

*The Human Services Commission approved these minutes on February 23, 2012*

CITY OF BELLEVUE  
HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION  
MINUTES

January 5, 2012  
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall  
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chairperson Beighle, Commissioners Bruels, Habib, Plaskon, Stout, Yantis

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioner Perelman

STAFF PRESENT: Emily Leslie, Alex O'Reilly, Joseph Adriano, Evita Almassi, Department of Parks and Community Services

GUEST SPEAKERS: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 8:38 p.m. by Chair Beighle who presided.

2. ROLL CALL

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

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. November 1, 2011

Commissioner Bruels called attention to the second paragraph on page 2 of the minutes and noted that in the sentence "...continue the tradition of Swedish relative to caring for independent women and babies..." the word "independent" should read "indigent."

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

B. November 15, 2011

Motion to approve the minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Stout.

Second was by Commissioner Bruels and the motion carried unanimously.

4. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS – None

5. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Motion to open nominations for Commission Chair was made by Commissioner Stout. Second was by Commissioner Habib and the motion carried unanimously.

Motion to nominate Commissioner Bruels to serve as Chair was made by Commissioner Stout. Second was by Commissioner Habib.

There were no other nominations.

Motion to close nominations for Commission Chair was made by Commissioner Stout. Second was by Commissioner Habib and the motion carried unanimously.

The motion to nominate Commissioner Bruels to serve as Chair carried unanimously.

Motion to open nominations for Commission Vice Chair was made by Commissioner Stout. Second was by Commissioner Habib and the motion carried unanimously.

Motion to nominate Commissioner Yantis to serve as Vice Chair was made by Commissioner Stout. Second was by Commissioner Habib and the motion carried unanimously.

There were no other nominations.

Motion to close nominations was made by Commissioner Stout. Second was by Commissioner Habib and the motion carried unanimously.

The motion to nominate Commissioner Yantis to serve as Vice Chair carried unanimously.

The gavel was passed to newly elected Chair Bruels.

6. STAFF AND COMMISSION REPORTS

Commissioner Beighle reminded the Commissioners of the annual One Night Count slated for January 27. She said she would again be leading the downtown count.

Commissioner Beighle also called attention to the Diversity Forum to be held on January 12 at Crossroads Community Center beginning at 5:30 p.m.

Human Services Planner Alex O'Reilly reported that earlier in the day she attended the annual planning retreat for the Bellevue Network on Aging. She said the group



concluded their focus for 2012 would be on advocacy, mobility and housing issues, and communication.

Councilmember Chelminiak reported that Bellevue's new mayor is Conrad Lee and that the new deputy mayor is Jennifer Robertson. He said upcoming Council meetings will include a discussion of housing issues and how the faith communities interrelate with city codes.

Councilmember Chelminiak said the Council also approved the mid-biennium budget. He noted that what was approved will have no impacts on human services programming, though there may be some impacts on staffing. Additional budget reductions are still being investigated, and they may include employee furloughs.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Stout about city revenues, Councilmember Chelminiak said he was not optimistic. He said he believes the city will see an uptick in sales tax revenues. On the negative side, the state is looking to take revenues that typically come to the cities. The annexation efforts are proceeding, though the state may be taking away the sales tax equalization funds.

Commissioner Yantis asked if a reduction in human services funding can be expected. Councilmember Chelminiak said it may not be possible to continue with the extra package that was put together. He said he would fight to retain the baseline funding along with the annual CPI increase and was hoping the other Councilmembers would do the same.

## 7. DISCUSSION

### A. Sex Offenders In the Community and Community Safety

Human Services Manager Emily Leslie reported that the topic would be rescheduled for March 2012.

## 8. DISCUSSION

### A. 2012 Human Services Commission Work Plan

Ms. Leslie informed the Commission that the next three meetings would include discussions of the gaps in funding identified by the Needs Update and other reports, and the development of focus areas for the next funding cycle. The Commission is required to conduct a public hearing in the spring on human services needs; that is typically done just before the applications are due. Reviewing the applications and making recommendations for 2013-2014 funding will be the largest task undertaken during the year. The Commission will also review applications for CDBG allocations.

The Commission will need to have its recommendations for human services funding completed prior to the end of July in order to mesh with the city's Budget One

process. Accordingly, it will be necessary to add meeting dates in May, June and July.

The list of potential agenda topics to be discussed following the August break include updates regarding state and federal legislative issues; regional human services funding sources; ongoing partnerships and collaborations; Bellevue initiatives; collaborations among city departments; transportation issues; and various pertinent issues facing the region and the community. Site visits and tours will be scheduled as well.

