

The Human Services Commission approved these minutes on October 3, 2017

CITY OF BELLEVUE
HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION
MINUTES

September 7, 2017
6:00 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
City Council Conference Room 1E-120

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chairperson Villar, Commissioners Kline, Ma, Mercer, Oxrieder

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioners McEachran, Perelman

STAFF PRESENT: Alex O'Reilly, Christy Stangland, 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 6:03 p.m. by Chair Villar who presided.

2. ROLL CALL

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioners McEachran and Perelman, both of whom were excused.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. July 6, 2017

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Commissioner Kline. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mercer.

Commissioner Oxrieder said she had noted several typos but said she was comfortable approving the minutes and having staff review them and make the appropriate corrections.

The motion carried unanimously.

B. July 18, 2017

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Commissioner Kline. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ma and the motion carried without dissent; Commissioner Mercer abstained from voting.

4. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS – None

5. STAFF AND COMMISSION REPORTS

Commissioner Ma said he attended a meeting recently at which Representative Tana Senn spoke regarding the state budget. He said Rep. Senn said the fact that the recently approved budget for education was levied on property taxes, which is significant. The result will be an increase of some \$5000 per year over the next four years for the median household in King County. That increase will impact homeowners and renters alike.

Chair Villar said she was disappointed to see Access for All fail. The levy would have exposed more people to the arts regardless of income level. Hopefully that outcome will not bode ill for future levies.

With regard to parking at and around City Hall, Grant Coordinator Dee Dee Catalano reported that sometime in October access to the parking lot on NE 6th Street will be closed. The access lane on 110th Avenue NE will reopen as a two-way driveway, but just north of the driveway 110th Avenue NE will be closed. At times, NE 6th Street will be reduced to just one lane. For evening meetings, there will continue to be 54 parking slots available in the regular visitors lot.

Chair Villar welcomed Human Services Planner Christy Strangland. She said Ms. Stangland brings a lot to the table and the city and the Commission are fortunate to have her.

Ms. Stangland said she worked at Hopelink for 17 years and has experience with homelessness, case management and addressing basic needs.

6. PUBLIC HEARING

A. 2018 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Funding

A motion to open the public hearing was made by Commissioner Mercer. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Kline and the motion carried unanimously.

There were no persons present to offer testimony, and staff noted that no written testimony had been received.

A motion to close the public hearing was made by Commissioner Oxrieder. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Kline and the motion carried unanimously.

7. DISCUSSION

A. Final 2018 CDBG Funding Recommendations

Human Services Manager Alex O'Reilly invited Debbie Lacy, co-founder and director of the Eastside Refugee and Immigrant Coalition (ERIC), to discuss the welcoming initiatives. She said the work of ERIC has primarily been focused on building the cultural competency of service providers. In 2015 the mission was expanded to include Welcoming America, a non-partisan non-profit effort headquartered in Atlanta. The program was initially started as part of President Obama's New Americans initiative, the intent of which was to create welcoming initiatives in major cities throughout the United States. The program has strong roots in economic development and as a way to revitalize much of the country, especially areas in decline. The premise was that retaining immigrants and refugees is a good way to strengthen local economies, which has proved to be accurate.

Ms. Lacy said another aspect of the welcoming movement has to do with relationships between newcomers and established residents. That is certainly something folks can relate to in Bellevue more than economic decline. The welcoming framework focuses on messaging and communication around facts about refugees and immigrants, notably their contributions, with an eye on making sure the facts are accurate. Combating misinformation is a big part of the movement. Institutionalizing welcoming involves policies, practices, types of services available in a community and access to those services. Bellevue is fortunate in that since 2014 it has had the Diversity Advantage Plan which guides work in different areas across the city. Mark Manuel, Diversity Outreach and Engagement Administrator, is spearheading the move to get the city of Bellevue to join the welcoming movement and become an official welcoming city.

ERIC has 28 different partners, including the cities of Bellevue, Redmond, Kirkland, Issaquah and Sammamish, that are hosting or co-sponsoring welcoming events in 2017. Welcoming Week was first celebrated in East King County in 2016, and ERIC has been at the forefront of getting people involved in creating events. The number of events has increased in part because of the changes since the election.

Ms. Lacy encouraged the Commissioners to attend Welcoming 101 on September 15 from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. in Redmond. She said the event offers a great opportunity to get a sense of what the welcoming framework is and how it is far more than just the right thing to do.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Mercer about the distribution of program information to the Bellevue School District, Ms. Lacy said materials are available in different languages. Coalition members who work directly with immigrants

and refugees are making personal invitations to their program participants. She said she has reached out to the Bellevue School District but has not received a great response. The Lake Washington School District is distributing program flyers in their student packets and is doing a good job in helping to get the word out.

Turning to the CDBG recommendations, Ms. Catalano noted that the Commission had reviewed the applications and made recommendations on July 18. She also called attention to the contingency plan that was included in the packet intended to account for the actual CDBG allocation amount without having to revisit the issue. As drafted, the contingency plan calls for awarding any additional funds to the Major Home Repair Program, and any additional funds to the Minor Home Repair Program. Should there be less money than projected, the contingency plan calls for making reductions by the percentage matching the shortfall, followed if necessary by reductions to the allocations to planning and administration, then a reduction to the Minor Home Repair Program of not less than \$80,000, and then to Major Home Repair Program.

