

CITY OF BELLEVUE  
HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION  
MINUTES

January 4, 2023  
6:00 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall  
Room 1E-126

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chair Piper, Vice-Chair Amirfaiz, Commissioners Halsted, Jain, Singh, White

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioner Mansfield

STAFF PRESENT: Christy Stangland, Toni Esparza, Leslie Miller, Donna Adair, Asma Ahmed, Saada Hilts, Andrew Ndayambaje, Department of Parks and Community Services; Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis

GUEST SPEAKERS: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

2. ROLL CALL

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioner Mansfield.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. November 1, 2022

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Vice-Chair Amirfaiz. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Singh and the motion carried unanimously.

B. November 15, 2022

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Commissioner Singh. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chair Amirfaiz, and the motion carried without dissent; Chair Piper abstained from voting.

4. ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

Alex Zimmerman with Stand Up America, a candidate for Bellevue City Council, expressed concerns regarding limitations on public comments during meetings, the level of promotion for public forums and term limits for councilmembers.

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

Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis took a moment to welcome the two new Commissioners Halsted and Jain.

With regard to the budget, Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis noted that in late November the Council voted unanimously to adopt the 2023-2034 budget and the 2023-2029 Capital Investment Program. The \$2.2 billion budget package funds essential services and makes targeted investments in Bellevue's unprecedented growth. The priorities include environmental stewardship, public safety, affordable housing and the city's ongoing work on diversity. The budget includes investments to the Human Services Fund. The budget includes the allocation of Community Development Block Grant funds in the amount of \$1.3 million in 2023, focused specifically on supporting low- and moderate-income residents, the rehabilitation and repair of single-family homes, and microenterprise business assistance. The Council also approved the Housing Stability Program with a budget of about \$1.75 million along with the Commission's recommendations for funding affordable housing, behavioral health and housing-related services in the community.

In December, the Council voted unanimously to initiate work on additional items to advance the city's overall Affordable Housing Strategy under the Next Right work. The planning effort is aimed at complementing ongoing housing work and encouraging more housing and affordable housing production in the city. The Council directed the staff to move forward with removing barriers to micro-apartments, allowing higher density for residential developments, and reducing permit fees for affordable housing projects.

Continuing, Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis noted that the Council also voted to move ahead with the draft Eastside climate partnership interlocal agreement between the Eastside cities to cooperatively focus on environmental stewardship efforts. The primary near-term focus will be on managing the Energy Smart Eastside program to encourage residents to gain energy efficiency awareness and install high-efficiency heat pumps. The program also makes it easier for the cities to accomplish joint procurement, share contracts and share sustainability staff positions through shared funds.

The Council reviewed and approved the 2023 budget for the city's Eastside Arts Partnership which supports grants as recommended by the Bellevue Arts Commission in support of arts and culture activities in the community. The arts clearly benefit the city economically and offers the opportunity for residents to see a return on their investment in the arts. Nationally, people who attend arts events on average spend an additional \$33 in their communities above and beyond the price of their tickets.

Finally, Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis shared that the Council reviewed a proposed draft interlocal agreement with the city of Redmond to cooperatively work on a Tourism Promotion Area (TPA). The idea is to promote growth and the tourism economy in the area. The strategy is one of the key objectives of the city's five-year economic development plan. The TPA is expected to generate \$3.5 million in its first full year. The funds can only be spent on promoting tourism.

Major Mark Tarantino reported the Council voted to approve funding in 2023 for the co-responder Community Crisis Action Team (CCAT). The model combines police officers with mental health professionals. The program will be put in place starting in May.

Human Services Manager Leslie Miller asked the new Commissioners and staff members to introduce themselves, and had the other Commissioners and staff introduce themselves as well.

Leslie Miller said it is meaningful to get to do work that leads to more equitable and just lives

for those living in the community.

Chair Piper noted having joined the Commission due to a real passion for human services and a desire to give something back to the community.

Commissioner Jain, who works analytics for the insurance industry, noted having recently moved to Bellevue and joining the Commission as a way of giving back to and serve the community.

Commissioner Singh said serving as a Commissioner offers a great opportunity to serve the beautiful city of Bellevue.

Major Mark Tarantino noted having been with the Bellevue police department for 27 years. By serving as liaison to the Commission, the Commissioners are afforded a window into what the police department sees on the streets relative to human service needs.

Commissioner Halsted noted having spent a lot of time working for global companies. Since moving to and falling in love with Bellevue, contributions have included serving as chair of a local private school and as a consultant for the US Department of Agriculture working on rural development with a focus on underserved communities.

Vice-Chair Amirfaiz noted having led non-profits for more than 25 years. It gives great pleasure to be able to support non-profits as a member of the Commission.

Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis said serving as a Councilmember is a way to give back to the city. Sitting on the boards of various non-profits, including Sophia Way and Lifewire, also proved to be a satisfying way to serve the community. The Commissioners were also told that serving as liaison between the Council and the Commission is an honor.

Commissioner White, a Bellevue resident for ten years and owner of a Bellevue company, said when the opportunity came to join the Commission it was an easy decision to make.

Human Services Planner Andrew Ndayambaje noted having been with the city for only a month after serving in the non-profit world, primarily serving those experiencing homelessness. The desire is to make a difference in Bellevue.

Human Services Planner Saada Hilts reported having been with the city for three weeks and having a background in higher education and direct services. It is a privilege to be part of the city team supporting agencies through funding and identifying equity gaps.

Department of Parks & Community Services Assistant Director Toni Esparza for the past four and a half years noted they previously served in the non-profit world working with youth and families, education and human services. The Department of Parks and Community Services has as its vision holistic care for people and holistic care for facilities and park lands.

Human Services Planner Asma Ahmed noted having been a part of the human services team for the city for about eight months and having worked for a non-profit in the areas of early learning and community engagement.

Human Services Planner Christy Stangland for the past five years shared having previously worked for a non-profit in east King County for 17 years. The decision to join the city was made easy by the fact that Bellevue chooses to make significant investments in human services.

Community Development Block Grant Administrator/Housing Repair Specialist Donna Adair indicated having been with the city for almost two years. As someone who also has a background of working for non-profits, primarily in regard to affordable home ownership and owner-occupied home repair, it is an honor to be a member of a great city team.

**\*\*BREAK\*\***

6. STAFF AND COMMISSIONER REPORTS – None
7. INFORMATION FOR THE COMMISSION – None
8. OLD BUSINESS – None
9. NEW BUSINESS
  - A. Minor Amendment to the 2022 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Annual Action Plan

Chair Piper noted that amending the Annual Action Plan is needed to indicate the cancelation of the 2022 Seattle Business Education Hub’s Microenterprise Assistance activity.

Leslie Miller took a moment to explain that there are four sources of human services funding. The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), the Housing Stability Program, the General Fund, and ARPA funding. By action of the Council, much of the second tranche of ARPA funding has been dedicated to the support of human services, so while the year prior to the every-other-year funding cycle is focused on educating the Commission on needs in the community, there is in fact \$3.1 million to allocate.

Donna Adair explained that the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) provides annual grants on a formula bases to entitled cities and counties for the purpose of developing viable urban communities through the provision of decent housing, a suitable living environment, and by expanding economic opportunities principally for low- and moderate-income persons. Each year after Congress passes the omnibus bill, HUD has 60 days to release the annual allocations for CDBG funding. Once the allocations are released, city staff work to finalize the Annual Action Plan for submittal to HUD for approval.

All CDBG activities must meet a national objective and must be an eligible activity. There are three national objectives: the prevention or elimination of slums and blight; meeting emergent needs; and activities that benefit low- and moderate-income persons. The latter is primarily what Bellevue uses its funding for by providing things like services for seniors, homeless shelters and microenterprise assistance. Fifty-one percent of the participants, or of the residents in a dedicated area, must be documented as being low- and moderate-income. The one exception is that there can be a different percentage based on the fact that there are not predominantly low- and moderate-income areas in the city. The last census pegged that percentage in Bellevue at close to 36. Low- and moderate-income housing is defined as structures that must be occupied by low- and moderate-income households and the allowed activities include home rehabilitation and minor home repair and maintenance.

There are several activities that are eligible for CDBG funding, including administration and planning by city staff, public services, the acquisition of real property for any public purposes, public facilities and improvements, and assistance provided to businesses to carry out economic development such as job creation and retention activities.

The Consolidated Plan is a five-year plan the city must develop and submit in order to receive

the annual grant. The plan is the jurisdiction's comprehensive planning document and is also the application for the CDBG funding. The plan identifies the goals of the jurisdiction for the program as well as for housing programs. The plan must include a certification that not less than 70 percent of the funds received will be used for activities that primarily benefit low- and moderate-income persons.

The Citizen Participation Plan is part of the Consolidated Plan, and it encourages citizen participation via non-profit agencies, persons of low- and moderate-income within the community for whom the funds will be used. The participation plan must provide community members with reasonable and timely access to local meetings, information and records related to the use of CDBG funds. During the funding cycle there are two public hearings, both of which are part of the citizen participation plan. Time must be allowed for replying to written complaints and grievances, and must address the needs of non-English speaking residents.

