

The Human Services Commission approved these minutes on February 20, 2019

CITY OF BELLEVUE
HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION
MINUTES

January 15, 2019
6:00 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chairperson Mercer, Commissioners Kline, McEachran, Oxrieder, Piper

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioner Ma

STAFF PRESENT: Alex O'Reilly, Dee Dee Catalano, Christy Stangland, Natalie Minas, Department of Parks and Community Services

GUEST SPEAKERS: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

With the Chair and Vice Chair not in attendance, the Commission chose Commissioner Kline to serve as Chair pro-tem.

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m. by Commissioner Kline who presided.

2. ROLL CALL

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioner Ma. Chair Mercer participated electronically.

3. ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

4. COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITY COUNCIL, COMMUNITY COUNCIL, BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Councilmember Robinson thanked the Commissioners for their continued good work on behalf of the city. She said the process of interviewing for another Commissioner is underway. There were a lot of applicants and really good applicants. She said she uses a map when choosing applicants as a way of making sure the entire city is represented on the Commission.

Councilmember Robinson stressed the need to think about homelessness when

working to update the Needs Update. The county is doing a lot of work focused on identifying causation, commonalities and trends. It would be good to see some Eastside-specific information represented in the survey. She said she also would like some feedback regarding the types of services on the Eastside that require additional funding to assist her in her role as an advocate at the county level.

Commissioner Oxrieder asked for an update regarding the decision as to whether or not to make the men's shelter a year-round facility. Councilmember Robinson said an exploration is under way to determine what it would take to make that happen. She said the regulations allow it to be done for three years as a temporary facility, and as soon as it is designated a temporary year-round shelter, the clock will start ticking. The exploratory work includes looking at what improvements would need to be made to the building. While the building is not optimal, it is safer for the men to be inside it than to be out in the elements. No final determination has been made yet.

5. STAFF AND COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Human Services Manager Alex O'Reilly introduced Parks and Community Services Senior Planner Betsy Anderson. Ms. Anderson said her responsibilities include the long-range planning documents for the department. The position was previously occupied by Camron Parker who has moved on to become the Parks Property Acquisition Manager. She said she is currently working on updating the Recreation Program Plan, which must be done in order for the department to maintain its accreditation. The project will be brought before the Commission at the appropriate time. The schedule calls for completing the work by 2020. Ms. Anderson said she also will be working with Human Services Planner Christy Stangland on planning for human services, and said she represents the department on a number of citywide and regional planning initiatives that are under way.

Ms. Anderson informed the Commissioners that the involvement of Commissioner Ma had been secured to participate in a focus group for the Eastside Rail Corridor, specifically related to naming and branding the corridor. King County is leading a partnership with a number of Eastside cities regarding the corridor with the aim of revolutionizing the way people travel along the east side of Lake Washington. The focus group on which Commissioner Ma is serving is part of what hopefully will be a much larger engagement effort in 2019.

Commissioner McEachran said he very much enjoyed the recent event celebrating his 35 years leading his faith community. He stressed that he has not retired but rather was re-fired and would continue to look for positioning in regional church activities and would continue to serve the city where needed.

Commissioner Oxrieder referred to the Access Bellevue report mailed out to residents by the city. She asked if the referenced Ride To Pilot program, which provides first- and last-mile shuttle service to and from the Eastgate park and ride, is something new? Ms. O'Reilly said the program was not operational at the time King

County Metro last met with and updated the Commission. She offered to seek out additional information about the program and share it at a future meeting.

Answering a question asked by Chair Mercer, Ms. O'Reilly said she and Ms. Stangland have been communicating and working with King County Metro staff to develop a stakeholder meeting aimed at getting more partners for the solutions identified. The meeting will likely be in March.

6. INFORMATION FOR THE COMMISSION

A. Human Services Needs Update Discussion

Ms. Stangland said the staff have certain things they want to see in the changing document. The first is enhancing usability. Currently the structure of the Needs Update is similar throughout the chapters, but there are differences. The aim is to make each chapter consistent.

Staff also want to set the dates of the threshold of information. Currently there is information in the document that is fairly old because new data does not exist. The intent going forward is to not use any data that is older than ten years, though the ideal will be not to use any data more than five years old. The intent is also to remove from the various chapters any duplicated information to make it easier for those seeking data to know exactly where to find it. The end notes at the end of each chapter will also be hyperlinked.

