

CITY OF BELLEVUE
HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES

July 7, 2025
6:00 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
Room 1E-113

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chair Singh, Commissioners Imfura, Hays, Phan, Rashid

COMMISSIONERS REMOTE: None

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioners Gonzalez, Vice Chair White

STAFF PRESENT: Christy Stangland, Toni Esparza, Ruth Blaw, Andrew Ndayambaje, Gysel Galaviz, Department of Parks & Community Services; Dylan Gordon, Jordyn Green, Bellevue Fire Department

COUNCIL LIAISON: Mayor Robinson

POLICE LIAISON: Major Ellen Inman

GUEST SPEAKERS: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER and ROLL CALL

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

At the roll of the call, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioners Gonzalez and White.

Chair Singh welcomed new Commissioner Olga Perelman. The Commissioners took a moment to introduce themselves.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

June 2, 2025

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Commissioner Hays. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Rashid and the motion carried unanimously.

3. ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

Chair Singh took a moment to note that in compliance with Washington State campaign laws (RCW 42.17A.555), speakers are prohibited from using the public platform to support or oppose any ballot measures or political candidates.

Lawrence Luo, Executive Director of Transcend United, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, sought the support of the Commission for a community event aimed at seniors. The mission of the organization is to enhance cross-cultural understanding and to foster collaborations by providing programs at Crossroads Community Center. The twice-weekly events, which began in 2023, are focused on combating isolation among underprivileged seniors with language barriers. To date 6,700 persons have attended the events, with more than 800 unique attendees. There are eleven unique weekly programs and fifteen large events. The support of the Commission and the city was encouraged through funding or other means.

Joe Kuntzler expressed concerns about the past behavior of Alex Tsimerman and referenced several incident reports and public appearances. The Nazi rhetoric of Alex Tsimerman was denounced as hateful and it was stated that the person should be excluded from city spaces due to alleged harassment and unauthorized campaigning. The speaker thanked the Commission for its service and urged the Commission to uphold all the laws of the state. The Commissioners deserve much better than how they have been treated.

Alex Tsimerman began with a Nazi salute and called the Commissioners dirty damn Nazi fascist pigs and then criticized the video display setup and accused the Commission of obscuring the faces of speakers, which has been a long-standing issue. Staff and city officials were accused of censorship and procedural violations. Mayor Robinson has curtailed public speech unfairly. Past legal actions regarding trespasses issued against and the subsequent appeals, which referenced U.S. Supreme Court rulings, were ignored. City officials were called fascists and the Commission was accused failing to act on human rights concerns. It was claimed that his election statement had been suppressed as part of the city's authoritarian behavior.

4. COMMUNICATION FROM CITY COUNCIL, COMMUNITY COUNCIL, BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS – None

5. STAFF AND COMMISSIONER REPORTS – None

Human Services Manager Ruth Blaw distributed the meeting schedule for the remainder of the year, noting the August recess and indicated that beginning in September the Commission will return to having two meetings per month. The first meeting in September will kick off the funding cycle and it is expected to be densely packed with information.

6. OLD BUSINESS – None

7. NEW BUSINESS – None

A. Bellevue Community Crisis Response Program Presentation

Dylan Gordon, a Field Education Supervisor with the Bellevue Fire CARES team, noted serving as supervisor of the CARES advocates alongside two colleagues, and also noted holding a license as a clinical social worker. Jordyn Green was also introduced as a crisis response social worker and a licensed social worker who works with both CCAT (Community Crisis Assistance Team) and CARES 101, the social work dispatch unit.

Dylan Gordon shared serving as a student advocate with the CARES program in 2018 while pursuing a master's degree at Cal State Northridge. After joining CARES as a per diem member of the dispatch unit, a private therapy practice was also maintained. In time the transition was made to full-time with CARES and later becoming a Field Education Supervisor because of an interest in mentoring students.

Jordan Green shared with the Commission having received a master's degree from Simmons University with a focus on crisis work, and having had prior experience in inpatient psychiatric hospitals before joining CARES in 2020 through an internship, initially holding the Case Management Specialist position and then holding multiple roles that allowed for observing the evolution of the program from a small initiative into a more robust operation.

