

CITY OF BELLEVUE  
HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION  
MINUTES

January 2, 2019  
6:00 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall  
City Council Conference Room 1E-120

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

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioner Kline

STAFF PRESENT: Alex O'Reilly, Dee Dee Catalano, Christy Stangland, Kim Indukar, Blayne Amson, 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 Mercer who presided.

2. ROLL CALL

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

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. November 6, 2018

Commissioner Oxrieder noted that she was listed as present for the meeting even though she was absent.

A motion to approve the minutes as amended was made by Commissioner McEachran. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Piper and the motion carried without dissent; Chair Mercer and Commissioner Oxrieder abstained from voting.

B. November 20, 2018

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

4. ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS – None
5. COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITY COUNCIL, COMMUNITY COUNCIL, BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS - None
6. STAFF AND COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Commissioner McEachran reported that after 36 years on the job as pastor he would resign his post on January 7 to become the regional pastor in residence for all East King County Lutheran churches.

Commissioner Piper provided the Commissioners with copies of an article that ran New Year's Eve in the *Seattle Times* about an Australian program designed to combat youth homelessness. He noted that the program has proved to be very successful in reducing the number of youth entering homelessness. A \$160,000 grant has been approved to study the feasibility of launching the program in Seattle.

#### 7. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

A motion to open nominations for Commission chair was made by Commissioner McEachran. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Oxrieder and the motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Piper nominated Chair Mercer to serve as chair. The nomination was seconded by Commissioner Ma.

There were no other nominations made.

A motion to close nominations for Commission chair was made by Commissioner Ma. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Piper and the motion carried unanimously.

The nomination of Chair Mercer to serve as Commission chair carried unanimously.

A motion to open nominations for Commission vice-chair was made by Commissioner Oxrieder. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Piper and the motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner McEachran nominated Commissioner Ma to serve as vice-chair. The nomination was seconded by Commissioner Piper.

There were no other nominations made.

A motion to close nominations for Commission vice-chair was made by Commissioner Piper. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Oxrieder and the motion carried unanimously.

The nomination of Commissioner Ma to serve as Commission vice-chair carried unanimously.

## 7. INFORMATION FOR THE COMMISSION

### A. Programs and Services for People with Disabilities at the City of Bellevue

Ms. Kim Indurkar explained that the Choices Plan was created to ensure access and equity for Bellevue residents with disabilities. The program involves the provision of inclusion support for program access and breaking down physical barriers so parks and facilities can be utilized. The program is used as a tool for training staff as well. Adaptive recreation programs came about in the 70s when parents of children with intellectual disabilities came to the city with a plea for a place for their children to recreate. Space was provided and by the 80s the program was overwhelmingly popular. In the 90s additional adaptive recreation sites were established, and by the 2000s the focus shifted to inclusion services in addition to adaptive programs.

Ms. Indurkar said the first Choices Plan was completed in 2006 and was primarily focused on Highland Center, reaching out to persons with disabilities and offering adaptive recreation programs. The plan was updated in 2008 at which time new goals were added. In 2014 the Diversity Advantage Plan was written to include disabilities in the notion of diversity. The plan was more outreach oriented and included training for all city staff on how to provide services. The plan is clearly for persons with disabilities but it is also for parents and guardians; community recreation providers; recreation professionals; and elected officials and boards and commissions.

Development of the plan involved information gathering that included talking with user groups and service providers; researching best practices of other organizations; and adhering to all legal requirements, particularly those outlined in the Americans With Disabilities Act.

The first plan goal is to ensure that people with disabilities have access to facilities, city parks and programs. Several years ago, the city contracted with an organization that had expertise in access to facilities. The city's community centers and City Hall were all evaluated and from that a task list was created. Several items on the list were ticked off immediately, but the list also included planning for and accommodating annual maintenance closures and larger renovation plans.

Ms. Indurkar noted that currently there are four options being voted on related to the Crossroads playground, which is being partly redone. Staff met with the contractor to discuss equity and access issues, thus the four options on the table all are great and

will provide much better access to the playground. The next park to be addressed will be Ardmore and the same approach will be used there.

