

*The Human Services Commission approved these minutes on April 5, 2011*

CITY OF BELLEVUE  
HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION  
MINUTES

March 15, 2011  
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall  
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chairperson Beighle, Commissioners Bruels, Hoople, Huenefeld Gese, Plaskon, Stout, Yantis

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Emily Leslie, Alex O'Reilly, Joseph Adriano, Kimberly Walker, Terry Smith, Department of Parks and Community Services; Councilmember Chelminiak

GUEST SPEAKERS: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

2. ROLL CALL

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. February 15, 2011

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

4. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS – None

5. STAFF AND COMMISSION REPORTS

Commissioner Huenefeld Gese said the annual Youth Link gumbo night was fun as usual and the food was great. Chair Beighle said she spoke with several of the youth and heard from them that they enjoyed the coat drive and working youth-related legislative issues in Olympia.

Commissioner Hoople said he was recently invited as chair of the Veterans Citizens Levy Oversight Board to attend the King County Regional Policy Committee meeting focused on preparing the ordinances aimed at putting the Veterans and Human Services levy on the ballot. An attempt was made to amend the ordinance to eliminate the oversight boards and replaced by a board similar to the one overseeing the MIDD. There were many objections raised, both from members of the King County Council and everyone from the veterans community. The proposed amendment was eventually withdrawn.

Human Services Manager Emily Leslie said one member of the Committee had intended to submit an amendment that would have built an inflationary factor into the levy tied to the Consumer Price Index. It was opposed in preliminary discussions and thus was not raised, though it may come back at a later time. The Committee approved two ordinances, one approving the levy for the August ballot and one approving the levy for the November ballot; the King County Council will make the final decision by May 23.

Commissioner Bruels reported that he attended the King County Alliance of Human Services meeting earlier in the day along with City staff where the Veterans and Human Services Levy was discussed. A representative from the King County Executive's office was present to provide some information. He said there was a survey done which indicated significant public support for the levy, but little support for an increase in the levy. It was also noted that HB-1997 which is currently before the House Ways and Means Committee in Olympia is a measure that aims to repurpose some of the stadium taxes to human services; the Alliance supports the measure.

Ms. Leslie clarified that the bill would redirect some of the taxes to housing but not to human services in general.

Commissioner Bruels said the Alliance conducted a roundtable discussion to gain a better sense of the impacts associated with the cuts to human services funding. He said the picture that was painted was dismal.

Human Services Planner Alex O'Reilly said she attended the March 8 meeting of the Parks and Community Services Board and gave them an overview of the planning process for the Needs Update. She said they offered some good suggestions for community conversations. She added that the Council will be provided with a brief update at its Study Session on April 4.

Ms. Leslie remarked that Commissioner Huenefeld Gese was attending her final Commission meeting. To mark the occasion, Councilmember Chelminiak thanked her for her service to the city and gave her a certificate of recognition. He said her insights and her voice would be missed.



Ms. Leslie spoke on behalf of the staff and said it had been great to work with Commissioner Huenefeld Gese over the past few years. She especially appreciated her leadership during the 2011-2012 funding process.

Chair Beighle said she would miss Commissioner Huenefeld Gese's tireless work on behalf of the community.

Commissioner Huenefeld Gese said the decision to leave the Commission was very difficult to make but in the end chose in favor of her family.

Councilmember Chelminiak said he shared with the Council information that was presented to the Commission regarding human trafficking. He said he worked with Councilmember Wallace to make sure Bellevue was listed in support of the bill in the legislature.

## 6. PUBLIC HEARING

### A. Housing, Community Development and Human Services Needs of City Residents and Use of 2012 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Funds

Chair Beighle stated that during 2011 the Commission would be working to update the Human Services Needs Assessment as well as the Consolidated and Community Development Plan (CDBG). She said the two documents are used to set funding priorities for the local human services fund and federal Community Development Block Grant funding. She said the public hearing serves as an opportunity for agencies and residents to provide the Commission with information regarding housing and human services problems or needs observed in the community, particularly with regard to the current economic recession. The information will be used to guide the Commission in developing a plan for allocating the city's anticipated 2012 federal CDBG award.

