

CITY OF BELLEVUE  
HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION  
MINUTES

November 1, 2016  
6:00 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall  
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chairperson McEachran, Commissioners Bruels, Kline, Mercer, Oxrieder, Perelman, Villar

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Emily Leslie, Alex O'Reilly, Dee Dee Catalano, Kayla Valy, Department of Parks and Community Services

GUEST SPEAKERS: Priti Mody-Pan, Deeann Puffert, Paula Steinke

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

2. ROLL CALL

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioner Perelman, who arrived at 6:24 p.m.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. September 20, 2016

A motion to approve the minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Mercer. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Villar and the motion carried unanimously.

B. October 4, 2016

A motion to approve the minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Mercer. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mercer. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bruels and the motion carried unanimously.

#### 4. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. James Kelly, Fund Development Director for the Emergency Feeding Program, extended a thank-you to the Commission for the investments made over the years in feeding hungry people in Bellevue. He asked the Commission to reconsider the decision to discontinue funding the program, and asked them to consider funding the program at a slightly higher level. Requests for food packages are continuing to be received from long-standing partners in Bellevue, including St. Andrew's Lutheran Church, Salvation Army, LifeWire, Newport Covenant Church, SeaMar Behavioral Health, Sherwood Forest Elementary School, Family Connection Center, St. Margaret's Episcopal Church, the Juvenile Probations and many others. When the program was funded, chronic homelessness and hunger was less prevalent than it is currently. As the challenges have increased, so has the complexity of the work. More than 15 different types of variety bags are now distributed through 240 partners. The slight increase requested will make it easier to meet the challenges. For far too many Bellevue kids, the only meals they get are at school. On the weekends, they do not have enough to eat. When children are hungry, everything is harder, including learning. One out of five children in King County go to bed hungry. Many families must rely on local food banks for food. The Emergency Feeding Program makes a difference and reaches families even during the hours when the food banks and the soup kitchens are closed.

Ms. Kara Richards, President of the Board for Athletes for Kids, noted that the Commission chose not to fund the program because it chose to fund other mentoring programs, and because the number of people served in Bellevue is not as high as for other programs. She said her work as a pro-tem judge puts her in contact with people who have fallen through the cracks, those who have not had access to resources and as a result have become high-risk. They are all in desperate need of services. She said for many years in association with Youth Eastside Services she worked with high school students about healthy dating relationships, but because high school students already know everything, the program was backed up to the middle school level, but because they also know everything, the program was offered to second graders, who are still open to information. Athletes for Kids pares high school athletes with children who have special needs. They are not necessarily high risk children, nor are they necessarily children who do not have financial access to resources. The mentorships say to the children that somebody cares about them. The positive impact has been amazing. It is a different kind of mentoring program. The only chapter of the program operating in Bellevue is at Newport High School where there are 15 mentors and 15 matched buddies, but some 600 children have now been supplied with information about the program and there is a growing list of children with special needs whose families are desperately seeking mentors. Chapters cannot be opened at other schools unless there is funding to do so. It costs \$7500 to open a new chapter. She asked the Commissioners to consider giving a small portion of any new funds to the program, and to strongly consider the program during the next funding cycle.

## 5. STAFF AND COMMISSION REPORTS

Commissioner Mercer reported that she recently attended the Evans School Foundation dinner where the keynote speaker was former Seattle Mayor Norm Rice.

Commissioner Bruels said he attended the Society for Social Work leadership and healthcare legislative forum earlier in the day. He said it was reported that things are not looking good with regard to the budget. The Washington State Hospital Association addressed the attendees relative to healthcare, mental health and human services, and it appears they have a strong focus on addressing the opioid crisis and long-term care. It was also noted that there will be a push to get the tobacco age up to 21 in the state. With regard to the state budget, mandatory spending appears to be a significant issue, with the vast majority of the budget going to address those categories, leaving DSHS and mental health services on the chopping block. The Association is looking at addressing falling reimbursements and the psychiatrist crunch that is going on across the state given that so few are choosing to go into the field. They are seeking from the legislature more support for advanced nurse practitioner training programs and getting people interested in going into psychiatric practice; and they are seeking loan forgiveness for clinicians who get advanced degrees and want to go into mental health and social work.

Chair McEachran said he attended the second community meeting for the year-round men's shelter on October 27. He said it was an interesting two hours. Hopefully the stage has been set for additional community meetings and the sharing of information.

Human Services Manager Emily Leslie said the shelter meeting was videotaped and will be posted to the city's website. She encouraged the Commissioners to view it. She said she also made a presentation to the Bellevue Essentials class special session on affordable housing.

Grant Coordinator Dee Dee Catalano reported that she recently attended three days of training for CDBG where the focus was primarily on Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing. The issue of fair housing has for some time been important to the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the department will now be requiring cities to produce a new report along with their consolidated plans.

Ms. Catalano informed the Commissioners that the City met the CDBG timeliness requirements ahead of the November 1 deadline.

Human Services Planner Alex O'Reilly reported that she and intern Kayla Vally attended a forum on October 18 that was hosted by the Interfaith Task Force on Homelessness. The topic was vehicle residency and safe parking lots. It was noted that there are several models being used, some supported by social service agencies and some not. There are three safe parking lots on the Eastside, one of which is in Bellevue at Newport Presbyterian Church; there is one lot in Kirkland and another in Issaquah. The one in Kirkland has about 25 slots, while the Issaquah lot has four.

## 6. DISCUSSION

### A. Overview of Early Learning in Washington State and King County

Priti Mody-Pan, Director of Quality and Learning for Thrive Washington, explained that the organization partners with the Department of Early Learning to focus on early learning system building as well as on home visits and regional coalitions.