Expanding recreation choice opportunities is the second goal in the plan. Ms. Indukar noted that people with disabilities wanting adaptive recreation options should not have to drive to Highland Center, they should be able to have them at their home community center. Accordingly, there is a focus on making sure there are options at all of the community centers and other recreation sites, and on making sure there are inclusion opportunities as well. The creation of skill-based programs is integral to the program and to accommodating all in the community who want to participate.

The third program goal is focused on improving the knowledge and awareness of Parks and Community Services staff toward serving residents with disabilities. Rather than being reactive, the approach is proactive. Training is provided to improve the ability of staff to work with persons that have disabilities and the training ranges from the inclusion of persons with service animals to the role of parks staff working in a park. Every employee has some responsibility in making sure the city is assuring equity and providing access for all.

The development and implementation of strategies that expand awareness and knowledge of program and service opportunities for residents with disabilities is the fourth goal in the plan. Ms. Indurkar said the city has a number of great programs, but people do not necessarily know that. To address that, improvements are being made to the website to make it easier for people to search for programs and services, and to request modifications. All of the written materials have been drafted to be welcoming and clear, though admittedly there is still work to be done in that area.

Ms. Indurkar said the fifth plan goal seeks to expand programming to better serve individuals with a variety of disabilities. She said the city offers many programs for youth and adults with intellectual disabilities as well as programs for those with physical disabilities. Even so, some residents have come forward saying the programs do not work for them for various reasons. To address those concerns, the city is partnering with organizations that serve veterans and with mental health organizations that serve individuals. The hope is that the exercise equipment at Highland Center will be expanded to better accommodate veterans with disabilities.

Chair Mercer asked how the city measures or tracks how well the partner organizations are doing all that the city wants them to do relative to inclusion and the like. Ms. Indurkar said historically the city has worked together on programming with partner organizations. The intent going forward is that that will continue as groups come in to run programs. Additionally, contractors providing services are informed up front what their specific responsibilities are, and indeed they are written into the contracts. They all must follow all applicable state and federal laws, including the ADA.

Ms. Indurkar said the adaptive recreation program continues to be a first choice for persons with disabilities. The programs helps to build the skills needed to transition to an inclusive programs, and it allows individuals to participate in activities with others of similar ability. It also provides an introductory choice for learning new recreation activities. The list of adaptive recreation sites includes Highland Community Center, Northwest Arts Center, the tennis center, the aquatic center, and Bellevue Youth Theatre. The Bellevue Youth Theatre has for many years offered a fully integrated program, and more recently a program focused on theater possibilities was started to include younger kids and those who have never before participated in a theater program.

Inclusion is the ultimate goal in that it provides for the greatest number of choices relative to recreation activities and experiences. Inclusion supports the full and active participation of individuals with disabilities in the same community activities offered to those without disabilities. Most importantly, inclusion develops community support and encourages attitudinal changes to reflect the right of all people to dignity, self respect and community involvement. Inclusion happens in three ways: independent participation; through requesting modification or accommodation; and through program staff requesting support to successfully provide a program to a customer, an approach that involves working with the parents of disabled individuals as part of the information gathering process.

Chair Mercer asked in what ways the Commission could partner with or advocate for the Choices Plan. Ms. Indurkar said the best thing the Commission could do would be to put the word out about what the equity and inclusion standards are, particularly to all organizations seeking funding from the city.

Ms. O'Reilly said several years ago Mark Manuel, former Diversity Outreach and Engagement Administrator for the city, put together an inclusivity training for all providers. The intension all along has been to also provide training to providers on working with people of disabilities, but the diversity staff's workload meant that was put on the back burner for a time. Now with Blayne Amson having come on board, the focus is once again turning in that direction.

Mr. Amson said the federal government requires all cities with populations of greater than 100,000 to designate an ADA coordinator. He explained that he now carries that title along with Title VI administrator.