Dylan Gordon explained that Bellevue Fire CARES began in 2012 and was modeled after Spokane's CARES program. Initially, the team was comprised of Program Manager Natasha Grossman and two practicum students. The team received referrals from the Bellevue Fire Department and later the Police Department for follow-up case management. Over the years, the program expanded significantly and in 2017 the dispatch unit known as CARES 101 was introduced. In 2019, the CCAT pilot program began and became a full-time service in 2023. Currently, the team receives referrals from multiple city departments, including Code Compliance and Service First, which may request assistance from CARES 101 when individuals in need arrive at City Hall.

Weekly meetings occur every Tuesday where new referrals are reviewed. Students choose clients for their caseloads based on interest and appropriateness. The number of student advocates varies with the season; it currently totals ten but increases to as many as twenty-five during the fall and winter.

CARES 101 is a dispatchable unit that is active from 8:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. daily. The unit is a co-response team, which means that either police or fire personnel must arrive on the scene before CARES can be dispatched. The team does not self-select calls but monitors the 911 board to identify calls where their involvement may be necessary. Social workers may meet clients on site or at hospitals and they typically encounter individuals in crisis and provide them with immediate support and connections to resources, including shelter, transportation, or urgent supplies like car seats. After an initial interaction, the team files a referral that transitions to the CARES advocates for continued case management. High-acuity clients may remain temporarily on the CARES caseload before being transferred to student advocates. Notably, five current professional staff members are former student advocates, which reflects a strong internal retention effort.

CARES hosts an average of twenty-two to thirty practicum students per year from approximately sixteen universities. The current cohort includes about ten students from four universities. Students typically remain with the program for seven to twelve months, depending on their university's requirements. The University of Washington provides the largest number of students and has maintained a longstanding relationship with the program. Other participating universities include USC, ASU, and the University of Denver. Students arrive with varying backgrounds and

levels of experience. The program values both experienced professionals and those who are new to the field. Supervisors accompany students in the field to ensure safe and educational experiences. The program places a high value on learning and does not expect immediate expertise. The practicum is considered rigorous, but both staff and students have emphasized the impact and the resulting satisfaction of making meaningful differences in the lives of clients.

There are no limits on how long a client can remain on the CARES caseload since the services are free and voluntary. Some clients have received services for up to eight years. The lack of abundant state resources requires the team to employ creativity in problem-solving. The diverse backgrounds of the team members and a robust internal resource manual help support a wide array of client needs. All students in the program are currently pursuing master's degrees in social work.

Jordyn Green said CCAT, the Community Crisis Assistance Team, was piloted in 2021 in response to evolving community needs. The Bellevue Police Department and Bellevue Fire Department collaborated to create the pilot, which consisted of three configurations: one team had an officer and a social worker; another had two uniformed officers; and a third had two plainclothes officers. The goal was to evaluate how different team compositions affected outcomes, particularly in regard to whether pairing an officer with a social worker would yield better results, and whether officer attire influenced community interaction. The pilot revealed several significant outcomes. There was a forty-five percent increase in referrals to the CARES advocate team for ongoing case management, which showed that the teams were identifying individuals who could benefit from continued support. Additionally, there was an average of three referrals per client to existing community resources. Most notably, the pilot resulted in an eighty percent decrease in arrests and a twenty-four percent reduction in police use of force on CCAT-involved calls. The outcomes led to the decision to establish CCAT as a permanent and funded program in September 2023.

There are now five CCAT teams, each of which is composed of an officer wearing a specialized, but less formal, uniform and a social worker in an unmarked vehicle. A sergeant oversees the teams. All participating officers must apply and be specifically selected and then specially trained. Both officers and social workers undergo cross-training in mental health response and policing. The teams also undergo safety training and each member wears tactical vests.

The CCAT teams originally operated seven days a week from 6:00 a.m. to 1:40 a.m., but a heat map analysis resulted in adjusted hours to where it now operates Tuesday through Friday from 6:00 a.m. to midnight, and Saturday through Monday from 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. The hours reflect the actual demand patterns observed over time.

Continuing, Jordyn Green where CARES 101 responds after patrol officers secure a scene, the CCAT teams can respond directly and immediately to the scene, enabling faster intervention by mental health professionals in acute crisis situations. The structure fosters close working relationships between assigned officers and social workers, which enhances collaboration, understanding, and joint problem-solving. Both roles are interdependent, and the pairing is considered central to the success of the program.