Deanna Puffert, Executive Director of Child Care Resources, said the organization also partners with the Department of Early Learning around the delivery of early achievers services, works with families statewide relative to childcare choices, and works to develop a network of support for the family, friend and neighbor caregivers who constitute between half and three-quarters of all childcare services in the various communities. Homeless families are also served.

Paula Steinke, Director of SOAR, a non-profit organization whose mission is to promote the healthy development of children, youth and families. The work is done through the convening of coalitions and amplifying community voices in order to influence programs, policies and practices.

Ms. O'Reilly commented that there is a great deal of collaboration carried out among the three organizations.

Ms. Mody-Pan explained that there are about 80,000 babies born annually in Washington state. There are currently some 500,000 children under the age of five in the state, up to 75 percent of which are not in a formal child care setting. About 21 percent of them live in poverty, and less than half of kindergarteners begin school with the skills they need to be successful. The philosophy of Thrive Washington is that learning begins at birth. The first year of life is very important as their bodies and brains grow at an astonishing rate. Eighty-five percent of the human brains develops in the first three years of life, and during that time the wiring needed to think, communicate, move and form attachments with those around them is formed. Kids with nurturing, healthy and supportive experiences in their early years are much more prepared to be successful in school and life. From the day they are born to when they start kindergarten, there are about 2000 days, and those are days that need to be filled with being read to, talked to, cuddled and hugged. It is important that the kids be healthy and that goes to quality medical care and healthy food to eat. Kids also need safe places to run and jump and play in creative ways. It is known that investments in early learning pay off in the long run.

Studies show that for every dollar invested in high-quality preschool programs saves about seven dollars in future costs relative to social services, remedial education, public safety and juvenile justice. Many states focus their early learning dollars are preschool and pre-kindergarten programs, but there is a clear need to invest in the birth to three years. Washington state is focused on coordinated efforts across

agencies to address those development years. There is an opportunity gap that shows up across all race and ethnicity lines and income status that shows up as early as nine months old. Most cases of child abuse or neglect appear before the child is one year old. The birth to three range is the best time to identify and address developmental delays and disabilities.

In Washington state, early learning is focused on birth to third grade. Thrive Washington believes in a comprehensive approach that addresses the whole child. Parents are the first and most important teachers of children and have the kids' best interest at heart. Thrive works with many community partners to assist them in developing a racial equity theory of change to drive how organizations consider the implications of their activities, funding and policies across all communities.

Ms. Mody-Pan said one of the key parts of the state system is the Early Learning Partnership, which involves Thrive Washington and four state agencies, the Department of Early Learning, the Department of Health, the Department of Social and Human Services, and the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. The Partnership members, which are the top executives from each agency, meet monthly to coordinate activities aimed at moving the needle on various priorities that are determined by the Washington State Early Learning Plan. The plan sets up a series of objectives, including home visiting, the child care quality rating and improvement system, state-funded preschool, kindergarten readiness, full-day kindergarten, and partnerships and mobilization. About a year ago, the director of the Department of Early Learning created a bold goal of by 2020 having at least 90 percent of children kindergarten ready, and eliminating race as a predictor of success. That goal is creating a sense of urgency in the early learning system.

Ms. Mody-Pan said the formal early learning system touches about 30 percent of the kids aged zero to five in the state. State agencies generally provide direct support to kids based on financial need, developmental need or risk. Examples of the programs are early support for infants and toddlers, home visiting, and preschool and prekindergarten programs. There is also the Early Achievers program, which is the licensing system for formal child care programs. The informal system involves the other 70 percent of kids in the state who have family, friend and neighbor care through programs such library story times and activities at community centers that get funded by various organizations and foundations. As kids enter the formal system, there is a shift to all-day kindergarten which all entering kindergarteners will have access to. The state has focused most of his energy on the formal system, but clearly most of the kids are in the informal system. There is a clear need to think about things in different ways.

Commissioner Mercer asked where programs like the Bellevue College model that involves parent participation are ranked. Ms. Mody-Pan said the fee-for-service programs where parents pay for their kids to participate. Ms. Puffert added that such programs are not licensed and have no monitoring oversight by the state and as such should be ranked in the informal system. Ms. Steinke added that community run

preschools fall under the same category; preschools that operate for less than four hours per day do not need to be licensed.

With regard to Thrive Washington, Ms. Mody-Pan explained that the vision is to have every child ready to succeed in school and in life. The organization focuses on advancing early learning with a commitment to quality and equity in the state. The vision is carried out by being an indispensable partner, unwavering advocate and a breakthrough investor. The efforts appears in community capacity building, policy and advocacy work and grant making. One example of capacity building can be seen in the way the organization brings together parents, community members, stakeholders and state-level decision makes to create shared, equitable and effective ways of supporting young kids and families. Innovative ideas are encouraged, key partnerships are built, and technical assistance is provided by the organization. Policies that are vital to a strong and equitable state early learning system are championed, and the voices of families in the community are amplified through advocacy in support of a cradle to career educational continuum. As an intermediary, Thrive Washington seeks funds from the state and private foundations and distribute them as grants to help communities developing in the early learning space.

Commissioner Perelman asked what grants have been made. Ms. Mody-Pan said the largest grant-making portfolio is for home visiting. It is currently in the process of being transitioned to the Department of Early Learning. Contracts totaling \$11.5 million have been issued to organizations across the state to operate home visiting programs. There is also a small portfolio for early science, technology, engineering and math development. The Early Learning Regional Coalition is also supported. The home visits funding primarily comes from the Department of Early Learning, which in turn comes primarily from the federal government. Policy and advocacy efforts are funded to some degree by individual donors and foundations.