Commissioner Stout said she would like to receive an update regarding the Governor's early learning initiatives and how that department is shaping up. The update should include some indication of what the Eastside can expect to receive of the \$60 million in federal Race to the Top funding that will flow to the state.

Chair Bruels voiced his desire to see program accountability discussed by the Commission.

Commissioner Plaskon concurred. He said he would like to see the discussion include a review of how other jurisdictions address program accountability.

Grant Coordinator Joseph Adriano commented that following the November Commission meeting staff began meeting with some of the smaller agencies the city funds to talk about program accountability. He said many of the agency representatives have voiced strong suggestions regarding what they feel would be a better system. Their suggestions should certainly be explored.

Commissioner Habib suggested the Commissioners could benefit from receiving an update regarding children's health in light of the state cuts to healthcare programs.

Councilmember Chelminiak said his desire is to spend the next four years building better connections between Bellevue, Kirkland and Redmond. The three cities have a lot in common and fostering relationships to better address common issues, including human services, makes sense.

Commissioner Beighle suggested that reaching out to and working with Issaquah on human services issues would make sense as well.

## 9. DISCUSSION

### A. 2013-2014 Funding Focus Areas

Mr. Adriano reviewed with the Commissioners the allocation process timeline. He noted that the first step is to determine focus areas, which the Commission will do over the course of three meetings and hopefully will wrap up by February 7. In mid-February the 18 participating cities will issue to prospective applicants a packet of

information regarding the funding criteria for each city. Funders workshops for applicants are slated for March 7 and March 9, one on the Eastside and one in South King County. The new website is slated for launch on March 22. That will usher in a five- to seven-week period during which applicants and file their applications online. The application website will close on April 26 at 4:30 p.m. The Commission will see the applications and begin discussing them the second week in May.

Mr. Adriano said it is difficult to project how many applications will be submitted. The instructions being drafted include a narrowing of the criteria, including a minimum funding amount and a minimum service level provided to Bellevue residents. The application has also be tweaked to be more prescribed when it comes to outcome statements; it has been narrowed to nine general outcomes statements that cover everything the big cities are funding.

Once the Commission reaches a preliminary decision with regard to a funding package, the public hearing will be conducted and the public will be able to comment on the recommendations. That will need to happen in July and will coincide with the Budget One process. Then in October the Commission will present its recommendations to the Council which will in turn approve it between November and December.

Commissioner Stout asked for an update regarding the projected CDBG funding. Ms. Leslie said the initial projection anticipated a 20 percent reduction, but the actual reduction tentatively will amount to only 12 or 13 percent.

Going on past allocation packages, Mr. Adriano noted that generally speaking about 40 percent has traditionally been earmarked for prevention programs, and 25 percent has been for intervention programs.

With regard to the Commission's history of funding priorities and emphasis or focus areas, Ms. Leslie noted that during some years the Commission identified no priorities at all. In other years, the priorities were very specific, while at other times the priorities were broadly construed. Throughout the years there has been consistency with regard to supporting the full spectrum of the city's needs and recommending continued support for the continuum of services. During the most recent funding cycle, 2011-2012, the primary focus area was recession and intervention programs serving residents most affected by the recession; secondarily, the focus was on leveraging dollars through supporting programs with significant formal partnerships within or outside agencies. Going into that funding cycle, the Commission concluded that the focus areas would be used to review previously funded programs as well as new applications.

Commissioner Habib observed that for the 2007-2008 funding cycle there appeared to be a real focus on accountability and asked if there were some concerns that triggered that. Commissioner Stout said there were discussions that year about making sure the agencies are held accountable in the same way that United Way

agencies are held accountable. Commissioner Plaskon added that the recession was just being recognized during the cycle and that was another reason the Commission chose to seek greater accountability.

Commissioner Habib asked what the Commission's history has been in funding legal aid programs. Ms. Leslie said Bellevue has funded the Eastside Legal Assistance Program for many years. Low-cost legal services has come up as a gap area in the Needs Update fairly consistently.

Ms. Leslie said the 2011-2012 Human Services Needs Update, along with the recently published *The State of Human Services Report*, highlight several gaps. The State of Human Services is a group of funders that has been meeting for more than a year; Ms. Leslie said she has been part of the group as have been a number of her colleagues from other cities and King County. The intent is to use the report to trigger conversations with different community groups about the impacts cuts to human services are having.

Ms. O'Reilly called attention to a matrix identifying gaps by goal area. She noted that the gaps highlighted in the Needs Update were very consistent with the gaps noted in countywide data in *The State of Human Services Report*.

