

CITY OF BELLEVUE  
HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION  
MINUTES

February 5, 2008  
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall  
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chairperson Hoople, Commissioners Beighle, Huenefeld-Gese, Lazetti, Seltzer, Stout

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioner Yantis

STAFF PRESENT: Emily Leslie, Alex O'Reilly, Senait Taddese, Department of Parks and Community Services

GUEST SPEAKERS: Francois Larrivee, Hopelink and Bellevue Network on Aging; Alan Kiest, Washington State Department of Social and Health Services

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:31 p.m. by Chair Hoople who presided.

2. ROLL CALL

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioner Yantis who was excused.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. November 20, 2007

Motion to approve the minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Stout. Second was by Commissioner Beighle and the motion carried unanimously.

B. December 4, 2007

Commissioner Beighle called attention to the first page of the minutes and the proposal by Commissioner Stout to revise the October 2, 2007, minutes. She said the first paragraph should read "Commissioner Stout called attention to Page 6 and the wording of the motion associated with the reserve fund request and noted that

because the motion was approved the wording should be changed from 'Motion to approve the request by Healthy Start was made by Commissioner Seltzer. Second was by Commissioner Beighle and the motion carried unanimously' to 'Motion to approve the request by Healthy Start was made by Commissioner Seltzer. Second was by Commissioner Beighle and the motion carried unanimously.'"

With regard to the fifth paragraph on page 8, Commissioner Beighle noted that the phrase "...they generally do not..." should read "...they generally are not...."

Motion to approve the minutes as amended was made by Commissioner Stout. Second was by Commissioner Beighle and the motion carried unanimously.

#### 4. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Commissioner Seltzer reported that part of the work plan for the Bellevue Network on Aging for 2007 was to work with the Human Services Division on the Needs Update. On behalf of the Network, she thanked the Commission and Human Services Planner Alex O'Reilly for being allowed to take part in the community conversations.

#### 5. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Motion to open nominations for chair was made by Commissioner Beighle. Second was by Commissioner Seltzer and the motion carried unanimously.

Motion to nominate Commissioner Yantis to serve as chair was made by Commissioner Beighle. Second was by Commissioner Seltzer.

There were no additional nominations made.

Motion to close nominations for chair was made by Commissioner Beighle. Second was by Commissioner Seltzer and the motion carried unanimously.

The nomination of Commissioner Yantis to serve as chair carried unanimously.

Motion to open nominations for vice-chair was made by Commissioner Beighle. Second was by Commissioner Seltzer and the motion carried unanimously.

Motion to nominate Commissioner Stout to serve as vice-chair was made by Commissioner Beighle. Second was by Commissioner Seltzer.

There were no additional nominations made.

Motion to close nominations was made by Commissioner Beighle. Second was by Commissioner Seltzer and the motion carried unanimously.

The nomination of Commissioner Stout to serve as vice-chair carried unanimously.

Commissioner Stout took a moment to thank Chair Hoople for doing an outstanding job as chair for the past two years.

Chair Hoople handed the gavel to Commissioner Stout.

## 6. STAFF AND COMMISSION REPORTS

Commissioner Beighle said she participated in the annual One Night Count along with Commissioners Hoople and Huenefeld-Gese. She pointed out that a number of homeless camps are not included on the map and were not counted. The tally for 2008 was higher than for 2007.

Commissioner Beighle said her group had four people from Issaquah. Two of them were former residents of Tent City IV who are now living on their own; they were able to provide a great deal of information about the homeless. She said Issaquah is seeking to be included in the 2009 One Night Count.

Commissioner Huenefeld-Gese commented that the main message of Steve Roberts who coordinated the event was that consistency was the goal. He said everyone knows the numbers are grossly underestimated, but by being consistent in the count it will be possible to demonstrate whether or not there are increases or decreases over time, which will indicate whether or not the ten-year plan to end homelessness is working.

Commissioner Beighle said she attended the Puget Sound Regional Council meeting on January 15 at the Bellevue City Hall at which their focus was the update to Destination 2030. They had a big comment board which included a number of comments regarding human services. The plan, which was originally adopted in 2001, lays out a strategy for meeting regional transportation demands in the three-county area through 2030. The King County Coordinated Special Needs Transportation Plan was referenced by the group at the meeting.

Chair Stout said she participated in the tour of AtWork! provided for the Commissioners. She said the agency did a wonderful job of laying out the work they are doing and the changes they are facing.

Human Services Manager Emily Leslie announced that 64 applications have been received for replacing Grant Coordinator Camron Parker. He is currently out of the office on two weeks maternity leave. The field has been narrowed to 20 applicants, each of which was mailed a test. Of those, 16 completed tests were sent in. From that list, the field was narrowed to eight persons to be interviewed. The goal is to

have the new hire in place in March prior to Mr. Parker transitioning to his new position.

