

CITY OF BELLEVUE
HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION
MINUTES

May 3, 2022
6:00 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
Virtual Meeting

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Commissioners Ma, Mansfield, Phan, Singh
COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Chair Piper, Vice Chair Amirfaiz
STAFF PRESENT: Christy Stangland, Toni Esparza, Leslie Miller,
Department of Parks and Community Services
GUEST SPEAKERS: None
RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

2. ROLL CALL

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Chair Piper and Vice Chair Amirfaiz.

Commissioner Ma announced the resignation of Commissioner Mercer.

Commissioner Ma stated that this meeting and future meetings would be held remotely via Zoom.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. April 5, 2022

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

B. April 7, 2022

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

4. ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS – None

5. COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITY COUNCIL, COMMUNITY COUNCIL,
BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS – None

6. STAFF AND COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Human Services Manager Leslie Miller announced that the department had hired Asma Ahmed. She is coming to the city from United Way of King County.

7. INFORMATION FOR THE COMMISSION

A. Equity Training Debrief

Human Services Planner Christy Stangland offered the opportunity to debrief the equity training session on April 7. The Commissioners were asked to comment on what they learned from the presentation, their homework assignments and exercises that should be considered when reviewing and discussing applications.

Commissioner Phan said it was good to have the issue of implicit bias highlighted and the need to be aware of it when looking at organizations.

Commissioner Ma said the rubric highlighted in the equity training session was pretty good. The Commission has not previously used rubrics in reviewing applications but has looked generally at certain aspects, such as financials and the number of clients served. A rubric could prove to be a useful tool.

Commissioner Mansfield also indicated liking the rubric as a way of keeping in mind underrepresented populations when working through applications, some of which can be overlooked when just focusing on the financials and the bang for the buck. The rubric can also aid in remembering that smaller organizations need additional funding in areas of staffing and overhead given that they do not have all the funding options large organizations have.

Commissioner Singh said the rubric is a useful tool when scoring applications. The equity training was eye-opening for a number of reasons and was a worthwhile exercise.

Leslie Miller commented that the equity training was more general in regard to equitable grantmaking. Some elements of the training were highly relevant to the process of reviewing applications as a public funder, but other elements were more relevant to private foundations.

Christy Stangland asked if legal had offered any advice in regard to using a scoring rubric as part of the application review process. Leslie Miller said there are a couple of different ways to use a scoring tool. The Commission has not traditionally used a rubric in scoring, but it could be a useful tool in terms of asking the right questions.

Commissioner Ma said the rubric would be good if it involved soft scoring rather than hard scoring aimed at ultimately determining funding decisions. If used, the rubric should be a means of making sure the Commission discusses specific items, such as issues of equity and specific needs highlighted in the Needs Update.

Commissioner Mansfield concurred. Commissioner Phan agreed as well, noting that the rubric would be a good way of elevating equity issues as a starting point. It should not, however, be a be-all and end-all tool.

Commissioner Ma commented that the Commission has specifically tried to fund smaller organizations and has indicated to the staff a desire to continue pursuing that approach. The Commission has traditionally sought to allow for a cost-of-living increase, but rather than giving an automatic increase to all funded organizations, those funds should be earmarked for where the needs are the greatest and toward a more equitable distribution.

Department of Parks and Community Services Assistant Director Toni Esparza commented that at a previous meeting the Commission talked about different ways to address equity in funding. One of the conclusions reached was that going into the next review round the

conversation should not be started by considering how much an agency has been previously funded, so as to not bias the recommendations. Commissioner Ma noted concurrence with taking that approach, adding that often the applications involve many programs that have not changed and are just continuing, even though there is still a clear need, and that should be discussed.

Leslie Miller agreed that the application process includes many previously funded programs, and as the Commission reviews them it will see the amount of money previously awarded to those programs. The Commission's decision made in March was to prioritize the needs listed in the Needs Update and to determine funding amounts based on programs that meet those priority areas.