Asked by Commissioner Oxrieder when Thrive Washington came into existence, Ms. Mody-Pan said the organization was formed at the same time as the Department of Early Learning. By statute, the organization serves as a private partner to the Department of Early Learning in doing system building work. Ms. Puffer noted that Thrive Washington as a 501(c)(3) has access to relationships the state cannot get. Ms. Mody-Pan added that Thrive Washington has some 35 staff and an operating budget of \$16 million.

Ms. Mody-Pan explained that there are ten Early Learning Regional Coalitions in the state and they represent roughly the educational service districts. Pierce and King counties are separated out because of their populations. The purpose of the Coalition is to represent the early learning community needs across the state. It serves to bring diverse community voices up to the state level, and to communicate state-level considerations to the local communities. Both the early learning plan and the Coalition's grant-making strategy are six years old. The focus is on building the capacity of the various coalitions and on improving state-to-local coordination efforts.

The Coalition convenes three times per year at different locations across the state, and there are monthly coordination calls.

With regard to home visiting, Ms. Mody-Pan said the service is made available to at-risk families. The state legislature created the Home Visiting Services Account in 2010, allowing public funds to be matched with private funds. The funds go to support service delivery as well as innovative approaches to home visiting. The home visiting system is focused on planning and governance, considerations around finance and sustainability, service delivery and access, quality and accountability and public engagement to keep building support for home visiting in the state.

Commissioner Kline asked how it works at the state level to mix public and private dollars. Ms. Mody-Pan explained that all private investments stay with Thrive Washington, and as a contract administrator, the public funds flow into the organization and get combined there with private funds. To date, the service delivery element has been funded through a private investment. Those funds, however, are coming to an end. Part of what is going into the state's decision package is picking up support for those programs.

Ms. Mody-Pan said Thrive Washington has been running the contract administration portion of the home visiting program. The organization partners with the Department of Early Learning on the systems building piece and the systems development work around home visiting, and is also responsible for the quality element in terms of providing, coaching and supporting the home visiting programs throughout the state. The types of outcomes the home visiting programs help to effect are around health, child abuse and neglect, school readiness and reductions in crime.

Commissioner Bruels asked if the organization addresses homelessness. Ms. Mody-Pan allowed that it does not. She said the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families program supports about ten different programs and has a heavy emphasis on homeless families and housing instability.

The home visiting service account serves programs in counties across the state. The program is still in expansion mode and the long-term vision is to have a continuum of home visiting programs in each community statewide. By statute, the state funds have to be contracted out through a competitive bidding process. A portfolio approach is used to fund a range of capacities of programs with an eye on achieving regional diversity.

Commissioner Kline asked if the competitive process is implemented through an RFP and if the competition is by region or across the board for program quality. Ms. Mody-Pan said RFPs are issued, some of them specific to the particular funding stream supporting given contracts. Community need and organizational capacity to implement are determining factors.

Ms. Puffert said she has been actively involved in the development of the Early Achievers program over the last six years. She said she has been working in the early learning landscape for over 30 years, 26 of those years with Child Care Resources. Until the Early Achievers program began, child care was a very undifferentiated system, meaning that every licensed child care provider had to meet minimum licensing standards, even the very best operations. Early Achievers is an effort on the part of the state to create a differentiated system that allows families to choose care they feel comfortable given how they measure against a set of best practices. It is also an opportunity to acknowledge the studies that prove the brain is built substantively prior to age five, making it necessary to provide the highest possible quality settings for children. Early Achievers is a system that is not predicated solely on an educational background, rather it is about being able to prove the practice of teaching children. The rating system is not weighted on paperwork, rather it is about showing in practice that good child care is being provided.

Ms. Puffert said Child Care Resources has been involved from the start. The Gates Foundation funded Thrive Washington, which in turn funded Child Care Resources to run a pilot project out of White Center aimed at developing a quality rating and improvement system that would inform the ability to apply for a Race to the Top grant through the Department of Education. A number of years were spent in trying various approaches and evaluating the outcomes as part of determining the best practices that go into the quality rating and improvement system.

Early Achievers provides ratings in four main areas: 1) child outcomes, which gets to the point of kindergarten readiness; 2) curriculum that develops a great learning environment and facilitates good attachments between the children and the teacher, and between the children; 3) professional development and training; and 4) family engagement and partnerships. Two major tools that are nationally studied are used. The environmental rating scale looks at the classroom tools that meet the needs of the age of children in the setting. The class rating scale looks at the ability of the teachers to develop an appropriate attached relationship with the children in their classroom, and the ability of the teacher to facilitate relationships among the children. The measurements are made by the University of Washington using a scientific approach. Level 1 is a licensed facility that is not participating in the Early Learning program. Levels 2-5 involve increasing levels of quality. Most of the programs in the program land in the Level 3 category; a few are in Level 4, and only two statewide are in Level 5.

Through the coaching efforts of Child Care Resources, facilities are rising up and developing the quality of their care to a higher level. Early Achievers provides training, technical assistance through an onsite coach, and professional development scholarships that pay for higher education. The providers that enroll are all starting at very different levels. They include those who are highly motivated to make changes but who do not have much in the way of materials or the tools they need to develop their practice. Once provided with assistance, they find a new love for their work, better relationships with the children, and fewer discipline issues. There are also



those who operate fairly high-level practices, and they view the program as an opportunity to push even higher.

Ms. Puffert said in Bellevue there are 149 licensed child care providers, including 72 centers and 77 family child care homes. Seventy-seven of the providers are enrolled in Early Achievers, and of those 28 have rated. Of the 28 rated programs, two are Level 4; 23 are Level 3; and two are Level 2. Level 3 and above is considered to be quality child care, and 86 percent of Bellevue's providers are in that category. Since August 1, all providers who receive subsidies from the state have been required to enroll. Prior to that date, enrollment was completely voluntary.