The community voice will be highlighted in the Needs Update. A lot of work goes into making sure the community voice is heard during the process and the staff want to make sure it is included and highlighted at the beginning of each chapter.

Ms. Stangland noted that the Commission had previously identified areas of change in the document, including the fact that currently it is too long and is overwhelming. The intent is to make it less overwhelming so the document will in fact be read.

Ms. Stangland said she and Megan Farwell carefully reviewed the meeting minutes and handwritten notes following the Commission's last discussion on the topic and pulled together into one place everything that was said. From the information it was clear that data and narrative are important to the Commission. Statements were made that metrics are good but narrative is better, data trends need to be tied to narrative with more visuals and not less, and that data needs hyperlinks. The Commission also highlighted the desire to have a one-pager at the beginning of the document outlining why the goal areas are important. The Commission was clear about wanting to see the community perspective moved to the head of the document, and about keeping the goal areas approach. Having target populations was suggested in the form of a single page with five top issues and a couple of quotes. The suggestion was also made to change the goal areas themselves, but because they are aligned with the funding application, staff are not able to make that change in

the upcoming version of the Needs Update. It is something that can be explored in the future. There was agreement among the Commissioners to shorten the document, to avoid losing information on specific populations, to maintain stories and to incorporate as many graphics as possible.

Continuing, Ms. Stangland said the staff agree with having a one-pager at the beginning outlining why the goal areas are important; having clear headings to help easily identify the information included in each chapter; highlighting the community voice; maintaining the narrative stories; maintaining data with the addition of hyperlinks and the incorporation of more graphics; removing agency-specific information; and retaining the specific population chapters while avoiding information duplication within the chapters.

Commissioner McEachran voiced concern about the picking of data. He said he gets excellent data from the *Puget Sound Business Journal*. For example, parenthood is not cheap given the cost of child care. He said he likes the human infrastructure continuum that is outlined in the Needs Update. The question is how to bridge to the focus areas using color and font. Many human service providers in the community have begun making their annual reports focus on impact points. He agreed that adding hyperlinks would be a good idea, but stressed the need not to forget about those who do not use computers. The narratives are a good idea.

Commissioner Kline asked if staff anticipate any issues surrounding agencies being able to determine that their information was included even if their agency name is not specifically used. Ms. O'Reilly said she has been talking to intern Natalie Minas who will serve as the lead for the SurveyMonkey survey of the agencies. That survey is one way information from agencies is gathered for use in the Needs Update. She said there might be a way to develop a hybrid format.

Commissioner McEachran said agencies sometimes come forward without believing they have the full ear of the Commission, or access to the Commission's pocketbook, simply because they are small. He said he would like to see bold collaboration among agencies aimed at meeting the goal needs.

Commissioner Kline stressed the need to making sure the credibility of the document is not lost by agencies looking for but not seeing their numbers. Chair Mercer agreed and said the numbers should be sourced somewhere, either in a footnote or something in the back of the document. Information should not be included without citing it. Ms. Stangland explained her view about not being agency specific. She said there are two main food banks operating in Bellevue, Renewal and Hopelink. The document should include the total pounds of food given out during the year by the two food banks but without specifying how much came from each. There will be quotes from agencies but without specifically linking them to the agency. The hard data would still be linked to the agencies providing the services, but the specific quotes would not be.

Commissioner Piper said he recalled discussing at the first feedback session the ability to focus on specific populations within group areas. It is a helpful approach to being able to do a deep dive on specific target populations in isolation, and for being able to compare populations. Having a way to filter the data would be helpful. Ms. O'Reilly said she and Ms. Stangland were slated to meet with the IT department on January 17. There is a process in the city in which departments can propose different IT projects and a proposal has been put in for how to incorporate data visualization, primarily with the electronic version of the Needs Update. The filter component will be discussed with the IT staff.

Commissioner Kline asked why the goal areas could not be changed in the update to the Needs Update given that the document will be released well in advance of the next funding cycle. Ms. Stangland explained that any changes to the funding application would require buy-in from all 17 of the partner cities. Grant Coordinator Dee Dee Catalano added that the goal areas are shared by many of the cities, even though they are not part of the application. Technically, the change could be made, but that would make Bellevue's approach different from the other funding Eastside cities. Ms. O'Reilly said it would be a big effort, but it is something that could be considered for the future.