Commissioner Mercer asked if there is a minimum allocation needed by the Major Home Repair Program in order to function. Ms. O'Reilly said the administration costs for the program are in the neighborhood of \$100,000 to cover staff salaries and benefits, unless the number of staff FTEs were to be reduced. She added that the program carries a portfolio of close to \$2 million of loans that have not yet been paid back. As the loans get paid back, the income flows back into the CDBG program line of credit and becomes available for allocation the same as the entitlement monies.

Ms. Catalano explained that the \$80,000 figure for the Minor Home Repair Program is the minimum amount the program needs to function according to the application.

Commissioner Mercer suggested including a minimum for the Major Home Repair Program as well that would kick the issue back to the Commission for additional discussion should the HUD allocation be far lower than anticipated. Commissioner Kline suggested the Commission was not in a position to arbitrarily determine a minimum number.

Ms. O'Reilly said one of the elements in the city's Affordable Housing Strategy includes potentially developing a city of Bellevue Home Repair program. The approach could be a way for the city to continue such a program without federal funding.

Ms. Catalano called attention to the bullet point for Step 2 in the contingency plan and noted that in consultation with the city attorney a revision was made to the language to avoid the need to go to the City Council for every little change made to the allocation. The language clarifies that if a project in the plan that has been funded is canceled for some reason, the funds can be reallocated to another CDBG-funded project capable of absorbing the funds, and indicates that if there is no other funding project that can take the funds, the funds will flow into the reserves to be allocated at

a future time. The prerogative to reallocate funds to a new project would not be lost under the contingency plan as drafted, though funding a new project would require Council approval.

A motion to approve the 2018 CDBG funding recommendations was made by Commissioner Ma. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mercer and the motion carried unanimously.

A motion to approve the 2018 CDBG allocation contingency plan as drafted was made by Commissioner Oxrieder. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mercer and the motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Catalano said the package would be before the Council in study session on Monday, November 6.

8. DISCUSSION

A. Amendment to the 2017 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Annual Action Plan: Recommend Funding Two Additional Projects

Ms. Catalano reported that the Bellevue Boys & Girls Club acquisition of the Teen Center building from the city did not move forward as quickly as anticipated due to staffing issues. Accordingly, the allocation for the project will not occur prior to November 1. That means \$150,000 that will not be drawn down from the CDBG account. Additionally, the Housing Repair program faced some staff changes that resulted in a slowdown of the bidding process. The projects will still go forward, but there is a timing issue that is triggering the provision that the city cannot have more than 1.5 times the entitlement amount in the line of credit with HUD on November 1.

Ms. Catalano proposed two additional projects that can facilitate drawing down the balance before November 1. The Boys & Girls Club kitchen appliance purchase, which originally was recommended for 2018, was problematic because the organization wanted to spend the funds in 2017, and the application was ultimately withdrawn. A budget for the appliances to be purchased, totaling about \$25,000, has been submitted, and the purchase will be made as soon as approval for funding is given.

The second project proposed was a Sophia Way program that purchases bus tickets for their clients. A United Way grant is currently used to purchase some of the tickets, but those funds have been exhausted and the agency is purchasing them currently with its own funds. The purchase of \$20,000 worth of tickets will last almost three months.

Ms. O'Reilly allowed that every agency needs bus tickets, including the rotating men's shelter. She said Sophia Way was chosen because it can turn the tickets

around quickly, and because a great deal of attention and funding is being earmarked for the men's shelter.

Ms. Catalano said CDBG funds can be used to purchase the tickets in that it qualifies as a public service. She noted that allocations for public service applications are normally determined during the general fund discussion, which will happen in 2018.

Chair Villar asked if the agencies that accept CDBG dollars for public services face onerous reporting requirements. Ms. Catalano said there are many reporting requirements. Additionally, the financial systems of the receiving agencies must be sophisticated enough to comply with federal government requirements.

Commissioner Kline said it was her recollection that allocations for public services are limited to a certain percentage of the total CDBG award and that the Jewish Family Services allocation maxed that out. Ms. Catalano allowed that there is a limit but said the Jewish Family Service application did not max it out. The calculation is made based 15 percent of the current year entitlement and the previous year's program income, which exceeds the current Jewish Family Service allocation. HUD does not allow the replacing of general fund dollars with federal dollars, unless a service has not been funded with general fund dollars for at least a year.

Ms. O'Reilly said Sophia Way was contacted to see if they could use the extra funds. She noted that the shelter now has a female outreach worker and the thinking was that the funds could be used to grow her job a bit given the great homeless need in the community. However, in the conversation it became clear that the agency would benefit more from being able to have more bus tickets for clients to use in getting to the shelter, to work and to appointments.

Ms. Catalano said the request from the Boys & Girls Club totaled \$27,669 including the warranties. CDBG funds, however, cannot be used to pay for the warranties, so the total is \$25,494.

