

The Human Services Commission approved these minutes on May 3, 2011

CITY OF BELLEVUE
HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION
MINUTES

April 5, 2011
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chairperson Beighle, Commissioners Bruels, Hoople, Stout, Yantis

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioner Plaskon

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

GUEST SPEAKERS: Cindy Jayne, Eastside Timebank; Leslie Miller, Steve Roberts, Colleen Kelly, David Johns Bowling, Winter Shelter Program

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:33 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 Plaskon who was excused.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. March 1, 2011

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

B. March 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

Mr. Ryan Scott introduced himself as a Bellevue resident interested in possibly applying for a position on the Commission.

5. STAFF AND COMMISSION REPORTS

Commissioner Stout said that along with Human Services Planner Alex O'Reilly and intern Kimberly Walker attended the Community Conversation with the Cultural Navigators. She stated that while only three were present, they did a very good job of reporting. They voiced most strongly concerns about access to medical services in light of possible cuts due to the state budget situation.

Ms. O'Reilly said the issue of discrimination, both real and perceived, was also raised during the conversation as a barrier to services. ERIC is taking steps to address the issue.

Ms. Walker said it was noted that the Latino community faces the difficulty of accessing jobs online without having basic computer skills.

Commissioner Hoople said on March 25 both the Human Services and Veterans Regional Oversight Boards were invited to meet with King County Executive Constantine to share ideas about the upcoming ballot measure. In a recent survey the public indicated support for renewing the levy but without an increase.

Commissioner Bruels said the King County Alliance of Human Services wants to make sure the levy will go to ballot at the highest level the public will support.

Commissioner Hoople reported that he participated in the Community Conversation at Friends of Youth with representatives from Healthy Start. They expressed concern about the potential loss of interpretive services as well as concerns about transportation and housing.

Ms. O'Reilly said it was noted at that meeting that case managers often must spend as much as an hour on the phone on hold waiting to contact DSHS regarding services. Many young families use pre-paid cell phones, and if they had to do the same it would take all of their pre-paid minutes. If the agency does not intervene in seeking help, the clients will simply not get the services they need.

Chair Beighle said she and Human Services Manager Emily Leslie attended the Friends of Youth luncheon. More than 500 people attended the fundraiser, which netted more than \$150,000.

Ms. O'Reilly informed the Commissioners that the 2011 East King County Transportation Forum sponsored by the Eastside Easy Rider Collaborative will be

held on April 20 from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. at Eastside Fire & Rescue, 175 Newport Way NW in Issaquah.

6. DISCUSSION

A. Eastside Timebank

Eastside Timebank administrator Cindy Jayne informed the Commission that the initial pilot program focused on Kirkland and ran from December 2010 to March 2011. By the end of March about 87 people had participated in the orientation and application process; about 65 of them signed up online. To date about 85 hours have been exchanged, 30 of them in just the last month. About ten Bellevue residents are signed up. The services exchanged so far been wide ranging, from job coaching to home repair, jewelry repair, guitar lessons, tutoring, childcare and massage. The monthly potlucks have been very well attended.

Ms. Jayne indicated that with the pilot completed the focus has been turned to launching the program in both Bellevue and Redmond. Articles have been prepared for *It's Your City* and the *Bellevue Reporter*, and a spot for BTV will be filmed soon. KIRO radio has highlighted the program as well.

The timebank has 11 board members currently but more representation from Bellevue is being sought. The funding and staff support from Bellevue has been very helpful.

7. DISCUSSION

A. Eastside Winter Shelter Report

Grant Coordinator Joseph Adriano reminded the Commissioners that the shelter opened with the season's first snow on November 20, 2010, and closed on February 20, 2011. During the season there were 68 activated nights; there were only 18 in the previous season. The average number of bednights per night was 39, which totaled 2670 bednights. There were 226 unduplicated individuals served, with the percentage of women increasing dramatically to 19. The average age of the clients was 37. About 34 percent indicated Bellevue as their last permanent address; a surprising number of Seattle residents utilized the shelter.