B. 2023-2024 Human Services Fund Applicant Overview

Leslie Miller briefly reviewed the Commission's mutual commitments adopted on March 1. The Commissioners committed to reading the Human Services Needs Update to inform their recommendations. The Commissioners also committed to reading through all of the applications and all of the meeting materials in advance of each meeting and committed to meeting at least one time with their partner outside of the regular meetings to review their assigned applications on a more in-depth basis.

The Commissioners were informed that a total of 136 program applications had been received from 72 agencies. The last funding cycle saw only 106 applications received, 100 of which were determined qualified to be considered. Staff are currently engaged in reviewing the 136 applications to determine which of them qualify. In all, the application requests total more than \$10 million. More than half of the total, \$5.2 million, is in Goal 1, Food to Eat and a Roof Overhead. Goal 2, Supportive Relationships Within Families, Neighborhoods and Communities, has asks totaling just over \$2 million. Almost half a million in asks is in Goal 3, A Safe Haven from All Forms of Violence and Abuse. Nearly \$1.6 million falls under Goal 4, Health Care to Be as Physically and Mentally Fit as Possible, and just over \$1 million is in Goal 5, Education and Job Skills to lead an Independent Life.

It was stated that Vice Chair Amirfaiz and Commissioner Mansfield would make up Team 1; Chair Piper and Commissioner Phan would serve as Team 2; and that Commissioners Ma and Singh would serve as Team 3.

Leslie Miller shared with the Commissioners a spreadsheet sorted by goal area listing each application, the agency, the program name, the amount requested, and the program description summary. The document will serve to aid the Commissioners in quickly understanding at a high level what programs are involved and what each program does to serve the community. The spreadsheet also included the specific team assignments. The Commissioners were informed that they would all be given access to the portal where all the applications are posted but would also have the option of requesting hardcopies of each application.

Christy Stangland briefly reviewed with the Commissioners the process for gaining access to the portal, provided a quick tutorial for how to use it, and outlined the information it contains.

Commissioner Phan asked if the applications include a section highlighting the populations served. Leslie Miller said there is no check box section, but the topic is one applicants discuss in the narrative section.

Commissioner Phan asked how the Commissioners are to address conflicts of interest. Leslie Miller asked the Commissioners to read through the applications summary document and identify any possible personal or professional conflicts of interest and to email the list to staff.

The Commission has traditionally used the first review round to indicate general yes, no or maybe indications for each application. This year the Commissioners will instead be asked to identify the programs they are confident the city needs to fund and set them aside before zeroing in on the applications earmarked as maybe or no, giving priority to those applications assigned to them. Any questions about the applications should be forwarded to staff who will then seek answers to them.

Toni Esparza clarified that in the first round, applications determined by either vote or consensus to be a no will be removed from the list and not revisited. Those given a yes will be discussed again, but without a guarantee of being funded. During the second round the Commission will assign preliminary funding numbers, and in the last step those numbers will be refined and finalized.

There was consensus to take that approach. It was also agreed to schedule an additional meeting on May 24.

For the benefit of the new Commissioners, Commissioner Mansfield urged them to stay ahead of the process by understanding that there is a lot more reading than one might think. Also stressed was the need to really understand the logistics of the various programs. Commissioner Ma agreed and recommended against trying to read through all of the applications in one or two sittings. It helps to have an idea in mind of what to look for in reading through each application.

Leslie Miller noted that staff would be providing the Commissioners with demographic information and summary documents for agencies that have been funded in the past. Staff will be making sure agencies have turned in their financial reviews and audits and will be highlighting any findings. Staff will also make sure each agency is registered with the state either as a non-profit or a different type of entity. Christy Stangland added that the documentation would be taking the place of the traditional staff review.

Commissioner Phan asked what is done with the information submitted by agencies about their BIPOC staff. Commissioner Ma noted that populations that are traditionally underrepresented are best served by members of their own communities. BIPOC staff are better able to serve members of their underrepresented communities.

Christy Stangland stressed the importance of Commissioners attending meetings in order to make sure there is a quorum and to make sure all voices are heard.

8. OLD BUSINESS – None
9. NEW BUSINESS – None
10. CONTINUED ORAL COMMUNICATIONS – None
11. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Mansfield. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Phan and the motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Ma adjourned the meeting at 7:14 p.m.