Human Services Planner Christy Stangland asked for clarification regarding the reported eighty percent reduction in arrests resulting from the pilot program. The question focused on whether the data compared the same types of calls. Police liaison Ellen Inman noted having served as the sergeant for the pilot program and emphasized that CCAT typically responds to low-level, high-frequency calls such as trespassing, minor theft and disorderly conduct, which often involves individuals in crisis. In such scenarios, CCAT personnel are able to offer alternatives such as transportation, shelter options, or basic needs assistance, including food or bus tickets. The resources often resolve the immediate issue without arrest, which explains the substantial decrease in the number of arrests. It was also noted that law enforcement and community attitudes have shifted positively and the program has likely continued to improve as experience, resources, and understanding have increased. While officers are sometimes required to make arrests, there are many situations that allow for discretion on the part of the officers. The presence of a mental health professional introduces new options and support, reducing the pressure on officers to arrest by providing sustainable solutions.

Jordyn Green reiterated that the officers and the mental health professionals all receive specialized training in Crisis Negotiation, formerly known as hostage negotiation. The Level I and II coursework totals 80 hours. Additionally, the team members are trained in Crisis Intervention Training, which consists of 40 hours, which is standard for police academy recruits. They also receive training in defensive tactics, involuntary detention, substance abuse, and youth-specific topics.

Chair Singh asked about the specialized training relative to teen development. Jordyn Green said the "teen brain" development training focused on understanding how adolescent neurological development affects crisis response and behavior. The training is aimed to teach de-escalation strategies and improve long-term outcomes for youths in crisis.

Dylan Gordon shared an anecdote from a team member who attended a recent co-response conference where the attendees viewed a video of a young man holding a knife during a mental health crisis. In the video, officers issued a brief command before deploying a taser. The team member observed that in a room filled with both law enforcement and mental health professionals, the reactions differed. The situation underscored the importance of co-response models like CCAT, where both safety and therapeutic response are balanced. The mental health professionals bring skills that de-escalate situations without immediate use of force. Police officers have traditionally been trained to prioritize the safety of others and self, but the inclusion of mental health professionals introduces additional options that can reduce the need for force and improve long-term community outcomes.

Jordyn Green shared a real-life example involving a teenager who had ingested pills and was holding a knife while sitting on a backyard playground set. Several CCAT units responded, and thanks to the team's extensive training, including Crisis Negotiation Training and youth development instruction, they were able to successfully de-escalate the situation. The teenager voluntarily dropped the knife and entered an ambulance for transport to a hospital. The team believed that without the combined efforts of both mental health and law enforcement personnel, the outcome could have been much more severe.

Dylan Gordon informed the Commission that an Opioid Outreach Crisis Response Social Worker, funded by the Opioid Settlement Fund, was added several months ago. This role focuses on individuals affected by opioid use. The social worker conducts follow-up case management, community outreach, and public education, and will soon begin attending community court sessions to provide resources and short-term case management directly to individuals. The position is still evolving but has already become a valuable asset.

Dylan Gordon shared with the Commission the overall organizational chart showing the structure of the program. Natasha Grossman oversees the entire CARES initiative, while Captain Ryan Parrott supervises CCAT.

Department of Parks and Community Services assistant director Toni Esparza asked what the most significant gaps are in terms of finding resources for clients. Dylan Gordon identified women's shelters as a particularly limited resource, noting that Bellevue has only one shelter with few beds and no emergency housing, which often results in transporting vulnerable individuals by taxi to facilities in distant cities such as Tacoma.

Jordyn Green said many clients struggle to access traditional services because they have burned bridges or do not function well within structured systems. There is a need for more unconventional, flexible services for clients with complex needs, including those struggling with mental health, substance use, or intersecting challenges such as homelessness, disabilities, and domestic violence. Existing services often exclude clients whose needs span multiple categories. A recent example cited was in regard to an unhoused woman in a wheelchair with a service animal, no identification, and who was fleeing domestic violence whose needs could not be met by any single agency due to overlapping restrictions. There is little co-occurring treatment for mental health and substance use where both are being looked at within treatment equally. There is a need for wraparound models such as the Program for Assertive Community Treatment, although such programs are difficult to access. Wait times for therapy services are often three to four months, and co-occurring disorder treatment, where both mental health and substance use are addressed simultaneously, is very limited in Washington State. Many treatment programs heavily favor one aspect over the other.