The identified gaps for each goal area were:

Goal 1: emergency financial assistance for basic needs; food for food banks, meals and emergency food bags; transitional housing and shelter; homeless housing for single adults; affordable housing; and foreclosure assistance.

Goal 2: low-cost legal assistance for issues including domestic violence, immigration and foreclosure; parent support for all families but particularly for those families for whom English is not their first language; play and learn groups for the children of unemployed parents; support for older adults wanting to age in place; access to information about programs and services; availability of information in multiple languages.

Goal 3: shelters, transitional and permanent housing for domestic violence survivors; low-cost legal assistance for survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence; increased capacity on Crisis Line for survivors; medical insurance coverage for sexual assault and domestic violence counseling; transitional and low-cost permanent housing for survivors and their families; culturally relevant and linguistically appropriate services; education and prevention activities related to domestic violence and sexual assault.

Goal 4: culturally competent, accessible and low-cost healthcare and treatment services for under-insured or uninsured adults and undocumented children; low-cost dental care and eye care; low-cost mental health and substance abuse counseling; community education about the benefits of

exercise and healthy foods to prevent obesity; community education, especially for the youth, about services for prevention and early detection of diseases and conditions.

Goal 5: more affordable and accessible job training opportunities for jobs available in the current economy; access to help in applying for jobs; subsidies to help low-income families pay for quality childcare and after-school care; jobs that pay a living wage; affordable transportation options to get to work.

Ms. O'Reilly noted that in addition to the gaps in the various goal areas, there are gaps specific to certain populations:

**People With Disabilities:** housing opportunities for disabled persons who prefer to live independently; support for aging parents whose disabled adult children still live at home; transition services; screening for early identification of children with disabilities; support and information for caregivers of children with disabilities; affordable transportation options.

**Refugees and Immigrants:** interpreter services, including medical; information about resources in languages other than English; support for refugee and immigrant parents with children of all ages; services for domestic violence, including safe housing and counseling; free and low-cost legal assistance; ESL and job training programs; low-cost healthcare for immigrants who do not have insurance.

**Veterans:** mental health services tailored to meet the needs of veterans returning from Iraq, and Afghanistan, as well as support services for their families; support services for women veterans who have been sexually traumatized and for general healthcare services; services for aging veterans and their caregivers, including respite care; housing for low-income veterans; jobs for returning veterans; information about eligibility for veterans benefits.

**School-Aged Children and Youth:** emergency shelter and transitional living programs for homeless youth; school support services for homeless youth and youth whose families are suffering from the economic recession; detection and treatment of youth mental health problems; confidential and accessible services for youth, including health and human services; mentor programs, quality after-school programs and programs that address bullying; services for diverse school-aged children and youth, including refugee and immigrant youth and their families.

**Older Adults:** affordable and accessible housing with services, including long-term care and in-home services; adult day health services; support for family caregivers, including grandparents raising grandchildren; mental health counseling for older adults; low-cost dental and eye care for low-income older adults; job training for those who need to return to work; employment

placement services; information about older adult abuse; access to low-cost public transportation as well as other creative mobility options; access to information about other services.

Ms. O'Reilly said staff are working to schedule a study session date with the City Council to present them with the information in the Needs Update. Once a date has been confirmed, the Commission will be informed.

Ms. O'Reilly called attention to her memo regarding happenings at the legislative level. She noted that the special session that started the Monday after Thanksgiving ran through December 17; the legislators identified half a billion dollars in cuts but needed to find more than two billion dollars in cuts. The regular session is set to start on January 9 and the focus will be on reducing spending even more. The regular session will run through March 8 by which time the applications for funding will already be in play.

Chair Bruels allowed that while local jurisdictions cannot afford to backfill cuts made at the state level, they still have an obligation to preserve local human services infrastructures.

Commissioner Plaskon commented that during the Budget One process two years ago each city department was required to justify their programs and services. The budget was built on those justifications. Every human services program funded by the city has merit, but the city cannot be everything to everyone and it may be necessary to take a similar approach. When there are limited dollars, it should first be determined which human services expenditures are the most effective.

Commissioner Yantis pointed out that the Commission has historically been reluctant to take away funding from agencies that the city has funded in the past. Starting from zero for all agencies could result in a completely new funding pattern.

Commissioner Habib suggested that to some degree funding over time naturally shifts towards those programs that have been deemed to be the most essential. Chair Bruels said he hoped that in fact that has happened, and if so it should be fairly simple to define what has the most value. Over time the city has funded some agencies annually and in many instances has become their primary source of funding, thus creating a level of responsibility to those partner agencies.

