

CITY OF BELLEVUE
HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION
MINUTES

September 1, 2009
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

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

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Emily Leslie, Alex O'Reilly, Joseph Adriano, Patrick Tippy, Terry Smith, Department of Parks and Community Services

GUEST SPEAKERS: Councilmember Creighton; Jan Nestler, Cindy Sharek, Elder and Adult Day Services

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

2. ROLL CALL

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

3. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS. None

4. STAFF AND COMMISSION REPORTS

Councilmember Creighton said steps are being taken to fill the vacant Commission seat, noting that the application period will be open until September 30.

Commissioner Stout said she and Councilmember Creighton had recently attended a meeting with Senator Murray that was very successful. Councilmember Creighton concurred, noting that Senator Murray took the opportunity to familiarize herself with the issues. She expressed surprise at some of the Bellevue statistics that were shared.

Commissioner Stout said Senator Murray had some very good questions for the business representatives regarding the banking and credit situation, and the answers offered were enlightening.

Commissioner Beighle said she is continuing to work on getting the One Night Count going in Issaquah. She noted that Issaquah passed a law two years ago that outlawed camping in the city limits, so the homeless camps there have been largely cleaned out. The remaining camps are out in the woods in places where volunteers would not necessarily go in search of the homeless.

Human Services Manager Emily Leslie said a project has been identified for the Commission for the Day of Caring, the annual campaign kickoff for United Way of King County. She noted that the event is slated for September 11 and involves organized groups of volunteers working on projects at non-profit agencies. The project identified for the Commission is painting at one of the offices of Eastside Domestic Violence Program.

Ms. Leslie said she along with Joseph Adriano and Patrick Tippy attended an open house at My Sister's Home. She said the focus was on an opening of the children's program.

Human Services Planner Alex O'Reilly announced that Patrick Tippy's internship with the city would end on September 11. She said he would have a short break before going back to the Evans School to finish his second year of graduate school. She said he has been a tremendous asset to the team.

Mr. Tippy said he attended the King County Council meeting at which the topic was funding for human services. He said the King County Alliance for Human Services rallied the troops to make phone calls and send emails in support of human services, the result of which was a slight increase in funding. Ms. Leslie explained that the Alliance is advocating for the King County Council to set aside one percent of the general fund for human services; while that would represent only half of the current funding level, it would at least be a dedicated source of funding over time.

5. DISCUSSION

A. Update on Adult Day Health

Ms. O'Reilly reminded the Commissioners that during the last legislative session the issue of funding adult day health funding was on the agenda. She introduced Jan Nestler and Cindy Sharek with Elder and Adult Day Services to discuss the issue.

Ms. Sharek said Elder and Adult Day Services provides relief to caregivers by offering day health programs focused on frail seniors and developmentally disabled adults. She said the agency has been operating in Bellevue for 25 years and is determined to continue providing services in the community. The core services include structured therapeutic activities, promoting self-esteem, self-care activities and social skills, health management of chronic conditions, rehabilitative programs for strengthening balance, fall prevention and safety, coordinates care with medical

professionals, and provides resources, support groups and educational materials for caregivers. Forty-two percent of the participants are served by family or uncompensated caregivers.

Ms. Nestler said the average client receives services from the agency for 32 months. At the end of that time the person generally needs a higher level of care, though some have lost their caregivers.

Ms. Nestler said on June 30, 2009, Medicaid funding for adult day health was eliminated for all persons living in all state-funded residential or supported environments. A state-funded residential facility is an adult family home or an intensive group home in which the residents are provided with a bed, three meals a day, and a bath once a week. The providers do not have to have medical training, they do not provide rehab services, and clients in need of additional assistance must seek it outside of the adult family home. The clients are evaluated to determine their levels of self care and medical issues. The state has determined that adult day health services are the least expensive for those whose score determines that they need some sort of nursing or rehab care.

Adult day care, which does not provide nursing or rehab services, has not been impacted by the recent legislative changes. Medicaid funding for transportation to adult day health for all persons has been eliminated.

Because of the legislative changes, 68 persons who were attending the Bellevue Elder and Adult Day Services program were disenrolled by DSHS. Eleven of the Issaquah clients were disenrolled. Forty-five persons currently attending the facilities have been affected by the elimination of transportation services.