Leslie Miller, the demographics specialist for Sophia Way, pointed out that "last permanent address" has an official definition of the last address at which someone lived for three months or more. A person could have lived on the streets of Bellevue for the past three years and still report their last permanent address as being Seattle. She said a client at Sophia Way recently gave Mercer Island as her last permanent address even though that was 20 years ago. The data does not indicate where the person is working or where they consider home.

The severe weather shelter is operated by the Interfaith Social Concerns Council with two agencies: Congregations for the Homeless and Sophia Way. From November 20, 2010, to January 15, 2011, the shelter activation criteria were met a total of 32 nights. The program then switched over to the Old Redmond Schoolhouse Community Center and was open nightly for 36 nights.

Steve Roberts with the Interfaith Social Concerns Council explained that because the shelter program concept was expanded to be continuous, the local jurisdictions were tapped for additional funding. In previous years most of the funding has come from Bellevue, but this year there was full participation from Kirkland, Redmond, Issaquah and Bellevue. A number of local groups made contributions as well, Interfaith Social Concerns Council offered in-kind contributions, and King County came through with some money which was used to purchase bus tickets.

Colleen Kelly with City of Redmond said the operating model change was an interesting process in which to be involved. In the month leading up to the winter season there was a lot being said by experts about how severe the weather would be. The forecasts showed a lot of low temperatures in addition to more snow and rain than normal. A contract person in Redmond who provides outreach services to homeless persons called on the mayor to open the doors of city hall to provide more regular and ongoing shelter options. That paved the way for open discussions about the need for additional severe weather shelter options for the homeless. Everyone agreed that the need was real, and that there would be a real benefit to offering continuous nights of service in overcoming the barrier that the intermittent nights of service model presents. The agencies volunteered that they had the capacity to address the issue provided funding could be found; space was also identified as a critical need.

Ms. Kelly said it was expected that once the shelter was open nightly that the average numbers would increase, though no one expected how high they would climb or that they would remain high. On one night 64 people took advantage of the shelter.

David Johns Bowling with Congregations for the Homeless said there were pros and cons associated with operating the shelter in two different locations during the season. When it was announced to the clients at the Bellevue site that the shelter would be moving to Redmond, many indicated they would not be able to move for a variety of reasons. After the move, there were quite a few from Bellevue that managed to make the move, but a number of new clients from Redmond participated. The grant offered by King County to purchase bus tickets helped a lot of people who otherwise would not have been able to make the move.

Ms. Kelly allowed that there were difficulties involved in accommodating co-located programming. One of the lessons learned was that having a dedicated shelter facility would be ideal.

Mr. Bowling said the move to Redmond occurred with only two weeks' notice. The police stepped up and were for the most part very helpful, though it was found that some did not know the criteria. Before moving into any community, there should be full disclosure with regard to who will be coming in and any issues that could potentially be faced.

Ms. Kelly added that because the shelter in Bellevue was open only when the criteria were met, shelter attendees did not know from night to night whether the shelter would be open, so they would disperse during the day. Everyone in Redmond knew the shelter would be open every night, so they did not go far from the downtown area, which was not expected by the community. There were some complaints brought forward that will need to be addressed before the next season.

Mr. Bowling said once the homeless are afforded a predictable place to spend the night, especially if they know food will be provided, two of the biggest issues they face are satisfied. Relationships get built and they get connected with the support they need.

Mr. Roberts said there are levels of homelessness. In thinking about ending homelessness it is absolutely essential to find ways to reach out to those who refuse to come into shelters or to seek any kind of help for themselves. The severe weather shelter was utilized by many who otherwise would not have come forward, and they were able to see that the staff are there to help them. Some decided their lives could be taking a different direction if they were to accept assistance.