Commissioner Mercer pointed out that the Bellevue College system involves parent education and other things, including a play-based focus. She said it does not feel like there is room for innovative programs of that sort in the Early Learning program. Ms. Puffert said programs of that sort play a very specific role that is very different from what most full-day child care programs offer. Commissioner Mercer suggested that to some degree the programs are labeled as being only for the rich. Ms. Steinke said the program and those like it do not fit in the Early Achievers program but they do fit within the early learning system and the early learning coalition.

Ms. Puffert said a part of the effort is to professionalize the child care workforce to where child care is preschool and not just babysitting. There is, however, community based preschool that preexisted the Early Learning program that is not being touched by the quality rating and improvement system. Many programs that are child care are play based as well. It is not likely that the part-time preschools will want to get licensed because it would put them under the purview of the state.

Commissioner Bruels asked if in the three years the program has been in place there have been complaints or license revocations for programs. Ms. Puffert said she was not aware of any. She said her staff spend more time in child care settings than they ever have. As a required reporter, there has been an uptick in the number of reports Child Care Resources has had to make. The role of Child Care Resources, however, is far different from that of a state regulator and is in fact far more proactive. In that light, a report is not necessarily a negative, rather it is an opportunity to create sustainability.

Commissioner Kline asked about the world of full-time child care going forward, and what the program has done to child care cost. Ms. Puffert said the reimbursement rate from the state, even before all the quality improvement work for King County, has been at about the 50th percentile, which means low-income families are only able to access about half of the providers, those willing to take the state rate. Of course, it costs more to run a quality program. There is a huge conversation currently under way about how the subsidy rates can be raised so that low-income families can have access to the programs. Having the standards in place has not yet caused any shrinking of the capacity. It is known what child care programs in King County get the most in subsidy dollars. All of the programs have been required to enter Early

Achievers. A year out, much more will be known about how long it will take a particular provider to get to a rated Level 3, which is required within 30 months in order to retain their eligibility to take state-funded children. The concern is that child care deserts for low-income children will be created because the 30-month window for the program will not be sufficient.

Commissioner Perelman suggested the need to tie the Early Learning program to licensing rather than the receipt of state funding. She noted that child care providers can be licensed but accept no subsidies, in which case they are not required to participate in the program and will never get rated. Ms. Puffert said that could be the case in the future. There are providers that choose not to get involved in the quality rating and improvement system. Some of them offer low-quality care, but others actually serve high-end families and are offering excellent programs. What the state was unhappy with was the number of providers that were serving large numbers of state-subsidized children and that were not coming into the system voluntarily. The fact is that moving providers along to higher level quality takes an amazing amount of effort. Ms. Steinke pointed out that it would take legislative action to make participation in the program mandatory.

Commissioner Villar asked how often child care service providers are re-rated. Ms. Puffert said providers can either pay for a re-rate or can wait for the re-rate that occurs two years after the initial rating. Commissioner Villar asked how the rating actions are prioritized when there are providers waiting to be rated for the first time and providers who have a Level 3 rating but want to move to a Level 4. Ms. Puffert said that is why providers are given the opportunity to pay to be re-rated. Many who have been re-rated have moved up to the next rung as a result of the coaching provided. Because of the 30-month requirement, however, rating is prioritized in favor of providers that have not yet been rated.

Ms. Puffert said Early Achievers is a flexible tool that serves all manner of programs, including Montessori and religious-based programs. ECAP providers are now required to be part of Early Achievers. The great hope is that parent consumers will be able to make child care decisions based on program ratings instead of just relying on recommendations from others.

Commissioner Mercer asked if the Bellevue School District preschool programs are part of Early Achievers. Ms. Puffert said they have to date resisted being part of the system, but because they take state dollars, they are now enrolled.

Ms. Steinke addressed the issue of school readiness by referring to the Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (WAKIDS), a program that will be universally applied next year. The program contains an observational assessment performed by kindergarten teachers in October. The assessment determines skill levels across six learning domains, and informs the teacher's practice. In addition to the assessment, the program is based on having families actively involved in and

supporting their children's education. The other WAKIDS component is early childhood education partnerships.

Ms. Puffert said currently 45 percent of entering kindergarten schoolchildren are ready by the WAKIDS measure. The goal is to move the needle to 90 percent, which will require a heavy lift across the state.

Ms. Steinke said SOAR is the host of the King County Early Learning Coalition. The organization receives funding from the Department of Early Learning through Thrive Washington and additional funding from United Way. The goal is to convene stakeholders ranging from health to mental health and housing providers who are interested in supporting early learning. Early learning touches everything and as such is a sweet spot for collective impact. SOAR weighs in on standards, policies, practices and funding, and is very involved in family engagement and in reaching those 75 percent of kids in their formative years who are not in any kind of a formal system. A community based action research project is under way with the US-born African American community. The data shows that the most persistent and profound achievement gaps are in that community, which has largely been left out given the focus on ELL students and the immigrant communities.

Commissioner Mercer asked how the regional coalition works with the Best Start for Kids program coming out of King County. Ms. Steinke said SOARS supported the community conversations phase by getting the word out and helping to facilitate them. Some of the coalition members have served on the Best Start community advisory board. SOARS involves a broad group of stakeholders that includes both the formal and the informal system. The organization is committed to racial equity and partners closely with the Roadmap Project and with Eastside Pathways. Working in communities with community liaisons and natural leaders is a highly effective strategy.