Chair Beighle stated that during the public hearing there would be no interaction between those providing testimony and the Commissioners.

Motion to open the public hearing was made by Commissioner Hoople. Second was by Commissioner Huenefeld Gese and the motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Diana Olson with HealthPoint noted that the agency has clinics all over King County and annually serves thousands of residents from the area. The most serious issue for Bellevue-area patients is access to primary healthcare. Many have said they are losing their insurance coverage as a result of job loss, and in other cases are seeing their insurance coverage reduced. Demand for services provided by HealthPoint have increased dramatically. Often patients are delaying even seeking care. Some seek care from emergency rooms while others elect not to seek care at all, which often means complex issues are developing. The state budget crisis has

hit HealthPoint; the Disability Lifeline and Basic Health Plan may be cut. Funding from private sources have been reduced, as has Medicaid. In the years leading up to 2014 when the national healthcare plan is to be implemented, agencies such as HealthPoint will be expected to see thousands of patients. Accordingly, much of the focus has been turned to saving the infrastructure. HealthPoint is a revenue-producing organization, which makes it different from many non-profits, but it also provides uncompensated care which makes it necessary to dip into reserves.

Ms. Eileen Rasnack with Volunteer Chore Services of Catholic Community Services said the most serious health and human services issues facing older adults revolve around the fact that they are frail, isolated, and dealing with multiple health issues. Their most critical needs are in-home resources and transportation. Older adults also face difficulties in figuring out where to go for the services they need and making sure they are eligible for those services. It is a struggle for them to access basic needs; the confusion they face in working through the system can be very frustrating for them. Often they are reluctant to ask for help. Once they did figure out where they need to go, a lack of reliable transportation often stands in their way. The economic recession has affected the senior population in several ways. They are living on fixed incomes and are seeing their money having to stretch farther and farther. Additionally, many services for older adults have been reduced or eliminated. The volunteer chore guideline for eligibility is around a thousand dollars a month or less, which is very low, but many with higher incomes are calling seeking help because they too are struggling to be able to pay for services. Cuts made at the state level to services for older adults have had an impact; many no longer qualify for COPE services that were designed to help them stay in their homes, placing them at risk. Volunteer Chore Services has seen an increase in the number of calls received for services because of the reductions made in other programs. The agency lost King County funding in 2010 and has seen a 6.3 percent reduction in funding from the state. A staff position was eliminated, and all remaining staff are on reduced hours. Services have had to be prioritized in an attempt to do more with less. The commitment of Bellevue to human services is laudable and appreciated.

Ms. Ellen Hegenauer, also with Catholic Community Services, spoke on behalf of Harrington House and thanked the Commissioners for their support of the program. Housing costs and what low-income persons or families can afford to pay are making it difficult to place many clients in permanent housing. Clients come from shelters, stay at Harrington House for up to a year, and then either move to another transitional housing program or into permanent housing if a unit opens up. All of the clients are on TANF and their lack of income deters them from getting into market-rate housing. The women are usually single, most do not have a high-school diploma, and most lack job skills. Once laid off from their jobs due to their pregnancy, it is very hard for them to find new work. Most do not have medical coverage. Service delivery is a barrier to many clients, especially for those for whom English is not their first language. Providers covered by Medicaid are often not culturally appropriate for the clients. The attitudes of service providers at times discourages clients from seeking services.

Ms. Angie Johnson, case manager for Harrington House, explained that the program offers transitional housing for women who are pregnant or newly parenting and homeless. Most of the women face difficulties in finding affordable housing and good affordable childcare. Recent cuts in TANF has impacted many of the clients. Transportation continues to be an issue, especially given that the buses in Bellevue are not friendly to use. Recently a women who failed to fold up her stroller fast enough was yelled at by the driver. Donations to the program are down, which limits the program's ability to transport clients to and from appointments. With less funding, it has become necessary to reduce staff hours and relying on on-call staff, which in turn results in inconsistencies.