Mr. Amson said most people are familiar with the ADA in terms of curb cuts, sidewalks, ramps and physical access in general. However, the ADA requirements stretch far behind just those issues and covers the gamut of physical, intellectual, developmental and psychological issues. Even chemical sensitivities can fall under the ADA. The ADA is the broadest civil rights law in the world as it relates to persons with disabilities. It covers employment under Title I; public accommodation under Title II; governmental services under Title III; public transportation under Title IV; and telecommunications under Title V. The city of Bellevue has chosen to go above and

beyond the requirements of the ADA. As it relates to the letter of the law, however, disability and the ADA touches on absolutely every single city department and team.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act addresses race, sex, national origin, language and other protected statuses. It too impacts every service the city provides, but it is less well known. With regard to language, there are specific rules dictating how the city puts out information. Information that is deemed essential must adhere to certain thresholds relative to the languages in which the information must be disseminated. As a minority majority city in which there are close to a hundred languages spoken, Bellevue knows it needs to do a better job when it comes to language access. Additionally, the state of Washington has established requirements, such as protecting gender identity and sexual orientation, something that is not required by the federal government.

Mr. Amson said at the core of what he does is compliance with all applicable regulations. He said he works to ensure that every program, service and facility in the city follows the letter of the law relative to the ADA and Title VI. He said his position is part of and housed within the Diversity Advantage Initiative. The diversity and inclusion administrator position is responsible for ensuring that the 60 recommendations are met as they relate to internal staff, and the ways in which boards and commissions function in terms of access and equity. The outreach and engagement administrator is responsible for doing the work out in the community. He said his position as it relates to people with disabilities and Title VI compliance involves working both internally and with the public through outreach and engagement. He informed the Commissioners that one of the things he recently rolled out is a training program that focuses on changing mindsets and hearts in order to create a world that is inviting and accessible to those with disabilities rather than looking at disability in terms of compliance. The need for reasonable accommodation under the disability justice model should not exist as every space is made inclusive and available to all.

The attention of the Commissioners was called to a pamphlet designed by Mr. Amson called *Universal Design for Accessible Meetings, Trainings and Events*. He explained that the brochure outlines a number of concrete things that can be done to be inclusive and accessible without having to provide a reasonable accommodation. He said the document has taken off and has given the staff an opportunity to engage in supporting people in the way they want to be supported. The training through human services, public safety, education, economic development, civic engagement and cultural competency touches on all aspects of the 60 recommendations. It also touches on aspects of the ADA, thus by being equitable, the city is being compliance, and by being compliance, the city is moving toward equity.

Commissioner McEachran commented that the three legs the city standards on are economic development, infrastructure and human services. He asked how each of those are impacted by ADA and Title VI. Mr. Amson said many of the 60 recommendations touch on things that relate to economic development, such as

people living in poverty. He said his work with the community and city staff is focused on improving the ability of people with disabilities to gain the advantages they need to do things like get a job, thus increasing their economic viability. Persons with disabilities make up roughly 20 percent of the population of the United States, just over 12 percent in the state of Washington, and just above eight percent in the city of Bellevue. That begs the question of why persons with disabilities are not living in Bellevue. The answer in most cases is that they cannot afford to. Whatever can be done to increase the economic ability of persons with disabilities in Bellevue should be done. That can be accomplished through the creation of affordable housing opportunities and job opportunities.

Mr. Amson said the Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan is required by the federal government. Every city must have one. It is largely a dry read and it must be more detailed for cities with more than 100,000 residents. The self-evaluation portion of the plan involves taking a close look at all programs, services and facilities and determining where each lies in terms of compliance with the ADA. The transition portion of the plan outlines what needs to be done to bring into compliance those areas that are not fully compliant. Development of the plan represented a huge undertaking on the part of the entire city and it is due to go before the Council on January 14. It was important to the city that feedback from people with disabilities be sought and incorporated into the document. To that end three different focus groups were held, one at Highland Community Center, one at North Bellevue Community Center and one at City Hall. In all, 29 persons attended and participated. Some unique barriers were encountered in getting folks to participate, but in the end their feedback was substantial and was incorporated into the plan where appropriate. Additionally, a very simple feedback form was made available at all of the community centers and in all places where the public engages with the city, and it was posted online. The number of responses was overwhelming.