Commissioner Bruels agreed that parent involvement is important, but pointed out that it really is not known if it is reading 20 minutes per day to children that will increase their chances of graduating from college, or if it is the type of parent who wants to read to kids 20 minutes per day. The issues are complicated and not everything is known. Ms. Steinke agreed. She said she was home with her children when they were young and she read to them daily. However, for the single mom working two or three jobs with limited amount of time to spend with her children, it may be more important for her to focus on having healthy food on the table. SOAR's approach is to always been strength-based in the questions asked and the messages given.

Ms. Steinke said SOARS has worked with Eastside Pathways under the school readiness collaborative to recruit and train a group of eight Latino promotoras of different ages, genders and countries who are going to be holding community conversations to determine what they are interested in and what their needs are. Under the pilot project, they could end up working on anything from attendance to

kindergarten registration and early intervention. The community café model has been brought into the Eastside Pathways work.

## 7. OLD BUSINESS

Chair McEachran noted that representatives of grant requests 13 and 36 under Goals 1 and 2 had addressed the Commission seeking a revision in their proposed funding.

Ms. Leslie stated that staff along with Chair McEachran were slated to attend the November 7 Council meeting to present the Commission's funding recommendations. She urged the Commissioners to attend. She said the Commission was free to make changes to its proposal prior to making the presentation to the Council. At the Council meeting, the funding recommendations will be presented and any questions asked by Councilmembers will be addressed. Representatives of the two agencies could also attend that evening and address the Council during the public comment period. The Council will not take formal action on the funding recommendations until it adopts the budget early in December.

Commissioner Oxrieder asked if the claim made that the Commission's recommendation will keep people who need food from receiving what they need is true. Commissioner Bruels pointed out that the Commission had had a full discussion about that. Chair McEachran said the Commission did not recommend funding the Emergency Feeding Program because there are programs in Bellevue that fulfill the need. The Commission chose to fund those other programs instead.

Ms. Leslie added that the \$11,000 was divided between the Hopelink Emergency Food and Renewal Food Bank programs.

Ms. Catalano said she spoke to staff from Hopelink who expressed an openness to delivering food bags the way the Emergency Feeding Program does.

Commissioner Mercer suggested there are some systemic issues in regard to the Emergency Feeding Program that the Commission believes other providers could better address. The issue is not that the Emergency Feeding Program does not have the will or the compassion to do the work, rather that other providers could do a better job with the available funds.

There was consensus not to revise the recommended funding level for the Emergency Feeding Program.

With regard to the Athletes for Kids program, Commissioner Mercer said she was happy to receive the additional information, but said it was not enough to change her mind and propose funding the program. Chair McEachran pointed out that the agency had not been robust in seeking funding from other municipalities.

There was consensus not to revise the recommended funding level for Athletes for Kids.

Ms. Leslie reported that efforts are under way to get the interim winter shelter up and running at the Lincoln Center property. Residents of the Wilburton neighborhood are protesting the location and Congregations for the Homeless will be meeting with them on November 3. She suggested it would be helpful to have some positive voices in the room.

Ms. Leslie said the interim shelter is a permitted use and will open. The biggest issue has been in getting the building retrofitted and ready. Some of the work will be phased in over time.

Ms. Leslie also noted that the Eastgate neighborhood is very upset about the proposal to site the permanent shelter there. The city's neighborhood mediators were in attendance at the October 27 community meeting to help guide the discussion toward solutions, but the planned agenda was not followed because of the public's extensive questions and concerns.

8. NEW BUSINESS

Chair McEachran said the affordable housing technical advisory group is slated to meet two more times during the month of November.

9. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS – None

10. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Mercer. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Villar and the motion carried unanimously.

Chair McEachran adjourned the meeting at 8:14 p.m.

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Secretary to the Human Services Commission

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Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson of the Human Services Commission

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

CITY OF BELLEVUE  
HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION  
MINUTES

November 15, 2016  
6:00 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall  
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chairperson McEachran, Commissioners Kline, Mercer, Oxrieder, Perelman, Villar

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioner Bruels

STAFF PRESENT: Emily Leslie, Alex O'Reilly, Dee Dee Catalano, Department of Parks and Community Services

GUEST SPEAKERS: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chair McEachran who presided.

2. ROLL CALL

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioner Perelman, who arrived at 6:10 p.m., and Commissioner Bruels, who was excused.

3. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS – None

4. STAFF AND COMMISSION REPORTS

Commissioner Oxrieder reported that recently a women expressed on NextDoor her concerns regarding the winter shelter in Wilburton, saying she did not feel safe taking her kids to eat at Chick Fil A. She said she along with a number of others chimed in in defense of the shelter and the need for it in the community to serve the homeless.

Human Services Manager Emily Leslie reported that the temporary shelter at Lincoln Center was set to open that evening even though the facility is not fully remodeled yet. She said the meeting with the Wilburton neighborhood went well. They came with a long list of questions that were answered in three languages. Since that meeting, the neighborhood has been very quiet.

Chair McEachran said he has been keeping a watch on the community reaction to the proposed permanent homeless shelter in Eastgate. He said it has been interesting to see how quickly the neighborhoods have been united through NextDoor. There has also been a move to replace the strong city manager form of government with a strong mayor format.

Intern Kayla Valy reported that she has been assisting in the process of finding answers to the long list of questions from the community regarding the permanent shelter.

Human Services Planner Alex O'Reilly said early in 2017 she would provide the Commission with an update regarding the work of the King County Mobility Coalition which she is co-chairing. She provided the Commissioners with an updated version of *Acceptable Travel in Your Community* that included a number of services and websites people can access to get where they need to go.

Ms. O'Reilly also reported she and Ms. Valy attended a training session at Puget Sound Regional Council on how to use the census website. She said the event was very informational.

Chair McEachran said in delivering the Commission's funding recommendations to the City Council, he came away with a heavy degree of pride for the work done, which clearly was appreciated by the Council. Ms. Leslie said it made a big difference to have all the Commissioners in the audience.