Commissioner Yantis pointed out that every agency funded by the city has some tie to the list of identified gaps. If there were some national study pointing out exactly what should be funded in times when the needs are high and the revenues are low, it would be an easy thing to align the Commission's priorities with those outlined in the study and then choose to fund only programs that fit with those priorities. In the past when the Commission has had additional funds, it has taken a close look at areas in which they could best be applied. Often the funds were earmarked for specific and

timely needs. He said he did not know if it would be possible to bring to the table information that would help the Commission make better choices than it has to date.

Commissioner Plaskon commented that dental services for children and job skills training for their parents are both important, but with limited dollars it becomes necessary to choose between such things. Such choices should always be predicated on what is best for the community, and what is best for the community has to be based on a vision for the future.

Commissioner Habib suggested one question to ask each agency seeking funding is to what degree they have responded to emerging needs. He allowed that every agency probably would answer the question by saying they work in the community, know what the needs are, and in all likelihood know the needs better than the City does.

Commissioner Plaskon said that probably is especially true for the larger agencies that offer a variety of programs. Because they know the score and know what works, their applications should be given a little more weight.

Mr. Adriano said the city currently funds some 40 agencies, and historically some of them have been funded regularly. Where the Commission exercises the most judgment is in regard to new programs in determining how well they fit with the defined focus areas. Applying the focus areas rubric to every applicant would be a new course of action and would depart to some degree with the notion of funding the continuum of human services.

Commissioner Beighle pointed out that in past funding cycles the Council has questioned the Commission's recommendations to cut programs or agencies that have traditionally been funded. Commissioner Plaskon agreed that the programs the city has chosen to support over the years are solid programs, but the fact is the world has changed and is continuing to change, and that argues in favor of taking a new approach.

Commissioner Habib observed that to his knowledge Seattle is the only city in the area that does not contract out for human services. He said he would like to approximate to the extent possible the same model in Bellevue. If Bellevue were providing its own services, it would not suddenly get rid of its affordable housing staff in favor of providing healthcare or the other way around. Times are tough but that does not mean the established system needs to be dismantled. Those who provide housing will argue that housing is the most important thing to fund during bad economic times, whereas those who provide healthcare services will make the same argument. There simply is no universally agreed upon set of principles that can be used as a litmus test in determining how limited funds should be allocated.

Commissioner Yantis said when the Commission last went through the funding cycle it did not automatically give a cost of living increase to every funded agency has it did

in past funding cycles. Accordingly, some agencies received decreased funding relative to the value of dollars, and the decisions were predicated on the priorities established by the Commission and a fresh look philosophy.

Ms. Leslie pointed out that during every funding cycle agencies are told not to assume that previous funding will mean continued funding. At the same time, however, there has always been the philosophy that Bellevue funding is stable funding. The Commission has traditionally encouraged agencies to diversify their funding bases and to avoid making Bellevue their only funding source.

Commissioner Stout said stability for Bellevue residents should be the ultimate goal in determining how to allocate the limited dollars. The hierarchy should be services that move residents from emergency to stability to productivity while allowing at-risk populations to remain as stable as possible. The programs that fit under that hierarchy are those that provide food, shelter in all its forms, all elements of medical and dental care, and services for children.

Chair Bruels said if he were to develop a hierarchy it would include programs and services that are tied to joblessness, namely food and supplies, eviction and foreclosure prevention, utility assistance, employment and job search assistance, and childcare.

Ms. Leslie asked the Commissioners to keep in mind that Bellevue does not operate in a vacuum; it is part of a regional system. There are a number of regional initiatives with which the city should be aligned. Bellevue has also historically made an effort to align its funding with neighboring cities.

Ms. Leslie said the topic would be raised again for additional discussion at the January 19 meeting.

## 10. OLD BUSINESS

Ms. Leslie reported that the Eastside Winter Shelter is up and running and as of January 4 had served 178 unduplicated people, the majority of whom have been men. Those served include three different families. The men are being housed at St. Peter's United Methodist Church and the location is working well as a facility; both the church and the local neighborhood have been very welcoming, though the location is not ideal from an access point of view and the men's numbers are down over the projections. The women and families are being housed at the Salvation Army facility and their numbers are up. A number of the clients, both men and women, have been connected with Congregations for the Homeless or with Sophia Way and some have already been housed. The budget is short by about \$25,000 to keep the facilities open until March 15, but there are two potential grants in the offing.

## 11. NEW BUSINESS – None

12. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS – None

13. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Bruels adjourned the meeting at 8:38 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

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Date