A motion to amend the 2017 CDBG Annual Action Plan to add the Boys & Girls Club teen center kitchen appliances purchase project, and the Sophia Way homeless bus tickets project, and to add the Boys & Girls Club and Sophia Way projects to the 2017 list of CDBG projects was made by Commissioner Ma. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mercer and the motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Catalano said the recommendation will be before the Council on September 18 for approval.

Commissioner Mercer suggested that the Commission should consider including bus tickets as part of the CDBG contingency plan. Ms. O'Reilly said that could still be done since the plan has not yet been approved by the Council. She said she liked the idea of looking at the issue of transportation broadly as part of the contingency plan without specifying bus tickets.

Ms. Catalano pointed out that the Commission will be asked to look again at the CDBG issue early in 2018. Some projects may need to be added in order to spend down the balance. Commissioner Ma said that would seem to argue in favor of not revising the contingency plan ahead of having that discussion.

Commissioner Kline asked about including in the plan a provision to fund transportation-related projects that could come up in the interim. Ms. Catalano said the approach would make it possible to fund a transportation-related project without having to go to the Council for approval. What is needed is additional research into the types of projects that are easy to spend CDBG funds on.

9. OLD BUSINESS

Ms. Catalano reported that a racial equity training session for non-profits would be conducted on September 11 and 18. Two representatives from each agency will be asked to attend the two four-hour sessions.

Ms. O'Reilly said she recently was in contact with the human services staff in Redmond who is in the process of trying to formulate a joint commissions meeting with a focus on reading applications using an equity lens. No date has been set for the meeting, which will include a presenter from the Non-Profit Assistance Center. The same person will also be looking at the application itself through an equity lens.

Commissioner Mercer said she would like to see the application include a box for the applicants to indicate whether or not they have attended an equity training session.

Ms. Catalano said the first agency visit will be at the Boys & Girls Club on September 20. Commissioners Kline, McEachran and Ma are signed up to participate. The tour will include the main facility and the teen center in Lake Hills.

Ms. O'Reilly said tours of Hopelink, Eastside Baby Corner and Bridge Ministries are being scheduled.

Ms. O'Reilly briefly reviewed the agendas for upcoming Commission meetings.

Commissioner Oxrieder noted that the Needs Update includes indicators regarding people who have lived in Bellevue for more than ten years and she asked if those who conducted the survey could drill down deeper into the data. She said she would like to know if the issues highlighted by the aging population in Bellevue are because they are elderly and cannot afford certain things, or because they are nostalgic for the way things were in the past. Ms. O'Reilly said she did not know how deeply the data can be drilled. She said the survey company does tests to determine if there are any significant differences between characteristics and notes the results in the report. For instance, for questions about affordable housing, the company looks to see if there

are significant differences in the answers given by those in different age and other groups.

Commissioner Mercer said she wanted to see the issue of the Commission's role relative to the development agreement and programs for the shelter addressed prior to getting into the funding cycle. She added that it would be helpful for the Commission to have an understanding of how the shelter might affect the funding cycle. Ms. O'Reilly said she intended to continue the discussion of housing and homelessness at one of the Commission's November meetings. At two Council meetings in September and at another two in October presentations will be given by staff regarding different issues related to homelessness, including panhandling, vehicle residency and parking on the street. The intent is to let the presentations to the Council proceed before recapping the issues for the Commission. She said the discussions at the Council level are not likely to affect human services funding. Commissioner Mercer stressed the need for the Commission to be fully informed in order to play its role as the eyes and ears of the Council. If the Council is going to be making substantial decisions that that will impact human services, the Commission should be in on the discussion. Ms. O'Reilly said she could adjust the schedule to allow for an update at the Commission's September 19 meeting.

Chair Villar commented that there are things that periodically pop up before the Council that have a human services component, like the decision to contract out jail services in order to save money, which could remove support systems from the incarcerated and their families. She said it would be helpful for the Commissioners to receive the Council agendas. Ms. O'Reilly pointed out that Council agendas are not made available until the Friday before each Monday night Council meeting. The agendas, once prepared, are available online.

10. NEW BUSINESS

Ms. O'Reilly announced that the annual holiday party with the Parks and Community Services Board was slated for December 5. She said there will be no formal Commission meeting in December.

Ms. O'Reilly informed the Commissioners that King County's Mental Health and Substance Abuse division was notified in July by the state that there would be an actuarial change made to the formula that calculates how much funding each county receives as a match for Medicaid dollars that come to the state. There used to be a 100 percent match, but for a variety of reasons the formula was changed to something closer to a 60 percent match. The change will mean a significant decrease in the amount of money agencies will be getting from the county. The change became effective July 1, but the county developed a step-down program that gradually reduces the amount of money. By the time of the application process, agencies will really be feeling the squeeze for mental health and substance abuse programs and they might come to the city seeking more money. The county intends to lobby for a change in the way the formula is calculated, but any changes would not

take affect for two years. The county is pulling together a series of workgroups to seek input from agencies on how the cuts should be made.

11. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS – None

12. ADJOURNMENT

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

Chair Villar adjourned the meeting at 7:56 p.m.

Secretary to the Human Services Commission

Date

Chairperson of the Human Services Commission

Date