Ms. Ann Merklin, program manager for Emergency Assistance, said the program provides assistance to low-income residents, the disabled and seniors. The majority of clients are families. The most serious problems seen by the program are clients who have been laid off or have had their hours reduced. Many who previously had benefits have seen them either reduced or eliminated. There has been a significant increase in the number of calls for help with rent and utilities, for motel vouchers for those who are homeless, and for assistance with food, gas, prescriptions and bus tickets. The increased number of calls has made it difficult for clients to get through to the agency staff at all; by the time they do get through their situations have often worsened. Clients have even reported difficulties in getting through to 2-1-1. Clients are finding it necessary to go to multiple agencies in order to get their needs met. Those unable to jump through all the hoops are finding themselves homeless; more and more new clients who have never previously asked for services are coming forward, and most of them are families. The agency is facing additional funding cuts which will necessitate additional staff and program reductions; a reduction in private funding is also expected.

Ms. Julie McFarland, director of homeless youth services for Friends of Youth, said the program provides emergency shelter for 12 to 17 year olds. In addition, the agency operates the only young adult center located on the Eastside; it is housed in the Bellevue YMCA and serves 18 to 24 year olds. She thanked the Commission for its ongoing support for those programs. The most serious human service issues being faced by Bellevue clients are affordable housing, mental health, substance abuse, unemployment, and untreated medical and dental issues. The clients face a number of barriers, not the least of which are wait lists for housing, mental health and substance abuse services. Transportation is a big issue; some young adult clients have jobs but their one-way morning commute takes two hours with all of the transfers they must take on the Eastside. The economic recession has increased the number of clients seeking services; young adults are being turned away from The Landing shelter almost every night, and many of them are coming over from Seattle. The wait list for transitional housing for young mothers has reached 121, which translates into a wait of six to nine months just to get an interview. With higher case loads, it flows that less individual attention can be given to each client. The loss of \$110,000 from King County for the shelter program was a serious blow and it may

become necessary to combine the two shelter programs in order to make ends meet. Funding from United Way has been reduced by ten percent, and Friends of Youth clients are utilizing the food banks more than ever before.

Mr. David Johns-Bowling, shelter director for Congregations for the Homeless, said the shelter houses 30 or more homeless men. He said the need is huge and qualified men seeking shelter are turned away every day. The agency also operates a housing program that houses 48 people. The housing program has been in operation since 2006 and has helped keep 260-plus people off the streets and into stable housing. The agency has helped co-operate the severe weather shelter with Sophia Way which saw more than 200 unduplicated people over the winter months. The loss of the GAU disability lifeline has been huge for clients of Congregations for the Homeless. The program includes access to dental care and nurse practitioners, but the clients still rely on the GAU for other services. Clients say it would be wonderful to have a day center they could use during the day. Laundry and shower facilities are critical to the homeless who are seeking jobs; it would also be great to have lockers for them in which they could keep their personal belongings. With GAU funding, some clients are not able to get their medical and mental health services.

Ms. Chris Brandt with AtWork! thanked the Commission for its continued support. Currently Bellevue funding is funding the employment consultant who works to help persons with disabilities transition into community jobs, and a job developer who seeks new job and volunteer opportunities in the community. Jobs are not easy to find for anyone in the current economy. Persons with significant and multiple disabilities often require the services of a job coach in order to be successful. For every dollar spent on hiring staff to provide support, \$1.69 is returned in taxes paid and benefits given that no longer must be provided by the government. The problem is that support for their jobs is diminishing, and some primary sources of funding are going away; without that support, people will lose their jobs. Without jobs, people with disabilities become more dependent on the services offered by agencies. Some who are supported by AtWork! are the primary wage earners for their entire family; many of them live with elderly parents who rely on their adult child with disabilities to earn an income. Public transportation is essential for persons with disabilities, and in the current economic climate transportation options have become more limited, more costly and less efficient. Stigmatism remains a barrier for people with disabilities, particularly the attitudes of employers. People will not be able to continue getting services unless they are on federal community waiver programs, and the state is looking at cutting state-only funded services. Only 14 persons were placed in jobs during 2010, and that is the lowest placement rate over the last five years; an additional 16 lost their jobs, the majority of whom were laid off. The agency's funding stream from United Way was cut by an additional 15 percent, for a total of 70 percent, and in the fall of 2010 the agency lost its largest commercial contract in packaging and assembly, which was worth some \$300,000 per year. The board decided that in order for AtWork! to remain financially stable it can no longer give away services for free absent a matching funding source; the agency has been giving away some 1500 hours of service monthly.