Chair Singh asked about the number of people served. Dylan Gordon said the case load hovers around 250 open cases at any given time. Jordyn Green added that in 2023, prior to the full launch of CCAT, about a thousand referrals were received. That number has likely increased since. Some referrals involve repeat clients, and some referrals result in no contact despite five outreach attempts. Only Bellevue residents are eligible for ongoing case management. However, CARES and CCAT may respond to individuals experiencing crises within city limits even if they are not residents.

Chair Singh asked where the referrals come from. Dylan Gordon said they are mostly from Bellevue Police, Bellevue Fire, CARES 101, and CCAT. Additional referrals may come from city departments such as Code Compliance or Service First. Any City of Bellevue employee can use an internal link to refer individuals.

When asked by Commissioner Hays about the age demographic shifts, Dylan Gordon explained

that CARES originally served a largely elderly population, such as those experiencing frequent falls. Over time, referrals have shifted toward younger adults, often between ages 30 and 50, with a greater emphasis on mental health concerns.

Commissioner Hays asked if the program is at risk in light of pending reductions to Medicaid. Dylan Gordon allowed that while their clients often rely on Medicaid and face related service access challenges, the CARES and CCAT programs themselves are not financially threatened. Both are grant-funded and neither bills insurance. All services are free of charge to the public. The greater risk lies in increased community needs outpacing available service capacity, which would strain the workload even further.

Toni Esparza said the risk to the programs lies more in the sustainability of their workloads as demand goes up in the community as a result of reductions to Medicaid.

Human Services Planner Andrew Ndayambaje asked about the relationship CARES has with area service providers and the nature of calls received from those organizations. Dylan Gordon said the team does get calls from agencies asking if their clients can receive help. Typically it is necessary to explain that referrals are only accepted through the 911 system. If a situation appears to be resolvable without emergency intervention, the team may offer immediate resources. If the situation seems to warrant urgent support, the agency is encouraged to call 911 and specifically request CCAT or CARES 101. Jordyn Green clarified that NORCOM, the regional 911 dispatch center, is fully familiar with both the CARES and CCAT programs. When a caller asks for a social worker, the dispatcher understands the request. However, CCAT does not rely on NORCOM to be dispatched. Instead, CCAT monitors the call board directly and independently determines which calls to respond to, particularly those that match the CCAT service model. Many of the calls are initiated by service providers concerned about their clients. Once CCAT or CARES personnel become involved, their role often includes advocating on behalf of clients, helping clients navigate community services, identifying more suitable services when necessary, and collaborating with service providers to formulate plans for managing present or future crises. The goal is to minimize harm to both the individual and the surrounding community.

Commissioner Rashid asked whether there is follow-up after a case is stabilized. Dylan Gordon said the primary focus is on connecting people to services rather than on delivering direct therapeutic or housing services. When a referral is received, advocates conduct follow-up by determining which external services can address the individual's needs. The advocates meet clients wherever they are, be it at home, on the street or elsewhere, assess their needs, and return to the office to research options. They later reconnect with clients to share findings, assist with applications, and offer logistical support, such as providing computers or internet access. Once the client has obtained benefits and access to necessary services, the case may be closed, provided the client no longer needs additional help.

Jordyn Green said a lot of the work of responding to 911 calls is focused on de-escalation, immediate stabilization and short-term safety planning. The teams may offer emergency shelter access, referrals to crisis lines, or next-day appointments. If a case requires continued support, the units refer the individual to the CARES advocate team for follow-up. The goal during the

initial crisis scene is to resolve the immediate issue and prepare the client to engage with longer-term services.

Chair Singh thanked Jordyn Green and Dylan Gordon for their detailed and informative presentation.

B. Bellevue Police Department Programs and Initiatives

Major Inman noted having served with the Bellevue Police Department for twenty-five years and is currently assigned to oversee the Investigations Section. Past roles have included serving as a patrol captain, leading the Personnel Services Unit in charge of recruitment and hiring, and acting as a sergeant in both patrol and the Office of Professional Accountability, as well as serving as a major crimes detective for sixteen years handling serious offenses including homicide and special assaults involving children.