For financial reasons, the Issaquah program merged with the Bellevue program effective June 30, 2009. The combined enrollment stands at 63. The administrative office lease was discontinued effective July 30, 2009, and has temporarily moved into the Bellevue center. A search for free or next-to-free administrative office space is under way; in the meantime, many of the staff are working from their homes. The Bellevue and Issaquah program staff were reduced by seven FTEs.

Ms. Sharek said EADS continues to accept Medicaid clients, but cannot accept those who live in adult family homes or supportive living environments. The agency continues to have a five-to-one participant-to-staff ratio, though the state requirement is six-to-one. EADS is the only adult day health program in the state that is nationally accredited.

Transportation is a lifeline for the people served by the program. The clients cannot walk to the centers, nor can they access public transit on their own. Many need someone to knock on their door and remind them why a driver has come for them. The loss of state-funded transportation has been very difficult. EADS clients do qualify for reduced rider fares, and the staff are working with families not currently

approved for the Access pass; the approval process takes up to six weeks. EADS has a contract to provide transportation during the transition period at the daily round trip rate of \$50 per person. DSHS increased its vendor rate by \$15, ostensibly to include transportation, bringing the Medicaid unit rate for adult day health \$77 per day. The unit cost for adult day health, without transportation, is \$72 per day. The \$50 per person transportation fee EADS is expected to pay results in a financial loss of \$35 per day for each Medicaid clients.

Ms. Nestler said legal efforts are underway to help reinstate adult day health funding, and the information is constantly evolving. In July, the national American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) filed a lawsuit against the state on behalf of each affected person, which totals some 19,000. The federal court judge concluded that the Olmstead Act had not been violated. However, the judge decreed that every person named in the lawsuit could have their cases reassessed and have their services restored until September 30, 2009, given that the state had not followed up on its stated intent to properly reassess each person and/or provide each affected person with appropriate replacement skilled nursing and/or rehab services. The affected persons can be served by EADS during the interim.

Ms. Sharek said EADS has a program called Stay Active and Independent for Life (SAIL). The pilot program has been under way for about a year and is focused on fall prevention, vigorous cardio and weight-bearing exercises. The outcomes have been very positive, including improved cognitive ability, weight loss, and a decreased need for assistive walking devices. Those who participate in the program are evaluated when they join and at regular intervals during their participation.

EADS also is continuing to improve its facilities. Funding has been sought and received from King County CDBG funds for two phases of the remodel; application has been made for funding for the third and final phase, which will upgrade and improve the interior of the center, specifically the bathrooms and the kitchen.

Commissioner Plaskon asked what credentials the staff must have at EADS. Ms. Nestler said they are occupational therapists, licensed nurses and certified nursing assistants. The agency also has an ongoing relationship with the participants' physicians. She said participants come by once or twice a week on average, though some come five days per week. People are served regardless of their ability to pay, though about 75 percent are on Medicaid and 25 percent are private pay.

6. DISCUSSION

A. Review First Draft of 2009-2010 Bellevue Human Services Needs Update

Ms. O'Reilly informed the Commissioners that updated data for the report is continuing to flow in and suggested that as such the document remains in draft form. She acknowledged the contribution of the Commissioners by attending numerous

community conversation focus groups and asking good questions. The Bellevue Network on Aging also participated by conducting community conversations with older adult groups in the community.

Ms. O'Reilly noted that work to update the report began in earnest in December 2008 just when some of the effects of the economic downturn were beginning to appear. In planning for the update it was clear that the report should include a focus on the impacts of the difficult economic times on Bellevue residents, as well as the residents of the sub-regions, King County and the state.

Mr. Tippy said the introduction section points out the fact that Bellevue is a diverse community. The 2000 census and the 2005-2007 American Communities Survey indicated that about 13 percent of the city's population is over the age of 65. About 30 percent of the residents are foreign born, and 33 percent of Bellevue households speak a language other than English in the home.

The unemployment rate in Bellevue has been rising for the past two years. In June 2007, the unemployment rate in Bellevue was 3.3 percent; in King County the figure was 3.7 percent. By June 2009 the rates had increased to 7.3 percent in Bellevue and 8.8 percent in King County. The number of families living in poverty in 1999 was 3.8 percent; between 2005 and 2007 the average was 5.3 percent.

Ms. O'Reilly said the document includes a chapter on quality of life. A survey of residents is a part of the process of developing the biennial budget for the city. The needs update telephone survey includes quality of life questions as well. In the latter, 94 percent of the respondents indicated that Bellevue is a good or excellent place to live. The respondents particularly highlighted Bellevue as a safe place that is clean, has good schools, enjoys diversity and has great parks.