Commissioner Kline asked if the five-year and ten-year data cutoff will be highlighted in the commentary. Commissioner Kline stressed that at some point an explanation may be needed relative to the general view of data, what is current and what is not. Ms. Stangland said she had not considered that but agreed it would be a good idea. With regard to data duplication, Commissioner Kline asked how data pertinent to more than one area would be handled. Ms. Stangland said she envisioned references and hyperlinks used but allowed that the exact approach to be taken has not yet been worked out.

Commissioner Oxrieder asked if the older data was more likely to be from federal sources. Ms. Stangland said the older data could be both federal and local. For instance, there is not a lot of current up-to-date affordable housing data that is not focused on Seattle. Ms. O'Reilly added that sometimes even the state will stop doing a particular survey because of funding issues. Federal data gives the big picture but does not necessarily help drill down on what is happening specifically in Bellevue. Additionally, new surveys, including locally, are constantly popping up, yielding new data.

Commissioner McEachran pointed out that with regard to affordable housing there is some very specific local data that was created for the Wilburton CAC. The data which projected such things as economic vitality and aging in place was a game changer for the group.

Commissioner Oxrieder suggested that the data that is old may still be considered important and as such should be included in an appendix. Ms. O'Reilly agreed.

Ms. Stangland noted that she had sent out a timeline in the packet regarding the data collection summary. She said staff are currently working to get the survey set up. The survey company indicated that where a survey is sent out through an email from the entity behind the survey, and where there is a webpage the URL comes through, people are more likely to complete it because they do not see it as spam trying to steal their information. She said IT has assisted in setting up an email account and the survey company will send out the survey using that email address. Those clicking on the link will be directed to a Bellevue webpage. After entering the code given to them, they will be directed to the survey company. The approach was recently piloted with the University of Washington and the survey completion results were incredibly higher.

Ms. Stangland said the Finance department will send out its survey first, and it will be followed in late February by the human services survey. The survey should be completed by mid March. The hope is that some questions regarding human services will be added to the business survey. Ms. O'Reilly said it has over the years become clear how important human services are to businesses in terms of locating in Bellevue and supporting their employees. They run the gamut from daycare to elder care to mental health services.

Commissioner McEachran stressed the need for the Commission to receive a presentation regarding what is going on in the city in terms of economic development. Ms. O'Reilly said a discussion with the acting manager of the economic development department has been scheduled for a Commission meeting in the spring.

Ms. Stangland said Ms. Minas will be working on updating the providers survey. Feedback will be sought from the Council in April.

With regard to the community conversations, Ms. Stangland sought direction from the Commissioners.

Commissioner McEachran said the community conversations held at Bellevue College have been very fruitful. The staff there are very good at pulling together diverse groups.

Commissioner Oxrieder suggested tapping into any school district parent groups that are meeting.

Commissioner Piper stressed the need to hear from refugee and immigrant groups. He also highlighted the need to hear from the LGBTQ community.

Ms. O'Reilly said the best approach is to tap into groups that are already meeting.

Commissioner McEachran said community centers are great places to tap into various populations. He said it would also be interesting to have a park and ride community conversation as a way of tapping into those who do not necessarily live in

Bellevue but who work in the city or otherwise come to the city for one reason or another.

Commissioner Oxrieder said before she retired she was invited to participate with an police community advisory group. She said if that group is still meeting it would be a good place to gather information. Ms. O'Reilly said there are three or four such groups that are meeting regularly.

Ms. O'Reilly said Yuriana Garcia Tellez, the person hired to take the place of Mark Manuel, the former Diversity Outreach and Engagement Administrator, has been asked to attend an upcoming Commission meeting. She is excited to be involved in the outreach done for the Needs Update.

Ms. O'Reilly noted that efforts relative to a faith community survey have not been overly successful in the past. Commissioner McEachran offered to talk offline with staff about how to make it successful.

Ms. O'Reilly said staff have been talking with the Youth Link staff about conducting a youth survey. The details are still being explored and the Commission will be kept updated. Staff and some Youth Link board members are slated to attend the Commission meeting on March 5 at which they will share details about what they are doing and to talk about ways they can be more involved in the work of the Commission.