The Annual Action Plan is informed by the Consolidated Plan. It outlines the city's plan for the use of the allocated CDBG funds. Work on the 2025-2029 Consolidated Plan will kick off in 2024. Each year the city must develop a draft application for the upcoming year by estimating the amount of funding and outlining how it will be used. The plan is posted to the city's website and subject to a 30-day comment period. A public hearing on the plan is conducted to obtain input from the community and service providers before the city sends out requests for proposals each year. All applications are screened by human services staff to ensure the projects meet the national objectives and are eligible activities. The Commission then reviews the applications and makes a preliminary recommendation, which becomes the subject of a public hearing before making a final recommendation to the Council for approval. Following approval by the Council, the information is added to the draft Annual Action Plan. Once HUD releases the final allocation amount, the Annual Action Plan is submitted to HUD and a grant agreement is executed and the funds are dispersed.

The city has the ability to do pre-awards in cases where the funding allocation has not yet been released. For example, in 2022 HUD did not release the allocations until May but the city did pre-awards for the recipients of the funds, allowing them to start their activities at the beginning of the calendar year.

The 2023 estimated amount for public services is \$166,200. For planning and administration, the estimate is for \$211,600. A total of \$586,000 is estimated for capital projects, and for community and economic development the estimate is \$370,000. In all, the estimate totals \$1,333,800. Public services are capped at 15 percent of the HUD current-year entitlement award plus 15 percent of the projected program income for the upcoming year. Program income is generated by revenues from the home rehabilitation program, including deferred loans that become payable on the sale or transfer of properties. Those repayment revenues flow back into the program to fund future CDBG programs. For the 2023 public services, the Commission elected to fund Congregations for the Homeless, which operates a 24/7 men's shelter as the designated public services agency.

Administration and planning is capped at 20 percent of the current-year entitlement plus 20 percent of the previous year's program income. In 2022, program income amounted to almost \$400,000, 20 percent of which can be allocated to administration and planning along with 20 percent of the HUD allocation for a total of \$75,000 to cover the cost of administration, including staff, the provision of technical assistance, monitoring recipients and capacity building for non-profit agencies. For planning, \$136,600 is allocated to cover the resources to adequately plan for and anticipate human services needs for Bellevue residents. The Needs Update is funded through the planning funds.

The home rehabilitation program is funded using capital dollars, in partnership with the King

County Housing Authority and Habitat for Humanity. The eligibility requirements include owning and occupying the home for at least one year and incomes at or below 80 percent of area median income. The homeowners must also have current hazard insurance and no reverse mortgages. The total loan to value of the loan cannot exceed 90 percent of the value of the home. Deferred loans and emergency grants are also provided as part of the program to low-income households, and the loans are paid back upon the sale or transfer of the home. For persons on the higher spectrum of the income range there are leveraged loans available on a case-by-case basis. The homeowner is responsible for 50 percent of the total and the other half is a deferred loan. There is an extensive review process for all loans and grants, and final inspections are conducted once the projects are completed.

Sound Generations offers minor home repairs that focus primarily on home maintenance. They are currently spending down funds from the 2021 and 2022 program years, so the city is not funding them for 2023.

Turning to the issue of microenterprise, Donna Adair explained that by definition such businesses have five or fewer employees, one or more of whom actually own the business. Microenterprise assistance qualifies under the low- and moderate-income limited clientele national objective when the assistance is provided to low- and moderate-income persons who own or are developing a microenterprise business. Persons who receive assistance are subjected to an initial screening and afterwards are expected to be working toward developing a business that is expected to be a microenterprise at the time it is formed. For 2023, three BIPOC agencies have been funded: 4Tomorrow at \$150,000; Big Hug Korean Resource Center at \$100,000; and Indian American Community Services at \$120,000. Each organization will be providing assistance to microenterprises.

Commissioner Jain asked how often the city is able to meet the demand for low- and moderate-income home repairs. Donna Adair said the program does quite well at meeting the demand for repairs.

Vice-Chair Amirfaiz asked if the King County Housing Authority or Habitat for Humanity charges a fee for their services. Donna Adair said the King County Housing Authority has a small administration fee, otherwise the city is invoiced only for the cost of the repairs.

A motion to amend the 2022 Annual Action Plan by removing the Seattle Business Education HUB microenterprise assistance activity was made by Chair Piper. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Singh and the motion carried unanimously.

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#### B. Commissioner Requests to Participate in Future Meetings Remotely

Chair Piper, Vice-Chair Amirfaiz and Commissioner Singh noted they would not be able to attend or participate remotely for the January 18 Commission meeting.

#### 10. CONTINUED ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Alex Zimmerman commented about filing a class action suit in Bellevue a decade ago and expressed concern regarding the use of area median income figures to determine eligibility for programs.

#### 11. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Piper adjourned the meeting at 7:45 p.m.