

CITY OF BELLEVUE
HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION
MINUTES

November 16, 2010
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chairperson Huenefeld Gese, Commissioners Beighle, Bruels, Hoople, Plaskon, Stout, Yantis

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None

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

GUEST SPEAKERS: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:33 p.m. by Chair Huenefeld Gese who presided.

2. ROLL CALL

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. October 19, 2010

Chair Huenefeld Gese called attention the fifth paragraph on page 2 of the minutes and noted that she had also attended the Chinese Information and Service Center fundraiser.

Commissioner Beighle called attention to the last sentence on page 5 and suggested it should be worded to read "The reports are compiled after the local screening takes place, are then transmitted back to the state, and hence back to the CDC."

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

4. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Jeff Bradt, new executive director of Elder and Adult Day Services, took a moment to introduce himself to the Commissioners. He said he is new to the area and is focused on learning about all the different human services issues and challenges.

5. STAFF AND COMMISSION REPORTS

Commissioner Hoople reported that an 800 number has been set up for veterans to call when they are seeking services. The initial thinking was that 2-1-1 would be able to provide the service, but that organization was not willing to do any callbacks or collaborate with the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs to establish relationships and set up referrals.

Commissioner Bruels said the King County Legislative Forum has been set for December 15 from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. in the social hall at St. Mark's Cathedral in Seattle. He said he has been working to help organize the event for the county. King County Executive Constantine will be the keynote speaker. The hope is that at least a dozen legislators will be on stage to answer questions about mental health and chemical dependency treatment. A large audience turnout is expected.

Commissioner Stout said she and Human Services Planner Alex O'Reilly attended a meeting on November 15 working with Healthy Start to adjust their budget now that the Children and Family Commission has been defunded by the county. She said a number of agencies and programs will be impacted, but Healthy Start is the biggest. Children under the age of three from at-risk families will lose their case management and home visits.

Commissioner Stout said she was proud to see the City Manager at the November 15 City Council meeting indicate that he intended to hold funding for human services as sacred because of the number of families in the community who are in need. She said it is refreshing to live in a city where people really do care.

Commissioner Beighle reported that the Home Repair Loan Review Committee met on November 15. She said she serves on the committee along with Ms. O'Reilly, Assistant Parks Director Terry Smith and program director Sam Esadeen. The request considered was from an elderly couple with a leaking roof. While they qualify for low-income status and do not have the cash needed to effect the repairs, their net worth in property exceeds \$900,000, so the application had to be reviewed by the committee. The conclusion reached was that the loan would be approved provided the couple quit claims their California property to a relative or charitable organization.

Ms. O'Reilly said the loan review committee convenes only to review applications that involve exceptions to the policies.

Intern Kimberly Walker reported on the Human Services Alliance meeting that occurred earlier in the day. She said it was reported that the King County Council had approved its budget. There was concern voiced regarding the transparency of the general process as it related to human services. The group talked about asking for a full list of the contracts that will be in place. There was discussion about the Veterans and Human Services Levy and the strategies to be used in supporting it. Information about the Healthy Start program was shared. Generally, the mood was somber.

Ms. Walker said the county representatives were asked how the county intends to sustain their staff cuts resulting from the new budget. They did not directly answer the question but did indicate that eight FTEs would be eliminated.

Grant Coordinator Joseph Adriano stated that about a dozen human service agencies attended the November 15 City Council public hearing on the budget. Hal Ferris, chair of the Planning Commission, testified about ARCH and did an excellent job. There was testimony on a variety of other topics, including transportation, the demonstration gardens, and the arts, but by and large human services advocates was the largest group.

Ms. O'Reilly urged the Commissioners to RSVP for the Eastside Human Services Forum annual meeting on December 2 from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the Redmond public library.

Ms. O'Reilly reminded the Commissioners that the Annual Holiday Celebration with the Park Board and the Human Services Commission was slated for December 7. She said no other Commission meetings are scheduled for December.

6. DISCUSSION

A. Update on MIDD and Crisis Solutions Center

Commissioner Bruels said the Mental Illness and Drug Dependency (MIDD) has 37 different strategies addressing five different policy goals. Its aims are to reduce the number of incidents and severity of behavioral health problems; to reduce the number of people in the criminal justice and hospital systems; to reduce the cycling of people through those systems; to divert people away from those systems in the first place; and to link with other services. The MIDD is funded through a sales tax of one tenth of one percent that was approved in 2007; the tax brings in about \$40 million annually. However, with the current budget crisis there has been some supplantation; about 30 percent of the funds are currently going to support existing services, and the chances are that percentage will increase under the new budget.

Commissioner Bruels said the MIDD includes a number of community based strategies. One strategy aims to get services to people who are not Medicaid-eligible. There has been a drain of clinicians who have gone through the chemical

dependency certification program, so one of the strategies is focused on providing funding to get clinicians certified as chemical treatment providers. Employment services for individuals with mental health and chemical dependency issues is another strategy, as is support for housing. The strategies for youth include collaborative school-based mental health and substance abuse services and a youth suicide prevention program; the latter includes training for teachers and first responders to help them identify suicide indicators. Domestic violence prevention is one of the strategies, as is service to children exposed to domestic violence.

Seventeen percent of the MIDD funds go to provide services to residents in east King County.