## 7. DISCUSSION

### A. Presentation on Easy Rider Initiative

Ms. O'Reilly introduced Francois Larrivee, Associate Director of Transportation at Hopelink, who has been serving as the unofficial chair of the Easy Rider Initiative on behalf of the Bellevue Network on Aging.

Mr. Larrivee said the mission of the collaborative is to bring together groups of individuals in the community to address the mobility needs of the transportation disadvantaged on the Eastside. The focus is on Bellevue because the collaborative was initiated in Bellevue. Part of the idea is to look at some very local projects and efforts that can be implemented in the short term and replicated in other communities. The collaborative includes a mix of private and public entities representing transportation and human services. The intent is to bring the commercial private sector more fully on board.

The survey that was conducted was followed by the community conversations. The collaborative identified a number of projects beginning in the summer of 2007 and then fell into a proposal writing period. Two of the projects were awarded funding. The Travel Ambassador Bus Buddy is sponsored by Sound Transit and is being administered and implemented by Hopelink. The collaborative has provided a great deal of support, and the Network on Aging is actively involved in the program.

Mr. Larrivee explained that the Travel Ambassador program works with the staff of human service agencies to educate them with regard to all of the transportation options available to their clients. The program also trains volunteers who in turn will offer training to other individuals and groups regarding travel options. The fact is there are quite a few options available; too often it is a lack of knowledge that keeps them from being fully utilized.

The Bus Buddy program is more targeted. It pairs volunteers one-on-one with individuals who are interested in learning to use the bus system. The model has been used in other communities and has been proven to be effective. The program is under way in Bellevue and will run for about nine months before moving to a different community.

Commissioner Beighle asked if the program can be crafted to apply to the disabled as well. Commissioner Seltzer said the program is focused on the established bus route. The Access program that serves the disabled is a door-to-door service. Mr. Larrivee allowed that some disabled persons, such as those who work with AtWork!

could potentially be served by the program.

Commissioner Huenefeld-Gese asked if the program is specifically targeted at seniors. Mr. Larrivee said that certainly is one of the target groups, but not the only group. The program can include youth, low-income individuals, and those with disabilities that might affect their ability to use public transportation.

Mr. Larrivee said the dial-a-ride program for the East Bellevue catchment area is almost fully funded. He said there are those who are willing to use fixed routes but who face a challenge of one type or another that prevents them from doing so efficiently. The dial-a-ride program makes it possible for persons to simply order a ride over the phone to a location where a fixed route bus can be accessed. The program was proposed as a project with various sources of funding, including local match; Sound Transit, King County Metro, United Way, the City of Bellevue and the state have all committed funding. Confirmation from the federal side has not yet been received. Without the federal funding, the program cannot proceed. However, the work to design the service is underway and is being managed and implemented by Hopelink.

It was explained that the East Bellevue catchment area is east of 140<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, south of the Crossroads area, north of I-90 and west to the lake.

Mr. Larrivee said the hope is that the federal funding will be received early in 2008. The design phase should be completed by the end of spring, so the program will be ready to initiate over the summer months.

Chair Stout asked if any from the congressional delegation have been asked to visit and learn more about the program. Mr. Larrivee said there have been some outreach efforts to local and state representatives.

The collaborative next will regroup and make sure its mission vision and goal is well defined. The group intends to identify other sources of funding, including renewal funding for current projects; identify other potential projects that can be implemented in Bellevue; reach out to other communities to demonstrate what can be done; and reach out to the community to build, strengthen and build the partnership.

Commissioner Huenefeld-Gese asked how the delay in getting the circulator up and running in the downtown will affect the Collaborative's programs. Mr. Larrivee said the collaborative informed the Council that it sees the circulator as an important piece of the transportation picture. One thing that came out of the survey was a growing concern about access to Overlake Hospital. The merger of Group Health's services with Overlake will compound the problem. The collaborative strongly believes the circulator should provide access to the hospital.

Chair Stout noted that there are several senior housing developments between 112<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE and 106<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE. Some of those people cannot walk five blocks to get where they need to go and the circulator would be a godsend for them.

## 8. DISCUSSION

### A. Update on State Workfirst Program

Alan Kiest, Washington State Department of Social and Health Services said when Bill Clinton was running for president in 1992, he promised to end welfare as it was then known; he was elected, and he followed through on his promise. The Workforce Development Council of King County deals with the panoply of manpower programs, of which Workfirst is only one. Workfirst is attached to the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program.

Commissioner Lazetti said the written history of the Workfirst program provided to the Commissioners was very helpful. She noted that there were budget shortfalls in 2003 that impacted the program. She asked if the program in Washington State has become self sufficient. Mr. Kiest explained that former Governor Locke created the Washington State program to wrap around TANF, which was originally existed as a block grant to the states. The so-called "welfare box" was handed to him by the legislature. While not technically self sustaining, it mixes state and federal dollars, and adds in the savings that occur every time someone is removed from the grant. During the budget shortfall period, the program was trimmed to stay within the box. The Eastside King County caseload dropped at that time from about 1,800 to currently about 397.