The survey also points out problems in the community. In the past five surveys, the top problems have been much the same: affordable housing, affordable medical care and insurance, unemployment and money management. Over 76 percent of the respondents indicated a belief that services are accessible to people in the community.

Ms. Leslie said the special focus section of the report deals with the impacts of the economic recession on Bellevue residents. She said United Way of King County has been tracking basic needs indicators for a number of months, and some of that data has been included in the report; the data includes requests for assistance from DSHS and from 2-1-1, requests for emergency food, and worker layoffs. The chapter includes data regarding city of Bellevue services and requests for assistance, as well as the 59 percent increase in utility shut-offs between 2008 and 2009.

Ms. Leslie noted that local philanthropy is feeling the effects of the recession. The Seattle Foundation, a major local organization, has seen its assets decrease by 20 percent, which has resulted in a decrease in the amount of funding available for

allocation in the community. On the positive side, one national study shows the majority of Americans who give to charities plan to continue their giving. Bellevue and most Eastside cities increased their allocations to human services for 2009 and 2010, but King County and Seattle are experiencing decreases in allocations for human services.

Ms. Leslie said Bellevue did receive federal stimulus dollars in the form of Community Development Block Grant Recovery funds totaling \$191,000. There are several local government initiatives under way, including the Bellevue Cares initiative that came out of the internal recession response team headed by Assistant Director Terry Smith and Neighborhood Outreach Manager Cheryl Kuhn. Extensive training has been conducted for front line city employees by the Crisis Clinic and 2-1-1. Planning and Community Development enacted Neighbor Link and various food drives, and a regional coordinated food drive will begin on September 26.

Eastside Helps is a program of the Eastside Human Services Forum. Their website includes a great deal of information about where to get help and how to give help. A number of corporate and private initiatives have been launched, including a response to basic needs by United Way, and a building resiliency fund formed by the Seattle Foundation.

The need to sustain human services funding goes without saying, especially long term. That calls for continued advocacy for stable and sustainable funding both locally and regionally.

Continued collaboration between agencies aimed at improving access to services is vitally important. In times of crisis people naturally tend to come together with an eye on figuring out how to do things differently. As part of the work of the Eastside Human Services Forum to address the recession, emergency financial assistance providers got together and are working on new ways to improve access for people who need emergency financial assistance.

Mr. Adriano said the school district reported that for the 2008-2009 school year about 30 percent of the students in seven schools qualified for the free or reduced lunch program, which is a good indicator of poverty or food insecurity. Updated information for the current school year will be available in early October.

The Renewal Food Bank reported that between early 2009 they have seen a 30-percent increase in the amount of traffic as compared to the same period in 2008. Between 2007 and 2009 the Hopelink Food Bank saw a 47 percent increase; between the spring of 2008 and the spring of 2009 the agency served 54 percent more clients overall, partly due to the fact that they received additional funding to help people. The Emergency Feeding Program reported a 56 percent increase.

The city's utility reported that in 2008 well over a thousand low-income seniors and disabled residents were provided with discounts and rebates.

Mr. Adriano said housing continues to be largely unaffordable to many. The One Night Count report has not yet been released, but it will include the number of sheltered people. The number of unsheltered persons counted was a little over 2800 countywide, 158 of whom were counted on the Eastside and in Bellevue. In 2008 Hopelink logged 898 turn-aways for requests for transitional housing; in the first four months of 2009 359 were turned away. The YWCA has reported that shelters in the south county area are also turning away Bellevue residents seeking transitional housing.

According to the American Communities and Dupree and Scott surveys, 38 percent of Bellevue resident renters and 30 percent of Bellevue homeowners are spending more than 30 percent of their incomes on housing. In the spring of 2009 the average Eastside apartment rented for \$1259 per month, which was higher than the King County average of just over \$1000 per month. The median sale price of Eastside homes in June 2009 was \$476,000, far less than the \$539,000 the same month of 2008.

Ms. O'Reilly said the three basic services in the second goal area are low-income legal assistance, information and referral, and care and caregiver/family support. She said the primary issue encountered in talking with agencies and individuals on the topic had to do with the added stress that is apparent in all groups because of the down economy. A need for all forms of support was expressed, including support for the youth.

The need for low-cost civil and legal assistance continues to be a growing need in the community. There has been a need for foreclosure assistance, particularly during the past two years, as well as help in proving eligibility for some benefit, such as Social Security. The need for domestic violence representation continues to be strong as well.