Major Inman said the mission of the Bellevue Police Department is to make Bellevue a safe place for residents, workers, and visitors. The department seeks to reduce both crime and the fear of crime through various strategies, including proactive and preventive policing, public education, and strong collaboration with city stakeholders, community members, and partner agencies such as the fire department. The department is nationally accredited along with only six percent of police departments nationwide. Accreditation is managed through CALEA, which requires strict adherence to policy development, ongoing training, and periodic compliance audits. Bellevue undergoes an in-person accreditation audit every four years. The department has maintained its accreditation since 2005, and a dedicated sergeant manages the extensive documentation and policy oversight required to meet the accreditation standards.

Major Inman highlighted the department's commitment to aligning internal policies with both legislative changes and best practices, and explained that Bellevue often proactively implements policies that are either consistent with or more rigorous than state law. The proactive stance reduces operational disruptions when new laws are enacted.

The department's guiding principles, which inform every aspect of the department's operations, are respect, integrity, accountability, and service. The principles shape the department's policies, training, public interactions, and innovation efforts.

The Bellevue Police Department is divided into two main sections, the largest and most active of which is the Patrol Division. The patrol division consists of uniformed officers who respond directly to 911 calls. Within the patrol division there are several specialized units, including the Traffic Unit which includes motorcycle officers and accident investigators, and the focus of the unit is traffic enforcement and accident prevention. Officers respond to areas where there are frequent community complaints about speeding, loud vehicles, or dangerous driving behavior. The officer's efforts are aimed at reducing traffic accidents, particularly during the summer months when collisions tend to increase. The department's long-term goal is to achieve zero traffic accidents annually.

The Downtown Unit is another subset of patrol and it is designed to address the unique

congestion and density of the Downtown area. The officers are assigned specifically to the area to reduce response times during high-traffic periods, particularly as workers from companies such as Amazon return to in-office operations.

The department maintains two substations, one in Crossroads and one in Factoria. The substations provide officers with local access to office space for tasks such as report writing, meal breaks, and personal needs, allowing them to remain within their patrol zones rather than return to City Hall. The locations are also open to the public and volunteers staff the facilities so that community members may engage face-to-face with police officers without needing to rely on phone or online systems. The setup helps accommodate individuals who may have hearing impairments or discomfort with technology.

Preparations are under way to develop a light rail unit in response to the development of a local light rail connection. Although full integration with Seattle's light rail has not yet occurred, Bellevue currently staffs four officers for transit-related duties. Two are assigned daily, and two are staffed through overtime. The officers are trained in specialized response methods, including bicycle patrol, and they build collaborative relationships with Sound Transit and the King County Sheriff's Office, which holds jurisdiction over broader regional transit hubs. Bellevue officers often respond to calls at local park-and-ride facilities even when the technical jurisdiction belongs to King County, due to proximity and timeliness.

The canine unit has three dogs, one assigned to daytime and two to nighttime shifts. Bellevue belongs to a regional SWAT team that can respond to high-risk incidents across jurisdictional boundaries. The team regularly trains with other agencies to maintain readiness and mutual support during critical incidents.

Among the specialized teams are a SWAT team, a bomb squad, which functions as a regional resource and uses advanced tools, including drones, to respond to threats both within and outside the city. Police officers work with CCAT and CARES, but the department maintains its own crisis response officers trained in communication and de-escalation. Those officers are deployed in high-risk incidents, such as when individuals are barricaded, with the goal of resolving the situation safely and without injury to anyone involved.

The department has a crime scene response team consisting of officers and detectives with specialized training in evidence collection, and the Honor Guard team participates in ceremonial duties, including funerals and other formal events.

Major Inman reported that the city received over 52,000 emergency calls in 2024. For priority one calls, which are the most urgent, the department achieved an average response time of three minutes and thirty-six seconds, consistently staying below its internal target despite the city's congestion.

The department is authorized to have 206 commissioned officers, including patrol, detectives, and other special assignments. In addition, there are 50 professional staff members who support operational areas such as forensics, property evidence, and public records. The department also benefits from the work of approximately 24 volunteers who assist in various roles.