Ms. Leslie said the Council will be holding a study session on November 28 about the homeless shelter. The meeting will be helpful in determining where the Council stands with regard to the Eastgate location. She noted that while the Commission has not taken an official position, it has been funding the program since 2008 and will continue to fund it into the future. The Commission is not on the record in support of siting the shelter in any particular place.

Chair McEachran pointed out that the shelter has previously been successfully sited in neighborhoods. Ms. Leslie said it was most successfully sited in Bel-Red. The family winter shelter is located in a neighborhood and there has been no big outcry against it.

Chair McEachran noted that during the Council meeting a Councilmember asked what constitutes a low-barrier shelter. He suggested that at some point the Council may need to be briefed. Ms. Leslie said a winter shelter is by definition a low-barrier facility. Such facilities are specifically intended to get people out of the elements.

Commissioner Villar reported that the Salvation Army building has been completed and is open and operating.

## 5. DISCUSSION

### A. Upcoming Legislative Preview

Ms. O'Reilly commented that while she is not a lobbyist, she does track legislative issues for the Eastside Human Services Forum and participates in the United Way Public Policy Impact Council on behalf of the Early Learning Impact Council.

Ms. O'Reilly said the legislature will be conducting a regular session that should wrap up by the end of April, unless a special session is called. It appears Republicans will hold a majority in the Senate, while the Democrats will have the majority in the House. The Democratic governor Jay Inslee was reelected for another term.

Usually in late November or early December the state budget office will offer a forecast of what to expect in terms of revenues for the coming year. While there is nothing official yet, it does appear revenues will increase in 2017 given the stronger economy. The governor usually releases his budget in mid-December. Most policy analysts believe the top issues for the upcoming session will include homelessness, McCleary funding and mental health.

Ms. O'Reilly provided the Commissioners with copies of the draft Eastside Human Services Forum legislative agenda, which she noted had recently been updated. She noted that for the last four years, the agenda has focused on supporting access to basic needs and health services; making homelessness rare, brief and one-time; supporting older adults and people with disabilities; and strengthening early learning and youth programs. The Forum Board, which is comprised of local and regional elected officials, school board members and non-profit representatives, will meet on November 16 to discuss the issues and discuss what to support. Historically, the Eastside city councils have included the Forum's legislative agenda in their own legislative agendas or policy statements.

Commissioner Perelman asked how the issue of a \$15 minimum wage will play out on the Eastside. Ms. O'Reilly said currently workers in Seattle, Seatac and at the airport are required to be paid that amount. The Eastside Human Services Forum looked at the issue three years ago and made the decision to look at what it is calling access to opportunities, which is a much broader approach. Some who made presentations to the Forum indicated that raising the minimum wage can prohibit some folks from accessing other services because they are no longer eligible. While that is not a reason to sidestep the minimum wage issue, is it something that needs to be viewed more comprehensively. In the recently election, a measure to increase the minimum wage statewide was approved, though it does not rise to the level of \$15 per hour.

Commissioner Mercer said she did not see anything on the draft legislative agenda about diversity. She said she would like to see the agenda include something basic along the lines of supporting diversity. Ms. O'Reilly said the agenda was drafted



following concerted efforts on the part of the subcommittee members to reach out to lobbyists and advocacy groups in an attempt to learn what they will be focusing on in the upcoming session.

Ms. O'Reilly noted that while working to develop the 2016 agenda, the Forum realized it had no objective criteria on which to base decisions. Rather, good information from lobbyists about what was likely to come up during the session was relied on. In focusing on 2017, a rubric was developed for use as an evaluation tool, one element of which increases racial equity.

Commissioner Mercer said her concern was that diversity beyond just racial equity needs to be focused on given the outcome of the recent election. Ms. O'Reilly said the Forum has the latitude to add issues as they come up in the session.

Chair McEachran pointed out that equity and diversity is shown as an area of focus on the rubric and specifically references the Bellevue Diversity Advantage, the Cultural Navigator Program and the Emigrant and Refugee Coalition. He suggested that it should also reference the King County diversity statement.

Ms. O'Reilly said she and Ms. Valy participated in three meetings that focused on a number of legislative items that potentially could end up on the legislative agenda of United Way of King County. She said a racial equity screening tool was applied in coming up with a summary of how certain bills or budget items might fare. Four items made their way onto the United Way of King County legislative agenda as a result. There is no doubt that the upcoming session will have a different context for some things people have thought were going to happen. Between the United Way of King County and the Eastside Human Services Forum, efforts will continue to identify issues to support, many of which will be related to diversity and other topics highlighted by the recent election. Washington state has a history of going over and above what the federal government requires.

Chair McEachran commented that the city's diversity initiative is a model for the country to follow.

Commissioner Mercer said she appreciated that the Eastside Human Services Forum and United Way of King County will be responsive to issues as they arise, but suggested the better approach would be to be up front about the need to address diversity.

Commissioner Perelman pointed out that the concept of supporting access to basic needs incorporates the concept of diversity. She agreed that diversity generally should be given a higher profile. Commissioner Oxrieder suggested that could be accomplished by including a broad opening statement.

Ms. O'Reilly pointed out that areas that will be tracked include funding for affordable housing and homelessness, mental health, and early learning and homeless youth.

Ms. O'Reilly commented that Initiative 1433 sets the new minimum wage levels. More than 730,000 Washingtonians will be seeing raises over the next four years as the initiative gets phased in. Paid sick leave will begin in 2018. Additionally, ST-3, while controversial, includes a construction tax set aside for affordable housing related to transit-oriented development. The funds will also be available to serve vulnerable students.

