

CITY OF BELLEVUE  
CITY COUNCIL

Summary Minutes of Regular Meeting

January 28, 2025  
6:00 p.m.

Council Chambers  
Bellevue, Washington

PRESENT: Mayor Robinson, Deputy Mayor Malakoutian and Councilmembers Hamilton, Lee, Nieuwenhuis, Stokes and Zahn

ABSENT: None.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:03 p.m., with Mayor Robinson presiding.

Mayor Robinson noted that Councilmember Zahn has been appointed to the State House of Representatives.

Ms. Zahn said she has been grateful for the opportunity to serve on the Bellevue City Council over the past seven years. She has already started to work with the state legislature and will continue to serve on the Council for a brief period of time. She expressed appreciation for the Council, the community and the King County Council for providing this opportunity to represent them in Olympia. Ms. Zahn said she will serve on three legislative committees: Local Government, Housing and Capital Budget.

Mayor Robinson announced that Helena Stephens, a longtime City employee, passed away the previous week.

Deputy Mayor Malakoutian said Ms. Stephens was working most recently as the City's Equity and Regional Policy Advisor in the City Manager's Office. She previously served as a Recreation Program Manager in the Parks and Community Services Department. Ms. Stephens was instrumental in executing the Council's vision and ensuring that Councilmembers and staff had access to the most accurate information for making decisions and setting policy. Mr. Malakoutian commended Ms. Stephens' expertise as she supported his service on the King County Mental Illness and Drug Dependency (MIDD) Behavioral Health Advisory Committee. Mr. Malakoutian said he has received numerous communications since she passed away praising her contributions and positive impact in the community.

Councilmember Zahn said she was devastated by the loss of Ms. Stephens. Ms. Zahn said she knew her before she joined the Council and worked with her through the Nourishing Networks, a consortium of communities that focuses on food insecurity. Among her many contributions, Ms. Stephens recently staffed the Eastside Human Services Forum.

Councilmember Lee commented on Ms. Stephens' longtime commitment to supporting and enhancing diversity before DEI initiatives became popular. He praised her work with young people and the Bellevue Youth Link Council for many years.

Councilmember Stokes said he enjoyed working with Ms. Stephens and appreciated her collaborative approach and sense of humor. He said she was especially skilled in supporting the City's efforts with optimism while reminding us that we can do better. Mr. Stokes said he will greatly miss her positive attitude.

Mayor Robinson said she saw Patrick Foran, the City's former Parks and Community Services Director, over the weekend. Mr. Foran said Ms. Stephens really wanted to lead the community services division. However, when she lost that opportunity, she continued to expand her role as an equity and regional policy advisor and community advocate.

Councilmember Hamilton recalled a lesson from Ms. Stephens that made a valuable and meaningful impression on him. He described a public meeting where he had a negative interaction with a challenging community member. Ms. Stephens approached Mr. Hamilton during a break and suggested making a slight accommodation for the person to get through the meeting and on to the issues that really matter. He said he appreciated her wisdom and kindness and will carry it with him.

Moving on, Mayor Robinson commented regarding public conduct during Council meetings. She said individuals are not allowed to disrupt the meeting, which includes talking out of turn or without permission, interrupting or making sounds when someone else is talking or approaching a Councilmember or City employee who is staffing the meeting. If a person disrupts the meeting, Mayor Robinson will issue a warning, end the speaker's comment time or ask the person to leave the room for the rest of the meeting. She asked everyone to express themselves without name-calling, taunting or disparaging others.

## 2. Roll Call; Flag Salute

City Clerk Charmaine Arredondo called the roll and all Councilmembers were present. Deputy Mayor Malakoutian led the flag salute.

### (a) Americans of Chinese Descent History Month Proclamation

Councilmember Lee read the proclamation recognizing January 2025 as Americans of Chinese Descent History Month in Bellevue. He thanked everyone in the audience who helped to support the proclamation and noted that more than 19 percent of Bellevue's population is of Chinese descent. He encouraged everyone to learn about and celebrate the accomplishments and cultural contributions of generations of Chinese Americans, including recent immigrants.

Faye Chien, representing Kin On health and social services organization for Asian elders and their families, said it is a honor to work and live in Bellevue. She thanked the Council for the proclamation.

(b) International Holocaust Remembrance Day Proclamation

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis read the proclamation recognizing January 27, 2025, as International Holocaust Remembrance Day in Bellevue. He encouraged everyone to join in solemn remembrance of the victims, educate themselves about the Holocaust and to work together to confront and eradicate antisemitism.

Regina Sassoon Friedland, Regional Director, American Jewish Committee Seattle, said this is the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp, where 1.1 million Jews were murdered. She said more than 6 million Jews were systemically murdered in a process intended to annihilate the collective Jewish people and other minority communities. Ms. Friedland thanked Mayor Robinson and the Council for leading the region in fighting hate and discrimination against all people and recognizing that Jew hatred still exists. She thanked Councilmember Nieuwenhuis for his continued dedication to the safety and security of the Jewish community.

(c) Lunar New Year Week Proclamation

Councilmember Stokes read the proclamation recognizing January 29, 2025, and the following week as Lunar New Year Week in Bellevue. He encouraged everyone to join in community festivities to celebrate the Year of the Snake with hope, prosperity and unity in our hearts.

Boliver Choi, Chinese Information and Service Center, thanked the Council for the proclamation, which he said signifies a recognition of our shared heritage and traditions. He said the Lunar New Year fosters a sense of pride in the community and is a powerful reminder of the importance of belonging. He wished everyone a Happy New Year.