The Criminal Investigations Section plays a critical role in handling serious crimes with follow-up, forensics, intelligence and victim support. The section includes both commissioned detectives and non-commissioned professional staff. The units operating within the Criminal Investigations Section include the Major Crimes Unit, which handles high-profile cases such as homicides and robberies. The Crimes Against Children Unit investigates offenses involving child victims. The Domestic Violence Unit addresses cases of interpersonal abuse, and the Cold Case Unit works on unresolved investigations, including missing persons such as the long-term disappearance of Sky Metalwala. The Property and Fraud Unit investigates theft and financial crimes.

The department deploys a proactive enforcement team that is referred to as the PROACT Unit. The team targets emerging crime patterns. Recently the team investigated a regional crime spree involving robbery and assault that primarily targeted elderly women, often of Asian descent, in parking lots. The offenders also engaged in car prowls and firearms theft across multiple counties, including Kitsap and King. The PROACT team worked with other jurisdictions to identify suspects, resulting in eight arrests and the recovery of firearms and body armor.

The Digital Forensics Unit analyzes evidence from devices such as phones, computers, and tablets. Bellevue maintains one of the few municipal forensic labs in western Washington, along with Seattle Police, King County Sheriff's Office, and the Washington State Patrol. The lab conducts latent fingerprint and DNA analysis and works closely with other agencies.

The Intelligence Unit monitors potential threats to public safety, particularly through social media and other electronic platforms. The unit coordinates with organizers of protests and marches to ensure safe and lawful events. It also monitors for unannounced gatherings and evaluates their potential impacts on the community.

The Technical Operations Unit deploys surveillance technology, including covert cameras, to monitor areas experiencing crime spikes. The unit has been especially involved in addressing the rise of wire theft, which disrupts essential services and imposes financial hardship on businesses and residents.

Major Inman said the broader vision of the department extends beyond traditional policing duties. The department strives to build community trust, maintain transparency, and demonstrate accountability. A key element of the vision involves showcasing daily efforts to deliver exceptional service through partnerships and collaboration.

To support transparency, the department developed a public-facing Transparency and Accountability Dashboard, a tool that is accessible via the city's website where data is posted in regard to crime trends within the city. The dashboard typically reflects data within a few days of incident reports being filed; the slight delay is due to the required review process that allows for checking and verifying reports for accuracy and completeness by the records department, particularly regarding demographic and statistical data collection. The dashboard includes year-to-date crime statistics broken down into categories such as person crimes and property crimes. It also features heat maps that display the geographic distribution of reported crimes. The tools

allow the department to analyze trends and strategically deploy resources to prevent and respond to crimes more efficiently. For instance, if car prowls or burglaries are increasing in a specific area, officers can be assigned to monitor and deter activity, while community members are encouraged to report suspicious behavior or submit footage from personal security systems. The approach has proven to be successful, particularly in reducing property crimes, which are down by nearly 30 percent from the previous year. Person crimes, however, have seen a slight increase, primarily attributed to domestic violence incidents, including violations of court orders among family members. The patterns often fluctuate around holidays or periods of prolonged close contact.

With regard to recruitment, Major Inman shared that the department has prioritized efforts in response to national challenges in law enforcement staffing. Law enforcement is a demanding career, one that often requires working holidays and weekends, without the benefits such as stock options that are offered by private-sector employers. Attracting candidates requires strategic outreach. The department recently launched a new website paired with a targeted digital marketing campaign. The advertisements appear on social media platforms, streaming services, and even during sporting events at venues like T-Mobile Park. Geographic targeting allows the department to reach specific communities, including historically Black colleges and universities that may not be located near Bellevue. By placing digital advertisements in those regions, the department can raise awareness and attract a more diverse applicant pool without the financial burden of traveling to every location. The success of the initiative is clear. In the first year, applications rose by nearly 300 percent. The targeted marketing strategy continues to generate interest. A recent job posting for a domestic violence victim advocate received fifty applications in just two weeks, with more than half coming from outside Washington State. Two of the three candidates currently on the department's eligibility list are from out of state.

Major Inman said the department engages with the community through its Police Advisory Councils. Initially established by former Chief Milet, the councils have since been expanded and strengthened under Chief Shirley. The purpose of the councils is to provide a platform for dialogue between the police and diverse community representatives. Monthly meetings are held on a rotating basis among the various councils, which allows for open conversations about issues facing both the police and the public.