Mr. Doug Renaud spoke representing Hero House. He said he has lived in Bellevue for the past 40 years and was the holder of two bachelor's degrees. Following a traumatic brain injury in 2004, it took him four years to earn his SSI disability award. He said he has been in the CFA2 shelter program and noted that his rent has increased by \$108 without the benefit of an increase in SSI. He said his program ends in a year and a half after which he will be homeless again. He said he has experienced some health issues which recently required a stay of a day and a half at Overlake Hospital, the cost of which was just over \$18,000, of which he will be responsible for 20 percent. The four prescriptions resulting from the hospital stay cost \$240 in co-pays, which is a quarter of what he has to live on each month. Other drugs prescribed to him have risen in cost recently. King County Metro and Sound Transit no longer have a yearly disabled pass so it is necessary to travel to Seattle every two months and spend \$54 for a pass. He said he has dental issues that resulted from his accident and it will cost \$3200 up front. His income is too high to qualify for food stamps.

Ms. Erica Horn, also with Hero House, thanked the Commission for its support. The program has become a mirage of services. Hopelink just informed the agency that Medicaid transportation no longer will cover rides to the clubhouse, so the staff are scrambling to figure out how to get people who need services to the clubhouse. Everything that can be done is being done to fill the void for the members who are currently served, but a flux of new members are coming in seeking help with various problems.

Ms. Marty Jacobs, family services director for Child Care Resources, thanked the Commission for its support for child care and early learning. She said the city's funding has been instrumental in increasing the quality of child care through training and technical assistance to providers; has helped families in making choices about child care through the information and referral service; and has assisted families through the financial assistance program. Access to high-quality child care continues to be a major need in the community, especially among those who need child care in order to continue working. In October the state reduced the eligibility level for child care subsidies from 200 percent of the federal poverty level to 175 percent. At the higher level, a family of three could earn up to \$3052 per month, which equates to just under \$18 per hour for full-time work; at the lower rate, the same family can earn up to \$2671 per month, which equates to \$15.50 per hour for full-time work. Families in the gap between those levels were impacted. Some elected to reduce their salaries so they would qualify for the lower level. Some took their children out of child care altogether, while others quit their jobs and went on TANF. The cost of child care for families is very high. A single parent making \$16 per hour and grossing \$2800 per month with a toddler and a preschooler in a family child care home might have to pay \$1750 for child care, leaving less than \$1000 for housing and other expenses. Child care providers have reported that many children who were receiving subsidies have left their programs, which leaves the providers struggling; some have closed their doors. The city's recession funding came at just the right time for some families;

28 children are currently being served, and 30 have been served thus far in 2011. An additional three children will be added in April. The agency has seen an increase in requests for help from homeless families.

Ms. June Wiley spoke representing the YWCA. She thanked the Commission for its ongoing support. She stated that 92 percent of all rental housing on the Eastside is unaffordable to low-income residents, which is alarming. The recession has brought forward people who have never had to access services before. The agency is focusing on economic resilience and financial literacy; the new program aims to help people manage their money, even if they only have a little, which will be the key to moving forward. Ongoing funding for domestic violence services will be critical.

Ms. Leslie Miller, children's supervisor and grant reporting specialist for Sophia Way, said the most serious issues faced by the agency are homelessness, mental health challenges, substance abuse, aging, traumatic brain injuries, unemployment, and the lack of very low-income housing. The barriers facing clients include transportation, and lack of availability of services for mental health and substance abuse for those in crisis. A greater variety of housing options is needed, especially for clients who cannot handle living alone in a scattered site apartment for one valid reason or another. The economic recession has resulted in women needing to stay in the shelter program for longer periods of time. Those who are higher functioning and could work are unable to find jobs, and those who do qualify for services, such as disability lifeline, are receiving less and less money, and some are in danger of losing their current housing. Clients are also losing their medical and dental benefits. The biggest issue facing the agency is that funders have less money to spread around, thus the demand is not going to be met.