Commissioner Villar observed that the new minimum wage requirements will need to be taken into account during the next budget cycle. Larger non-profits tend to increase their wages for everyone along the scale. That could trigger a need for them to seek more funding.

Commissioner Oxrieder said she recently read in the paper that Asian Counseling and Referral Service is concerned that it will need to lay off employees in order to manage the higher wage requirement.

## 6. DISCUSSION

### A. Debrief 2017-2018 Funding Process

Grant Coordinator Dee Dee Catalano asked the Commissioners to comment on the application form and related questions, the application materials both printed and electronic, the rating/scoring sheet, the staff review forms, the team application reviews, the meeting schedule, having agencies invited to answer questions, and any other topics relating to the funding process.

Ms. Catalano reminded the Commissioners that Bellevue does not have carte blanche to determine what is contained in the joint application. The city can within reason, however, seek something different and more specific in the supplemental information that is specific to Bellevue.

Commissioner Villar recalled that one area of the application that was unsatisfactory was the percentages relative to outcomes. She said it was unusual for an agency to set a target the Commission was satisfied with. Ms. Catalano allowed that the outcomes were very generic.

Commissioner Mercer said the steps taken to standardize the application has diverted far afield from what the agencies like to use to tell their stories to the point of being completely unusable. She said she would rather return to having the agencies being allowed to use their own metrics to tell their stories, even if that makes it more difficult to compare one program with another.

Commissioner Perelman agreed and said she would prefer to limit the number of characters agencies are allowed to use to describe their programs than to standardize the questions.

Commissioner Oxrieder called attention to the question on the application asking the applicant to list up to five partnerships with other agencies. She noted that some applicants answered the question very well, but others simply provided lists. Commissioner Mercer suggested the question should be expanded to identify exactly how the partnerships provide benefit and are enhancing the services provided.

Chair McEachran said he liked the question because it points out the collaborative impact. Commissioner Mercer agreed and suggested some clarification around what specific information the question is attempting to elicit would be helpful.

Commissioner Mercer said she would also like to see the applicants asked about diversity in their hiring practices. Ms. O'Reilly said there have in the past been questions asked about cultural competence achievements within the organization. Having the question made some agencies stand out among others.

Commissioner Oxrieder observed that the question about hiring was answered by many with something like "we try to hire a diverse workforce." The statement could be interpreted as meaning they were not always able to do so.

Chair McEachran said he utilized the paper copies of the applications and did not use the electronic files at all. Ms. Leslie said some commissions, including Redmond, do not use paper at all, choosing instead to rely fully on electronic copies.

Commissioner Kline asked if there has been any movement in Bellevue toward a fully cloud-based system. Ms. Catalano said the ShareOne app allows for that, but it requires downloading a pdf of each application, which is somewhat cumbersome. All of the files on the thumb drive have already been downloaded for use by the Commissioners.

Commissioner Oxrieder said she also preferred the paper copies over the electronic files.

Commissioner Kline suggested that if there is going to be a move toward having the applications available only in electronic format, it would be good to start the process by having the Commission packets available electronically. Ms. Catalano said the only issue would lie in the fact that the Commissioners would all need to bring their own electronic devices to each meeting. Ms. Leslie noted that the Council does everything electronically, but they are assigned an iPad to use. Ms. Catalano said the Commission's packets could be scanned to pdf files and emailed to the Commissioners.

There was agreement to begin the process of having all electronic packets in 2017.

There was also agreement that the staff reviews were a very helpful tool. Commissioner Mercer pointed out that they were slightly different from the

applications as far as layout. Ms. Leslie explained that the staff reviews are based on certain criteria established by the Council many years ago. The applications are thus assessed according to the criteria, and the result admittedly does not line up perfectly with the questions in the application.

Commissioner Perelman noted that when the staff were asked to go back to some organizations with additional questions, the answers were not always in the same spot. Ms. Leslie said they were all at the end of the staff reviews. Ms. O'Reilly allowed that additional answers supplied after the staff reviews were completed were supplied separate from the staff reviews.

Commissioner Mercer said the scoring tool and the way things were weighted did not feel right. She said she would be willing to revisit it provided the Commissioners were given the opportunity to provide input. Ms. Catalano agreed and said time would be taken in 2017 before the application process begins to review and revise the tool.

Commissioner Mercer suggested the move to electronic materials should include the spreadsheet with the various different ratings in a format that can be manipulated.

Commissioner Villar commented that her scoring of the applications are often subjective as a result of other things going on in her life, even when every attempt is made to be qualitative.

Commissioner Perelman said her concern was with how the ratings are used, particularly whether or not the ratings actually define how funds are awarded to applications. An organization could be given a low rating simply because it did a poor job of filling out the application, but that may not ultimately have anything to do with the level at which the application is funded. Ms. Leslie commented that in the past the rating tool was used to assist the discussion of the initial review. The tool has never been intended to identify which applications should be funded and which should not be funded.

Commissioner Villar said it would be helpful to have a tool to identify what the individual Commissioners liked about each application, what concerns the applications raised, and what questions were generated by each application. She said she currently makes notes on the paper copies, and if the switch is made to electronic copies, there will need to be a way to continue making notes.

Commissioner Kline agreed. She said she has found that using the rating tool has added a lot of time to the process, in part because it caused her to look at applications in ways that she otherwise would not do. She said she did not find the tool necessarily useful based on how she knew the applications would subsequently be evaluated. If the questions were crafted to lead to conclusions and information that would be useful, the tool would be worthwhile. Commissioner Mercer agreed and said careful attention should be paid to the things that will really be looked at in reviewing the applications, how they should be graded, and how they should be weighted.