Advisory council members also participate in immersive experiences, including observing de-escalation training, attending the police range for firearms training, engaging in defensive tactics exercises, and participating in ride-alongs with patrol officers. The activities provide insight into police procedures and allow members to better understand the pressures and complexities of law enforcement. At the same time, officers gain a deeper appreciation for the community's concerns and perspectives.

The Sector Captain Program is another strategy to strengthen community partnerships. The city is divided into three geographic sectors, north, west, and south, and a captain is assigned to each sector and given the responsibility of becoming deeply familiar with their area's specific conditions, including challenges and successes. The captains analyze crime trends through the department's transparency dashboard and use that information to deploy patrol resources strategically. The captains also serve as a single point of contact for community members,

offering residents an accessible and consistent liaison to the police department. This helps resolve situations where residents may not need to report a crime but still have concerns or questions. The captains work collaboratively with the department's crime prevention specialist, a civilian staff member trained in Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design. The staff member can visit properties experiencing high levels of crime to suggest practical solutions, such as installing cameras, improving lighting, trimming landscaping, or adding gates. The suggestions aim to reduce the area's attractiveness to criminal activity.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Perelman, Major Inman clarified that the police department cannot fund private security improvements due to limitations on the use of taxpayer money. It does, however, sometimes facilitate support through community partnerships, CARES referrals, or donations. One example given was in regard to the distribution of donated steering wheel locks for Hyundai and Kia vehicles following a spike in thefts. The department collaborates with automotive repair businesses and other service providers when residents cannot afford repairs, sometimes facilitated through CARES. The role of the department, especially through the crime prevention specialist, is often educational, helping property owners understand how to optimize existing security features or pursue improvements through alternative resources.

Commissioner Perelman asked how the department addresses cultural competence given how diverse the city is. Major Inman said all officers receive standardized training, much of which is developed and mandated through the city's Human Resources Department. The training covers language access, cultural awareness, and recognizing barriers to communication. Officers are taught to expect and identify language differences. If a resident does not speak English, the department uses translation tools, including a language line. Some officers are multilingual, which can be helpful. Language and cultural barriers are often identified during the initial 911 call via NORCOM, allowing officers to arrive better prepared. Officers undergo 40 hours of training before attending the police academy, a six-month academy curriculum, and a 16-week field training program. The phases include instruction in communication and cultural awareness. The department's review of body camera footage consistently shows that officers effectively adapt to the needs of community members.

Chair Singh asked about current staffing levels and Major Inman confirmed that the department remains short-staffed. There are currently some 16 officer vacancies, a number that fluctuates between 13 and 18 depending on retirements and other factors. Not all recruits are suited for the demands of the profession, even with training. Some may struggle with multitasking or may realize the profession is not a good fit. The department remains proactive in its recruiting efforts and is on track to surpass application numbers from the previous three years. Staffing shortages are also faced by nearby jurisdictions, including Seattle, and indeed is a problem nationwide largely driven by retirements as a generation of officers hired 20 to 30 years ago is now exiting the workforce. The department recognizes that hiring and onboarding must be an ongoing process and has adjusted its mindset accordingly. By continuing to prioritize quality training, effective recruitment, and a strong workplace culture, the department aims to retain employees for the long term, as evidenced by many officers who have remained in service for two to three decades.

A motion to extend the meeting for 15 minutes was made by Commissioner Hays. The motion

was seconded by Commissioner Rashid and the motion carried unanimously.

In response to a question from Commissioner Hays regarding emerging issues in Bellevue such as crowd control, demonstrations, and school violence, Major Inman emphasized that following the rise in mass school shootings, particularly over the last decade, the Bellevue Police Department has significantly adapted its training protocols. The changes include annual joint response training with the fire department and a shift in operational mindset that prioritizes immediate action in active shooter scenarios to stop threats and preserve life. The immediate response model has become standard practice across many departments in Washington State and nationwide. In Bellevue specifically, intelligence gathering is supported by having a detective assigned to a federal Joint Terrorism Task Force, an assignment that grants the detective a security clearance that enables access to regional threat information. When a threat reaches a level of concern, the information is relayed to the Police Chief and, if necessary, is shared with the city and its communities. Bellevue also operates a threat management team composed of various city stakeholders to collaboratively assess and manage potential threats, including those involving schools.