Commissioner McEachran wanted to know if Mr. Amson had had any interaction with Bellevue College. Mr. Amson said he had not had any relating to the transition plan. He noted, however, that Bellevue College has a professor who teaches disability studies seated as a member of the Bellevue Diversity Advisory Network. He added that once the self-evaluation and transition plan work is put to bed he will be freer to more fully engage with many entities within the city and strengthening the relationships, including with Bellevue College.

Chair Mercer said the topic should be given attention when discussing the Needs Update, and during the process of formulating the application process for the next allocation cycle. Mr. Amson said he would need to better understand the role and function of the Commission before being able to fully engage. He pointed out that the application process for joining the Bellevue Diversity Advisory Network has involved writing an essay. The approach values intellectual prowess and precludes those with intellectual disabilities from being able to apply. He said he and the Network is committed to changing the way the diversity team recruits for positions.

Ms. O'Reilly said she would make the universal design booklets available to the Commissioners.

Commissioner Oxrieder asked how the different city departments have made adjustments based on what they have learned through the training. Mr. Amson said one example stands out. He said quite a few human resources personnel attended the first training session, one of whom went about the very next day moving things around in her office to make it accessible to someone in a wheelchair. It is those kinds of concrete things that send strong messages to the disabled community.

## 9. OLD BUSINESS

The Commission took a few minutes to thank Commissioner Perelman for her eight years on the Commission and provided her with a document acknowledging the same signed by Councilmembers.

Commissioner McEachran noted that Commissioner Perelman and former Commissioner Jan Stout taught him everything about human services and the funding cycle process. He thanked her for being there for him and for the Commission.

Chair Mercer said she could not believe she would have to go through the next funding cycle without the insights of Commissioner Perelman.

Commissioner Oxrieder commented that Commissioner Perelman served as a strong leader and played a very important role with the Commission.

Commissioner Perelman said she learned a lot about the community during her time on the Commission. She said it had been a fun journey and that she would miss being a part of the Commission. She added that she would be looking to serve on the board of some other organization.

Refreshments were served and a group photo was taken.

Following the break, Ms. O'Reilly said she and Human Services Planner Christy Stangland recently met with Yuriana Garcia Tellez, the city's new Diversity Outreach and Engagement Administrator. She said she would invite Ms. Garcia Tellez to visit with the Commission in the near future. Ms. Garcia Tellez is enthusiastic about offering more training for providers and collaborating in the outreach work behind updating the Needs Update.

Grant Coordinator Dee Dee Catalano commented that the government is shut down, including HUD. Until the agency is reopened and the budget is approved, the amount of the 2019 CDBG allocation will not be known. With the citizen participation for the 2019 annual action plan completed, planning for 2019 can get under way, but it is

anyone's guess when the CDBG allocation will actually be released and how much it will be.

Ms. Stangland informed the Commissioners that the first Commission meeting in February would include a panel discussion around emergency financial assistance. She commented that many agencies offer emergency financial assistance, and suggested inviting only representatives from the agencies funded by the city, which is Solid Ground, Hopelink, Salvation Army, LifeWire and Catholic Community Services.

Commissioner Ma said Solid Ground and Hopelink were his first choices. Chair Mercer agreed.

Commissioner McEachran said he would like to hear from the agencies that have the most effective practices.

Chair Mercer said it would be good to have representatives from each of the funded agencies present, even if only two or three of them make presentations. Ms. Stangland said she could easily invite all to attend.

Commissioner Ma pointed out that Salvation Army does all of its fundraising internally and has a more flexible way of spending the funds. It would be helpful to have someone on the panel that has a different approach to allocating funds.

Chair Mercer said she would lean toward Lifewire given that they focus on a different population.

Commissioner Oxrieder said she would welcome having each of the agencies make presentations, provided they provide specific data ahead of time and focus on answering just a few questions. Ms. Stangland pointed out that including the agencies that are not funded by the city, that could mean a panel with 12 presenters. She said the agencies could all be asked to provide a brief summary of their programs.