Chair McEachran recalled that the first funding cycle in which he participated left him glazed over. He said mentoring assisted him in getting through the process. He said it was clear by the time his second funding cycle rolled around that opinions had been formed in regard to certain applicants and the focus turned to the outcomes. He suggested that moving forward it would be helpful to have up front some sense of how the individual Commissioners are initially feeling about certain requests.

With regard to breaking into teams to review the applications, Ms. Leslie explained that there were many years in the past where all Commissioners read all of the applications. Staff would introduce each application, following which there would be discussion. The upshot was that staff was essentially leading the discussions. The move to the team approach turned the process in favor of having team members leading the discussions. From the perspective of staff, the team approach has led to more in-depth reviews by the Commissioners.

Chair McEachran and Commissioner Mercer voiced support for the team review approach. Commissioner Perelman agreed but noted that she personally reads all of the applications. Commissioner Mercer said she did the same but focused primarily on the applications assigned to her.

Ms. Leslie said a point is made to review every application equally, even where early on it is clear an application will likely not survive the review process for various reasons. Chair McEachran said the process builds credibility.

With regard to the meeting schedule, Ms. Catalano said the process is largely driven by the city's budget process. The clock starts ticking as soon as the application period closes, which for the 2017-2018 applications was two weeks earlier than in previous years. The first Commission meeting occurred just ten days after the application period closed, and the rushed process resulted in some mistakes slipping through the cracks. Some agencies were asked to make changes to their applications by staff from other cities, a fact that Bellevue staff did not have in hand by the time of the first meeting. If during the next cycle the first meeting is held a week or so later, sticking in an additional meeting in the schedule may be necessary in order to stay within the overall schedule deadlines.

Commissioner Mercer pointed out that the number of applications in Goal 1 is always large. She asked if the Commission's review could begin with Goal 4 or Goal 5 instead. Ms. Catalano noted that during the recent review process only one additional meeting was added to the schedule, and that meeting ultimately did not occur due to a lack of quorum. In the end, the Commission completed its work on time anyway, which was a testament to how well organized the reviews are and how efficiently the Commission works through and discusses the applications.

Ms. Leslie said the process would benefit from having a few more days between the application period closing and the Commission's first review meeting. Ms. Catalano allowed that the staff are motivated to not have too many additional meetings, and if moving the goals around makes sense, that can be done.

There was consensus that the approach of conducting the preliminary review without talking about money, then assigning dollar amounts during the full review, is tried and true and should be continued.

With regard to agency questions, Ms. Catalano noted that the written staff reviews included responses to Commissioner questions. Additionally, specific agencies were invited to address the Commission and answer questions directly. She said it became clear to staff that the questions to be answered in person by agency representatives needed to be known ahead of time, both so the Commission would be prepared to ask the questions, and so the agency would be prepared to answer them. There was agreement to make it known ahead of the meeting what questions would be asked.

Ms. O'Reilly said the questions asked of agencies by the Commission were not always of such magnitude that it was necessary for an agency representative to appear in person to verbally provide answers. Often when the representatives were asked to appear, they were simply asked questions they had already been asked for the staff review. Their appearance was really not necessary, unless their first answer had not been adequate.

Commissioner Villar agreed but said it was somewhat surprising how many of the respondents answered the questions differently in person. That could have been because different persons were involved.

Commissioner Perelman proposed limiting the requests to speak to a representative in person to those agencies the Commission sees as being on the bubble when it comes to funding them. The Commissioners agreed.

Chair McEachran praised the staff for encouraging agencies to read the Needs Update. He said agencies should also be encouraged to bring to the Commission on occasion some qualitative narrative regarding their work in the community.

Ms. Leslie voiced concern over the poor quality of the applications during the recent cycle, even from agencies that could rightly be expected to do better. She said during the interval before the next funding cycle she would encourage the cities provide some technical assistance to improve the quality of the applications. The approach has utilized periodically over the years.

Commissioner Mercer suggested that along with encouraging applicants to read over the Needs Update, the agencies should be informed that the Commission will be looking at specific areas, including other funding sources, diversity and collaborative impact in the community. Ms. O'Reilly agreed and suggested the technical assistance

could include explanations of what is meant by diversity, collaborative impact and use of data.

Commissioner Kline stressed the need to keep the financial part of the application as much the same as possible. The more consistent the financial information is from year to year, the easier it is for the agency to know exactly what information is important. It would be a mistake to go back to allowing the agencies to determine their own format for supplying financial information.

## 7. OLD BUSINESS

Ms. Leslie said the New Bethlehem Day Center in Kirkland would have its grand opening on November 16. She said the day center serves homeless families and will be a tremendous resource. A number of faith organizations came together to see the day center up and running. The facility is to be operated by Catholic Community Services, which also operates coordinated entry on the Eastside.

Commissioner Kline said she recently learned of a family that had no water in their home because they could not afford it and was too proud to seek assistance. She asked if, when a city water customer falls behind, the city could send out a notice listing available help resources. Ms. O'Reilly said during and after the recession the utility saw an increase in the number of water shutoffs. She said she could check with the utility now to see what if anything they are currently doing.

Chair McEachran mentioned that Hopelink is expanding its drop-off snack bags to include the Velocity housing project in South Kirkland. He said they would love to engage the school district to drop off snack packs for students. Ms. O'Reilly said the Backpack for Kids program sends boxes of food home with kids during school holidays. Breakfast After the Bell is a program that would require school districts with a high percentage of kids on the free or reduced lunch program to provide breakfast all morning.

## 8. NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Leslie reminded the Commissioners about the annual meeting of the Eastside Human Services Forum on December 14 in Kirkland. The speaker for the annual meeting will be conducting a workshop at Bellevue City Hall on December 15.

## 9. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS – None

## 10. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Villar. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mercer and the motion carried unanimously.

Chair McEachran adjourned the meeting at 8:02 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