With regard to the current political climate and its impact on law enforcement, Major Inman said law enforcement has always been impacted by political expression given the right to free speech. In recent years, there has been an increase in demonstrations in the city. The police department maintains strong communication with event organizers to ensure safety and provide a secure environment for public expression. Officers are trained to support this right by managing events respectfully and professionally. The related issue of crowd control is managed distinctly. All officers receive training in crowd control responses that align with best practices. The department's long-standing accreditation through the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies ensures that policies are rigorously developed, training is consistently administered, and performance is regularly audited. While the frequency of public demonstrations has increased, there have been no major structural changes to the department's approach due to its existing preparedness. Staffing for public events is managed to ensure sufficient officer presence. Officers usually remain in a monitoring role to safeguard all participants, especially when groups with opposing viewpoints are involved. The priority of the department remains the safety of all individuals, regardless of political or ideological affiliation.

Commissioner Hays asked if the police department works with the school district to provide it with best practice training for any risk scenarios that might arise. Major Inman affirmed that the department maintains a strong communication with the schools. The same detective involved in threat assessment and the federal task force also assists in training school staff to prepare for potential emergency scenarios.

Major Inman circled back to the Community Academy, an annual program designed to educate community members about police operations. Anyone interested in understanding public safety work more deeply is encouraged to participate.

The department's volunteer program engages community members in various supportive roles, such as managing department vehicles and assisting at substations or City Hall. Volunteers often provide innovative ideas, and their contributions are considered vital due to limited staffing.

The Women's Empowered program was launched in 2022. The free program is open to girls starting at age eleven and includes a series of self-defense classes. It has been well-received by participants. The program is led by Craig Hananumi, a community officer known as the skateboard officer for working with the youth, and for efforts to secure furniture for families in need. Officer Hananumi's dedication is praiseworthy. The department collectively donates and raises funds to support the officer's work with displaced families.

The police summer youth camp program initially focused on middle school students but was expanded to include high school students due to its popularity. The program serves as an alternative method for youth engagement in the absence of school resource officers. The program has been overwhelmingly popular.

Major Inman shared that all officers like to participate in different education events in partnership with local organizations, including the Bellevue Boys & Girls Club and Youth Eastside Services. The events engage the youth in constructive activities and interactions with officers.

The Commissioners were told that in late May the department hosted its first gun exchange event, which allowed Bellevue residents to anonymously surrender unwanted firearms in exchange for gift cards. A total of 87 firearms were collected, and \$13,000 in gift cards was distributed. The event was considered a success and was framed as a public safety effort.

Throughout the year the departments hosts "Coffee with a Cop" events. The informal gatherings are hosted at various local coffee shops and are designed to build trust, foster accountability, and encourage direct interactions between residents and law enforcement personnel. Officers, detectives, captains and other staff attend the events to converse with community members.

The upcoming neighborhood walks, scheduled for July 10, 23 and 24, involve officers of all ranks walking through neighborhoods with residents and providing them with opportunities for dialogue and informal engagement.

The next National Night Out event is slated for August 5 in the Crossroads area from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. The event is conducted regionally and involves both the Bellevue police and fire departments.

Major Inman shared that the department has enhanced its use of social media. The department recently appointed a new public information officer with expertise in digital engagement. The role supports both recruitment and community transparency. The department actively shares updates through Instagram, Facebook, and X, and often features upcoming events and announcements.

The department produces an annual report that provides a comprehensive overview of all department activities, statistics, and programs from the previous year. It is published on the department's website and serves as a transparency tool that documents the department's partnerships and service outcomes. In addition, the department utilizes a SPIDR tech notification

system to enhance victim support, communication and public safety. The approach improves incident response and community trust. Residents who contact the police department for certain call types, such as property crimes, receive a request to fill out a survey via text message. Sensitive call types, such as domestic violence, are excluded. The survey gathers feedback on service quality and allows residents to offer praise or constructive criticism. The feedback is reviewed by supervisors, including captains and majors. Positive responses are shared with the involved employees, while negative or instructive feedback may be integrated into department training. The value of the feedback in improving service and communication.

Chair Singh thanked Major Inman for the presentation that increased awareness of the department's support strategies.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Singh noted that the next Commission meeting would occur on September 8.

Chair Singh adjourned the meeting at 8:11 p.m.