Mr. Gerald Wright with Hopelink said the agency promotes self-sufficiency for all members of the community. He thanked the Commission for its generous support. The major issues facing Hopelink include access to affordable housing and critical services such as food and utilities. On the Eastside, a family of four must have a net income in excess of \$4000 per month to be deemed self-sufficient. As a result, the fastest growing segment of Hopelink's client base is the working poor, individuals who have jobs but incomes that are not sufficient to secure housing or meet their basic needs. Services offered by the food bank are up ten percent over 2010, a year during which food bank services increased by 30 percent. Coupled with that is a reduction in the amount of food received by the food bank, which means more are being served with less. Funding is absolutely critical for programs that do not generate revenue, such as adult education programs. Attendance is up over ten percent in the agency's shelter and transitional housing units, and the turn-away rate is up 15 percent over 2010.

Mr. Jeff Bradt, executive director for Elder and Adult Day Services, thanked the Commission for its continued support, both for programming and capital needs. He said the work being done in the community by non-profits is astounding, but it is still not enough to meet the overall need. Transportation continues to be a need and

EADS is working its non-profit partners to find ways to address the need for its clients. EADS has been talking with AtWork! about bringing programs together, including a co-housing option for families with young adult children with developmental disabilities. A condo-type setting with service built in would be ideal. Such a building could also serve the aging parents of children with developmental disabilities who are concerned about transitioning their adult child into a home situation once they are no longer able to provide care.

Motion to close the public hearing was made by Commissioner Hoople. Second was by Commissioner Stout and the motion carried unanimously.

## 7. DISCUSSION

### A. Application to Conduct Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice

Grant Coordinator Joseph Adriano provided the Commissioners with a handout on the minor amendment to the city's Consolidated Housing and Community Development Plan. He explained that in general minor amendments are those that affect the Action Plan that is developed every year which follows the Consolidated Plan which is updated every four years. The plan essentially dictates what the city will do with its CDBG allocation during the four-year period covered by the Consolidated Plan; the annual Action Plan reiterates those activities.

The current consolidated plan includes a policy indicating that any minor amendment to the plan will be published in the city's paper of record, which is the *Seattle Times*, will be subject to a 15-day comment period, and will be reviewed by the Commission. Minor amendments include changes to the purpose, scope, location or those who benefit from the activities stated in the Action Plan. As required by federal regulations, the city must conduct an Analysis to Impediments to Fair Housing Choice, which in turn requires a change in the scope of the CDBG administration fund. The change will allow the city to use up to \$15,000 of CDBG funds for the analysis.

The analysis of impediments is an assessment of conditions, both public and private, affecting fair housing choice for protected classes, which include race, color and religion, as well as Section 8 status. The impacts that will be examined include local laws, ordinances and public policies; the nature of private sector sales and rentals; any concentration of protected classes; city demographics; and all discrimination complaints cataloged by the city's code compliance division. The work will include public involvement in the form of consulting with groups that work with people with disabilities, low- and moderate-income persons, housing advocacy groups, tenant rights groups, legal services, and veterans groups.

The Fair Housing Center of Washington was the only organization to respond to the RFP. Mr. Adriano said staff was expecting the agency to apply. They have to date produced 18 such reports for communities in Western Washington.

Motion to approve the minor amendment was made by Commissioner Plaskon. Second was by Commissioner Hoople and the motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Leslie pointed out that the current Consolidated Plan runs through 2011, so staff will be working on the new plan during the year.

8. OLD BUSINESS

Ms. O'Reilly said the phone and online survey will roll out very soon. She said three or four questions were added to the survey which will seek information from the respondents about the impacts of the recession on their lives.

Ms. O'Reilly circulated a sign-up sheet for upcoming community conversations.

Ms. O'Reilly shared with the Commissioners a flyer regarding the Eastside Time Bank. She stated that the City Council will be provided with an update at an upcoming meeting. On March 31 information will be shared about the program at the North Bellevue Community Center; a second event is scheduled for early in April and at that meeting people will be able to sign up for the time bank.

9. NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Leslie said a report on the Eastside Winter Shelter would be given at the next Commission meeting.

10. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

11. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Beighle adjourned the meeting at 8:11 p.m.

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Secretary of the Human Services Commission

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Date

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Chairperson of the Human Services Commission

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date