Commissioner Hoople asked if any of the 37 veterans who utilized the severe weather shelter were connected with the King County Veterans Program to get help. Ms. Kelly said the biggest issue there is their willingness to engage. The continuity of service approach allows for nurturing every person who is inclined to reach out. Of course, there must be services to offer the veterans who are seeking them.

Commissioner Hoople asked what is known about the 26 persons who reported that they do have a permanent address. Mr. Bowling said one couple was from out of town; they were well dressed but for some reason had run out of money and had nowhere to go. Some who are known to be homeless did not want to admit to that, so they gave excuses for needing a place to stay. There were some who had families to go to but simply had become stranded. Some stayed for only a few hours while waiting to connect with ride to somewhere else. One woman had locked herself out of her apartment accidentally.

Commissioner Yantis asked where the food served in the shelter came from. Mr. Bowling said it was all donated, primarily by different church communities but also from some elementary schools and individuals.

Ms. Kelly said an Eastside Winter Shelter group has been formed with representation from the cities of Bellevue, Kirkland, Redmond and Issaquah as well as faith

organizations and Interfaith Social Concerns Council. Subgroups have been tasked with addressing budget development, location, and resources. The group is meeting on a regular basis and is excited to see an increased commitment to sheltering the homeless when they need it the most. With regard to when the shelter should be open, the talk has been primarily focused on November to February, though there has been some conversation about December through March as possibly being a better choice. Either way, there should be enough money set aside to operate the shelter for two weeks.

Ms. Kelly said everyone agrees that using community shelters is not a viable long-term option. Accordingly, a workgroup is looking at empty buildings, reaching out to churches, and considering all such options. While there are benefits involved in having the shelter open in a single location for the entire season, consideration is also being given to having the shelter operate one month at a time in the four main cities. A concerted effort will be put into raising private funds to pool with the dollars provided by the participating cities.

With regard to program development, Ms. Kelly said consideration is being given to having a point person available in the shelter to help clients navigate to resources that are available. In addition, local agencies may be invited to have representatives come to the shelter to talk about their programs. The amount of work involved in addressing the needs of staff, volunteers and donors is significant, so steps are being taken to build into the budget a manager that can give full-time attention to the needs of the shelter.

Ms. Leslie took a moment to specifically acknowledge the efforts of Mr. Adriano in developing the foundation for the severe weather shelter.

8. OLD BUSINESS

Chair Beighle said the presentation to the City Council on April 4 went quite well. She said she shared with the community conversation with Momma Unitas about which they asked several questions and offered several suggestions. Every Councilmember spoke and sounded very positive overall.

Ms. Leslie said the Council was told about the Needs Update and the focus that has been given to recession impacts on clients and services. The Councilmembers expressed concern about the impacts of pending budget cuts and the domino effect they are likely to trigger. One Councilmember made the suggestion that the city may want to investigate backfilling the shortfall. They indicated support and appreciation for the work being done.

Ms. O'Reilly said Mayor Davidson volunteered to share information with regard to how the dental system works, given that dental care is a major concern for many. Councilmember Balducci noted her interest in transportation issues and wanted to know how information about the SR-520 tolling impacts is being made known; she

also expressed an interest in the provision of mental health services. Councilmember Chelminiak noted his interest in transportation issues as well.

Ms. O'Reilly reported that seven community conversations have been completed of the 25 that she would like to see happen. She said eleven are currently scheduled and will be occurring in the next couple of weeks; another eight are in the process of being scheduled. Some key informant interviews have been held already and others are scheduled. The providers survey form is being finalized and will be sent out toward the end of the month.

Ms. O'Reilly said the survey has been completed and some of the top-line data will be in hand in the next week or so.

9. NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Leslie said the city recently sent out an announcement regarding the vacant positions on the city's boards and commissions, including the Human Services Commission. The deadline for submitting applications is April 22.

10. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS – None

11. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Beighle adjourned the meeting at 8:02 p.m.

Secretary to the Human Services Commission

Date

Chairperson of the Human Services Commission

Date