B. Emergency Financial Assistance Planning Presentation

Ms. Stangland said she compiled the questions previously raised by the Commissioners, and she said she reached out to 11 non-profit agencies with an invitation to attend a Commission meeting. Only one of the agencies did not reply, and all those that did reply indicated they would attend the meeting. Each representative will be asked to give a brief summary of their financial assistance programs prior to the meeting. The Commission's questions will be sent out to each agency ahead of the meeting as well.

Ms. Stangland asked the Commissioners to identify the two most important questions for the agencies to answer.

Commissioner Oxrieder said she would like to know who the agencies partner with other agencies offering financial assistance.

Chair Mercer said she was interested in zeroing in on why it is necessary to have multiple organizations offering financial assistance. The why question is perhaps more important than how the agencies cooperate with other agencies.

Commissioner Oxrieder suggested the question should be more specific than just "why" to avoid a variety of vague answers.

Commissioner Kline said time could be saved by having the general questions, such as those regarding the maximum amount of financial assistance provided. That information could simply be entered into a table. Each agency should also be asked to supply a paragraph addressing the populations they serve.

Chair Mercer said her basic question in need of an answer is are people able to see their crises alleviated by obtaining assistance from an agency, or if they must visit several agencies in order to get what they need. To that question should be added the simple question “why” along with a request for a few examples.

Commissioner Kline suggested it would be helpful to ask the agencies to identify the shortcomings of their programs and any gaps in the financial assistance services they provide. Chair Mercer agreed and proposed including a question about how the agencies alleviate those gaps.

Commissioner Oxrieder said she would like to see the agencies asked their views about the advantages of having a single consolidated system. She agreed the question could simply be asked during the discussion with the Commission instead of including it in the questions mailed out ahead of time.

There was agreement that the two questions to be sent to the agencies in advance of the meeting would be about the gaps in the financial services they provide, and how they alleviate those gaps. At the Commission meeting, the agencies will be given three minutes to answer those two questions. There was also agreement that the questions for which there will be one-word answers for inclusion in a table would be the average grant amount given out, the maximum grant amount, the populations they serve, how often clients can obtain financial services from each agency, the percentage that come back more than once, how many times during a year they can come in for financial assistance, and the total amount of financial assistance given out during 2018.

With regard to the structure of the meeting, there was agreement to have the Commissioners in turn ask questions of the agency representatives, allowing the opportunity for another Commissioner to ask a limited number of follow-up questions, all facilitated by the Chair. It was also agreed that questions from the Commissioners would follow the various agency representatives introducing themselves and giving their answers to the two questions, and that the time allotted to each agency should be increased from three minutes to four minutes.

7. OLD BUSINESS

Ms. O'Reilly reported that the Eastside funders have formed a subcommittee to look at the grassroots funding process. The review will include giving consideration to how additional community outreach might be done and a review of current policies to determine if any of them are barriers to application funding.

Chair Mercer suggested adding to the list the possibility of setting aside some money earmarked for grassroots organizations.

Grant Coordinator Dee Dee Catalano commented that even during the government shutdown staff were working on the 2018 housing repair contracts, loan paybacks and drawing down prior year funds. The contingency plan put in place by HUD for the shutdown allows for the drawing down of funds.

8. NEW BUSINESS

Ms. O'Reilly informed the Commissioners that Department of Parks and Community Services Director Patrick Foran would be retiring in April.

It was agreed Mr. Foran should be asked to attend a Commission meeting to recognize his retirement.

Commissioner Piper said he would like to have someone address the Commission on the topic of child welfare, dependency and foster care. There was agreement to work toward that end.

Ms. Stangland asked the Commissioners to email her a list of the three agencies they would like to see visited.

Commissioner Kline noted that ARCH has been in the news lately. Ms. O'Reilly said staff have been talking with the new director Lindsay Masters, hired to take Arthur Sullivan's place after his retirement. She said she would ask Ms. Masters to come to a Commission meeting to introduce herself and talk about the organization, including the things that have lately been in the press.

9. CONTINUED ORAL COMMUNICATIONS – None

10. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Oxrieder. The motion was seconded by Commissioner McEachran and the motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Kline adjourned the meeting at 7:47 p.m.

Secretary to the Human Services Commission

Date

Chairperson of the Human Services Commission

Date