Referring to the printed materials, Commissioner Lazetti asked if the statement "The current employment retention rate for Workfirst recipients is about 30 percent lower than other adult employment programs" is a good statistic or not. Mr. Kiest said over the measured period of time, the rate at which the Workfirst clients are still employed is 30 percent less than the non-Workfirst people. The program, which is administered by the Department of Employment Security, was brought up to try and narrow the gap.

Mr. Kiest said unemployed people come in a variety of flavors. Welfare people tend to be the most challenging of the unemployed group. Generally speaking, 26 weeks of unemployment compensation are afforded to those who lose their job. Many of them within that 26 weeks will reconnect with the labor market and never see the inside of a welfare office. Someone who has blasted through the 26 weeks and spent down their resources to the place where they are eligible for a TANF grant is at greater risk.

TANF was originally understood to be a five-year program, but in some states, including Washington, it is only a two-year program. The 60 months is a lifetime limit; when it is gone, it is gone. The state quickly recognized the need to get people off the program as quickly as possible to retain for them some degree of cushion under the program. Beginning with close to 2000 cases on the books in July 2002, the

caseload was pared down in the Eastside catchment area to only 19. The 397 now on the books represent a much different spectrum from the original 2000; there is now a much bigger proportion of pregnant and parenting clients, more clients who are disabled, and others who are labeled as hard to serve.

At the front end, the focus is always on accessing what will be of most assistance to the client; that could be unemployment compensation, child support, or a cash diversion. Those and other tools are used to keep people off the TANF grant if possible.

Chair Stout noted that the materials make continual reference to families and parents. She asked what happens with single adults who have problems with employment or who are unable to support themselves for whatever reason. Mr. Kiest said his office primarily offers employable singles features of the basic food program, which used to be called food stamps, though there is also employment training. They all fall under the umbrella of the Workforce Development Council and they are eligible for the various programs based on the definition of the programs. Washington is one of only a handful of states nationwide that has a general assistance program; anyone who is unemployable for a minimum of 90 days is eligible.

Commissioner Huenefeld-Gese asked what makes the biggest difference for ESL clients who are trying to become employed. Ms. Kiest said statewide there is little difference in the level of success between the ESL group and the English-speaking group. The programs are designed to parallel the Worksource program to the degree possible, and the results seem to track accordingly.

Commissioner Huenefeld-Gese asked how many of the clients who do become employed are rising above the poverty line. Mr. Kiest said he does not know for sure. He noted that a parent with two children working with a full-time minimum wage job who has the full benefit of the food assistance is dramatically better off irrespective of the poverty level. On average, the job placements in the Eastside catchment area are in the \$10- to \$12-per-hour ballpark. The history of the program indicates that changes have been made over time trying to improve it and the lives of the clients. The Workforce Development Council is constantly reworking its programs. Workfirst itself offers tuition waivers post-TANF that can be accessed; there is also a phase down of medical assistance and a phase down of support services post-TANF. Because the TANF program in Washington state never became a five-year program, there is actually TANF available post-TANF.

When someone who was placed in a job loses it, it is not seen as a failure but rather as a part of life. Some find that they must cycle back onto TANF; when they make it back to Employment Security they undergo a debriefing in an attempt to make it a learning experience. The Eastside catchment has a higher percentage of TANF clients in education right now than any other part of King County, and that is always

aimed at making clients more marketable in the job market.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Lazetti, Mr. Kiest said the first wave of the Deficit Reduction Act rolled in in October 2006; the rest of it rolled in in October 2007. He said there are only a couple of states in the nation that are fully in compliance; Washington is not one of them, and there is the risk of sanctions in the state unless the law is changed.

## 9. OLD BUSINESS

Ms. O'Reilly said the Needs Update final report is in the print shop; the hard copy should be available in about a week. The web version is online already. As has been done in previous years, an eight-page overview of the document will be made available; the draft is being worked on and the final draft should be ready by early March.

Ms. O'Reilly said staff will be taking the Needs Update to the community in the form of presentations; there will be in-house presentations offered as well. She said she already made a presentation for the Department of Planning & Community Development staff and received some good feedback from them. She said she will next present the data to the Youth Link Board, then later in the month will be with the Probation Advisory Board. The Parks and Community Services Board will be given a presentation in March, and talks are under way with staff about getting on the agendas for the Transportation Commission and Planning Commission for briefings.

On March 12 from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 p.m. there will be a workshop held in Council Chambers titled "Where to Find Data." A broad mailing will be sent out to agencies inviting them to attend. A panel of representatives from about six organizations will be there with information about their groups.

Ms. Leslie reported that she attended a meeting of the Committee to End Homelessness on February 4 at which it was mentioned that Hopelink is planning to conduct a simulation on living in poverty and needs participants. She offered the Commissioners written information about the event.

## 10. NEW BUSINESS

## 11. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS – None

12. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Stout adjourned the meeting at 8:00 p.m.

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Secretary to the Human Services commission

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Date

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Chairperson of the Human Services Commission

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date