The need for information and referral services has historically been seen as a gap in the community. Most people do not bother to acquaint themselves with where and how to access information until such time as they really need it. With increased job losses and people needing services they have not previously needed, the number of calls to 2-1-1 and other information and referral providers have dramatically increased.

With regard to the topics of domestic violence and sexual assault, Ms. O'Reilly said for a period of time reports to the Bellevue Police Department leveled off. However, an increase in the overall number of incidents has been observed in 2009. The Eastside Domestic Violence Program is also reporting increased numbers. With the increase comes a greater need for more housing, legal assistance, counseling, financial assistance, and services for the children who have been affected by family violence. Agencies that see women of color are all reporting an increased need for culturally appropriate services. While all victims of domestic violence have similar

needs, women of color are particularly challenged by poor English skills and are fearful of immigration retribution and not having an income.

Ms. O'Reilly said it is difficult to generate exact numbers relative to elder abuse. National, state and county reports all indicate such incidents are on the rise. The Bellevue police department receives about 100 reports annually on average. While the numbers have remained fairly stable over the past two years, many believe there are many incidents that go unreported, often because the abuse is perpetrated by a family member.

Child abuse and neglect referrals have been fairly stable for the past couple of years, but there is some cause to be concerned with regard to the effects of stress on households that could lead to an increase in the number of incidents of child abuse and neglect.

Ms. O'Reilly noted that the Commission has supported the King County Sexual Assault Resource Center for a number of years. The program offers counseling for adults, community education, and operates a crisis line. The agency has reported an increase in the number of persons coming to them for services. For every person served by the agency, four are turned away because of lack of staff and resources. The Crisis Response Center has also seen a steady increase in the number of clients, which are primarily children who have experienced sexual assault or some other crisis.

School counselors and agencies in the community that work with youth report an increase in the number of youth and young adults asking for counseling and support around the issue of dating violence.

Internet safety, highlighted in the last Needs Update as an emerging trend, continues to be on the radar. The providers who work with sexual assault issues report that they are ramping up their education efforts in the community to youth and young adults about the dangers. Military sexual trauma is the term given to primarily women but also some men who have been sexually abused as a part of their military service; that is a trend that also needs to be tracked.

Because many people have lost their jobs and along with them their health insurance, there is an increased need for mental health counseling and support services for survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault.

Mr. Tippy shared with the Commissioners figures relating to the number of uninsured citizens nationally and locally during the period of 2005 to 2007. He noted that the figures for east King County were lower than those for Seattle and that the Bellevue numbers were lower than both of those areas. The numbers, however, were compiled prior to the beginning of the recession, and as unemployment rates rise so do the number of uninsured persons.

Mr. Tippy said the phone survey for the Needs Update has historically included a question about not being able to pay for or get medical insurance. In the latest survey, 16 percent of the respondents highlighted the issue as a problem. For those households earning less than \$75,000 per year, 23 percent reported affordable medical insurance as a moderate or major problem; only three percent of those households earning more than \$75,000 per year reported the same concern. Of the non-English speaking respondents, 27 percent reported facing difficulties in finding affordable health insurance; only 14 percent of English-speaking households reported the same problem.

During the community conversations and service provider interviews it was highlighted that requests for uncompensated and discounted care are up. The common belief is that the increase is directed attributable to the number of layoffs. The providers also pointed out the need for more interpreters to assist in the provision of services.

Mr. Tippy said mental health needs are growing in the community as well. Low-income and minority clients are more likely to need mental health support but less likely to seek it out. There will be increased pressures on the community services provided by the city and the county, and it will be important to seek innovative solutions to increasing access to quality care.

With regard to education and job skills that lead to an independent life, Mr. Tippy noted that Bellevue has a very highly educated workforce. Fully 59 percent of Bellevue residents have a Bachelor's degree or higher, and only five percent have not completed high school. The statistics bear out the fact that an education is the primary driver for higher wages. Affordable childcare, however, is a barrier for many families. Like the rest of the state, Bellevue needs more licensed facilities providing quality childcare. The lack of slots leads to increased pricing for the available slots: infant care in licensed childcare runs about \$15,000 per year. Most low-income families depend on friends, family members and neighbors as a result. There is also a lack of options for families that work non-traditional hours, such as the evening and graveyard shifts.