Chair Mercer said the better approach might be to ask the agency representatives to come just to answer specific questions from the Commissioners rather than to make presentations about their programs.

Commissioner McEachran said he would prefer to have only three representatives outline their effective practices, and to have all of the other agencies asked to send representatives to be present and hear the common narrative. That would allow them the opportunity to talk with each other after the meeting as well.

Ms. O'Reilly said the panel discussion will be the only agenda item for that meeting. She allowed that each speaker could be limited by using the timer.

Commissioner Ma agreed but suggested that even if only three or four are seated on the panel, all who attend should be given the opportunity to introduce themselves. Ms. Stangland said one option would be to have the organizations offer comments during oral and written communications, which is time limited.

Commissioner Oxrieder said she would like specific data shared with the Commission about how many people seek emergency financial assistance, and how many of them come to the agency having exhausted their options elsewhere. She said she also would like to know how far the funds given to clients go, what the ultimate impact is, and how the agencies coordinate with each other.

Chair Mercer agreed, noting that some programs set limits, including on what the funds can be used for. She said she would like to know how the agencies track the outcomes, including how many clients come with a request multiple times to multiple agencies. It would also be good to hear the agency's perspectives on diversity.

Ms. O'Reilly allowed that if needed, two meetings could be devoted to addressing the issues.

Chair Mercer said what the Commission really needs is a solid understanding of how the system works so it can do the best job possible of funneling funds to where it will do the most good. Ms. O'Reilly suggested one way to do that would be to make that point clear ahead of time to all of the agencies, and then asking them to identify two spokespersons to specifically address the issues. By having all of the agencies represented, they could all add their comments as appropriate.

Commissioner Ma voiced support for taking that approach in light of the fact that the goal of the Commission is to see the agencies collaborating with each other to address the need in the community in the most efficient way possible. Ms. Stangland said one of the challenges could lie in the fact that the agency people who collaborate with other agencies on the front line staff, and those are not necessarily the ones who would come in and present to the Commission.

Commissioner Oxrieder proposed sending to each agency a list of two or three questions for which the Commission wants short answers as a starting point, and then having the representatives meet in small groups to talk about their answers and the issues. Ms. O'Reilly suggested that approach could take quite a lot of time. She agreed that it would be helpful for the agencies to meet together to discuss the issues, but that could be done outside of a Commission meeting.

Commissioner Oxrieder said it would be interesting to tell the agencies that the Commission will have X dollars to spend on emergency financial assistance in 2019 and ask them to indicate how they would allocate it among themselves. Chair Mercer said that approach could yield some very interesting information.

Commissioner Ma stressed the need to move beyond simply asking the agencies how the system works. He said he would like to know how effective the programs are in terms of addressing the need in the community, and whether the best approach will be to continue funding the distinct programs, or consolidating or merging them.

Chair Mercer stressed that those who are invited know up front that the Commission wants to see a collaborative discussion among the funded and not funded program representatives. They should know the discussion is not intended to decide who to fund during the next funding cycle, rather it will serve as an informative session regarding the emergency financial assistance issue.

Ms. O'Reilly agreed that the model will be good for the Commission to try out. She said there are other service areas the Commission may want to focus on using the format in determining how the overall system can be made to work more effectively.

Chair Mercer suggested the discussion might be beneficial for other area human services boards and commissions. Ms. O'Reilly said an effort could be made to invite them to attend.

Chair Mercer said her preference for the meeting format was for the agency representatives to make their presentations first and to follow that up with questions from the Commissioners.

#### 10. NEW BUSINESS

Chair Mercer announced that she would not be able to attend the Commission meeting on January 15, but noted that she would be able to participate electronically.

A motion to allow Chair Mercer to participate in the January 15 electronically was made by Commissioner McEachran. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Piper and the motion carried unanimously.

#### 11. CONTINUED ORAL COMMUNICATIONS – None

#### 12. ADJOURNMENT

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

Chair Mercer adjourned the meeting at 8:07 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

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 refired 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.

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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