Chair Huenefeld Gese asked if the strategies leave any gaps. Commissioner Bruels said there are unfortunately a lot of gaps. He said for one thing many of the strategies have not been started yet due to budget supplantation. That is particularly true in the area of youth services.

The jail and hospital diversion strategy is where the crisis intervention training program comes in. The program trains law enforcement and other first responders how to assist people in behavior health crisis. The King County jail system is the second largest institution in the state housing persons with mental health problems; Western State Hospital is the largest. Nationally, more than seventy percent of incarcerated persons have substance abuse or mental health problems, and most of them are not violent offenders. Those in the jail system are not afforded treatment, and there is research indicating those in the system actually get worse. There is also the aspect of criminalizing mental illness.

Commissioner Hoople noted that there is some overlap between the MIDD and the Veterans Incarceration Program, which also seeks to keep people out of the jail system.

Commissioner Bruels said in addition to being ineffective, the jail system is a costly solution, as is hospitalization. What it costs for three days of hospitalization would pay for a full year of outpatient care. Hospital emergency departments are becoming de facto mental health clinics because many either do not qualify for mental health centers or the centers do not have any reenrollment slots. The MIDD is aimed in part at trying to stabilize persons before hospitalization is needed.

The Crisis Intervention Training Program offers communication, de-escalation and diversion training for law enforcement and other first responders. It is based on a Memphis model that emphasizes partnership with the community which troubleshoots problems and sets standards. In Memphis they found that the response approaches were all over the map in working with people in behavioral crisis, and it was determined that appropriate standards were needed. The Memphis model is evidence based and has been subjected to a lot of research regarding its effectiveness. It has been replicated in cities around the country.

Commissioner Bruels said the Crisis Solutions Center will be located on Lane Street in the Jackson Place neighborhood in Seattle. It aims to serve adults who are in good behavioral control and who are not suspected of a violent crime and who do not have a history of violence. The facility will focus on 24- to 48-hour stabilization. It will be staffed by mental health counselors, mental health professionals, case managers, nurse practitioners, and a psychiatric medical director. The staffing ratio will be high at around four to one. Clients will be over the age of 18 and in crisis relative to mental health or substance abuse.

Planning for the center began in early 2008. Consultants from San Antonio came to Seattle for an all-day retreat which was also attended by stakeholders, including service providers, advocates for the homeless, and law enforcement. A work group was subsequently formed to focus on planning for the facility, and various subcommittees were formed to look at specific issues, including where to site the facility and the licensing issues involved. Delegations visited programs in operation across the state.

There are three programs in the overall Crisis Diversion Program. The Crisis Solutions Center is the name chosen for the Seattle facility. The Crisis Diversion Interim Service is a program that will focus on those whose need will take a bit longer to stabilize their medications or find a place to live, possibly up to two weeks. The mobile crisis team will be staffed with two persons who will be able to co-respond with law enforcement to help stabilize crisis situations and to help connect people to services on the scene. If necessary, the team members will also be able to assist in transporting someone to the Crisis Diversion facility.

Commissioner Bruels said there have been a lot of delays. The initial RFP did not generate proposals the county would accept. The matter went back to the drawing board, and in the meantime Tukwila established a moratorium because they had heard that some of the sites under consideration were in south Seattle close to their border, and that put the brakes on the planning process. The Downtown Emergency Service Center (DESC) was ultimately selected for all three programs.

The process is currently focused on engaging the Jackson Lake community. The first community meeting was held on November 11 and went better than expected. Most who attended voiced their concerns, which centered primarily on the selected site not being an appropriate location. Their arguments were addressed by the facts associated with the methodical process that had been undertaken to site the center. The DESC plans to put together an advisory committee that will have representation from the Jackson Lane neighborhood.

The projected opening date for the new facility is the summer of 2011. The lease for the facility was signed about four weeks ago. Application for permits has not occurred yet, but all of the zoning hurdles have been cleared.

Commissioner Plaskon asked how issues of diversity will be addressed. Commissioner Bruels said there is a tendency on the part of some communities to view mental health problems as applicable to one group or another, but overall the American population has a very poor understanding of mental health issues; one survey found that more than 60 percent of Americans believe that mentally ill people are dangerous, but the research simply does not bear that out. Those who oppose such facilities are for the most part speaking out of their anxieties and coming to them with facts does little to ameliorate their concerns. What they really need is someone to acknowledge their feelings and engage them in the decision-making process. Once the facility is up and running they'll be able to see that the risk is not great and that property values will not be degraded.

7. OLD BUSINESS

Ms. O'Reilly said earlier in the day she sent out the scope of work for the 2011-2012 Human Services Needs Update Survey. She said what is being sought are proposals that will involve multimodal efforts, including telephone, internet and mail-in approaches. A new approach is needed to address the issue of increased cell phone usage which has in recent years resulted in less-than-representative samples from the phone survey. The results will be reviewed and rated by early December, and a decision will be made and a contract written in early January.

Commissioner Stout asked if the decommissioning of the Children and Families Commission will seriously impact funding for Communities Count. Ms. O'Reilly said funding from that source has been decreasing over time and was down to about \$25,000. Plans are on track to release a new online-only report in December 2011 using funds collected from other sources. A more user-friendly and interactive website is being developed.

8. NEW BUSINESS – None

9. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS – None

10. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Huenefeld Gese adjourned the meeting at 7:36 p.m.

Secretary to the Human Services Commission

Date

Chairperson of the Human Services Commission

Date