The phone survey results place transportation at the top of the list of concerns for households in Bellevue. For Bellevue residents living above the poverty line, 71 percent drive alone to work, eight percent carpool, and nine percent use public transportation. For those families living below the poverty line, 48 percent drive alone, 14 percent carpool, and 24 percent use public transportation.

Mr. Tippy said WorkForce reports that there is an ever increasing need to provide white collar job skills. The state-run program has been effective in getting people training and in jobs that pay a living wage, but more needs to be done to train workers. In order to get to the point of self-sufficiency, families need more than just job skills training; they need a supportive childcare system and transportation systems that they can rely on.

Ms. O'Reilly said the last chapter of the report deals with five specific populations. She said to a large extent they reflect the extent of the diversity of the city. The population of older adults need options for long-term care and affordable housing. A recent report indicated the need to bring online 900 units of low-income housing for older adults per year through the year 2025 in order to meet the need. Housing costs are going up, and people on fixed incomes are challenged with regard to their housing options.

Many residents are at the age of retirement but have found they cannot afford it, or have recently retired but are seeking jobs to help pay for basic living expenses. The national trend is being reflected locally. It is anticipated that the average retirement age is going to keep increasing through sheer necessity.

Bellevue is becoming increasingly diverse, and that is increasing the need for various adjustments in services aimed at making the services more accessible to English-language learners. Elder immigrants often are particularly isolated.

The American Communities survey highlighted the fact that 12 percent of older adults aged 65 plus no longer have cars of their own. Most of them need transportation options for getting to the store, getting to doctor appointments, and to generally remain active in the community. The King County Metro program called Access is difficult to qualify for and many seniors do not need that level of care. The recession has been hard on everyone, but older adults are particularly at risk.

People with disabilities also have specific needs. Disabilities increase with age, so as the population ages the number of persons with disabilities will increase, and they will require various levels of assistance to remain in the community. Persons with developmental disabilities, especially in a down environment, find it difficult to find and retain jobs, often because able-bodied persons who have lost their jobs are competing for the limited number of jobs. There is also a need for appropriate housing for the disabled.

There has been a decrease in funding for children from birth to three who have been identified with disabilities, but an increase in the number of those children. That has placed a burden on agencies to find additional funds to serve the children. Federal law requires the provision of services, so agencies are not turning them away, but they are not getting paid for the services.

Refugees and immigrants are another special population specifically highlighted in the report. Bellevue has a large number of foreign-born residents and the city's diversity continues to grow. Under the current federal administration the number of refugee arrivals are expected to increase. The trend is for more refugees to arrive from more countries, though in smaller numbers; that has the effect of increasing the overall number of language groups and brings with it a need for interpretation and

translation services. Local providers have reported that refugees lately have been arriving from Burma, Iraq and Iran.

Ms. O'Reilly said increased diversity is often seen first in the schools. Recent statistics from the school district staff indicate that almost half of the children enrolled are from non-Caucasian races and ethnicities.

During the community conversations with the counselors who provide services to the school district, the participants highlighted the growing need for mental health and substance abuse treatment. The counselors are clearly seeing the effects of the stress of unemployment on the families; there is increased absenteeism, more children acting up in school, and more children experimenting with drugs and alcohol.

There continues to be a gap in housing needs for young people aged 18 to 24. In Bellevue, The Landing shelter provides a small number of young adults with services five days a week, but the need exceeds the ability of agencies to meet those needs.

Ms. O'Reilly said veterans as a group are also highlighted in the report. She said data on the number of veterans living in King County was sketchy just two years ago but has steadily been improving as agencies revise their intake questions. With the passage of the veterans levy, there are more funds available and more of a focus on providing veterans with the services they need. While there are a number of vets living in Bellevue and on the Eastside who are returned from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, there are also aging veterans from the Vietnam and Korean wars; the list of services they need is increasing.

Ms. O'Reilly reviewed with the Commissioners the timeline for completing the Needs Update report. She noted that the second draft will be available prior to the November 17 Commission meeting. As data continues to come in, it will be shared with the Commission. On November 17 the Commission will be asked to approve going forward with the draft. A presentation to the City Council will be scheduled for January. Once the Council buys off on the report, it will be printed and distributed in the community and posted to the website.

7. OLD BUSINESS. None
8. NEW BUSINESS. None
9. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS. None

10. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Stout adjourned the meeting at 8:36 p.m.

Secretary to the Human Services Commission Date

Chairperson of the Human Services Commission Date