3. Approval of Agenda

→ Deputy Mayor Malakoutian moved to approve the agenda, and Councilmember Stokes seconded the motion.

→ The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

4. Oral Communications

City Clerk Arredondo said the total time for oral communications is for a period not to exceed 30 minutes and topics must relate to City of Bellevue government. Persons speaking to items on the agenda will be called first and if time remains, others will be called. The presiding officer is authorized to give preference to individuals who have not spoken to the Council within the past 60 days or who are speaking to items that will come before the Council in the upcoming 60 days.

- (a) Francoise Milinganyo, Executive Director, Congolese Integration Network (CIN), requested funding to support CIN's acquisition of the Amani Shelter. She noted that Amani means peace in Swahili and the shelter serves refugee women earning less than 30 percent of the area median income (AMI). The shelter has been successful in helping people to find jobs and move to permanent housing. She said the home housing the shelter was sold by the owner and the CIN is now in need of another facility, preferably with five bedrooms for multiple families and an on-site case manager. Ms. Milinganyo said the Congolese population is increasing in Bellevue.
- (b) Sameth Mell expressed support for the acquisition of the Amani Shelter project, an urgent and necessary initiative led by the CIN. He said many of the women they serve are survivors of trauma and displacement and need more than just a roof over their head. He noted the need for stability, culturally responsive care and the time to heal to rebuild their lives. The shelter will provide a secure home with 24-hour case management, workforce development support, mental health services and a shared community.
- (c) Joe Kunzler thanked the Council for the International Holocaust Remembrance Day proclamation. He said the Holocaust led to the deaths of Jews, individuals with disabilities, political dissidents, homosexuals and others. He encouraged the Council to stop a citizen who repeatedly engages in using the Nazi salute and Nazi rhetoric during oral communications. Mr. Kunzler thanked Councilmembers for their public service and commitment to individuals with disabilities.
- (d) Sara Wagner, a physician and the Executive Director of the Bellevue Symphony, said she wanted to raise awareness about the symphony that has existed since 2019. She said the Bellevue Opera has been in place since 2022. She noted the symphony's commitment to youth and to six youth competitions per year. The Young Artists concert will be held on March 2. She said the symphony provides a path for youth who want to pursue a career in music. She encouraged the public to contact her at [bellevuesymphonycontact@gmail.com](mailto:bellevuesymphonycontact@gmail.com) if they or someone they know is interested in serving on the Board. She thanked the Council for its support and thanked Mayor Robinson for attending the symphony's last concert.
- (e) Patrick Sathyanathan said he is a longtime resident of Bellevue. He expressed concern regarding the accountability of members of the Bellevue Police Department. He alleged police misconduct including perjury, false arrest, filing false charges and property destruction. He said he has been told that there have not been any violations of department policy.
- (f) Alex Tsimerman said he has been attending Bellevue School District Board meetings. Responding to Mayor Robinson, he said the District recently gave a presentation to the Council and he wanted to comment on it. He said he was trespassed for one year by the BSD Board after speaking at two of their meetings.

Mayor Robinson asked Mr. Tsimerman to keep his comments to City business. Following additional comments, Mayor Robinson noted that he was disrupting the meeting and asked that he be removed from Council Chambers.

5. Reports of Community Councils, Boards, and Commissions: None.

6. Report of the City Manager: None.

7. Council Business and New Initiatives: None.

8. Consent Calendar

→ Deputy Mayor Malakoutian moved to approve the Consent Calendar, and Councilmember Stokes seconded the motion.

→ The motion to approve the Consent Calendar carried by a vote of 7-0, and the following items were approved:

(a) Council Minutes

*Minutes of January 7, 2025 Regular Meeting*

(b) Motion to approve payment of claims and payroll for the period December 1, 2024 - December 31, 2024.

(c) Motion to award Bid No. 24120, NE 8th Street and I-405 Crossing Improvements and Beautification Project, to Granite Construction Co. as the lowest responsible and responsive bidder, in the amount of \$2,369,503.60, plus all applicable taxes. This project is funded by the Neighborhood Safety, Connectivity and Congestion Levy (CIP Plan No. PW-R-199).

(d) Motion to award Bid No. 24103 for the 2024 Utilities On-Call Asphalt and Concrete Repair contract to AA Asphaltting LLC, as the lowest responsive and responsible bidder, for an initial term of two (2) years in the amount of \$2,169,749.00, plus all applicable taxes, with an option to extend the contract for one (1) additional year for \$1,084,874.50, plus all applicable taxes, for a total not to exceed contract amount of \$3,254,623.50, plus all applicable taxes.

9. Public Hearings: None.

10. Study Session

(a) Fall 2024 Housing Trust Fund Allocation Recommendations by the ARCH (A Regional Coalition for Housing) Executive Board

Deputy City Manager Nathan McCommon said he is the newly elected chair of the ARCH Executive Board. He said the Board voted unanimously in favor of the recommended Fall 2024

Housing Trust Fund allocations. The Community Advisory Board reviewed the applications and recommended funding projects that are most aligned with the values of ARCH, had strong feasibility for success, and placed the Trust in a good position for future accomplishments.

Thara Johnson, Planning Director, said staff is requesting Council direction to prepare legislation to approve Bellevue funding of \$1,810,900 for the Fall 2024 ARCH Housing Trust Fund for future Council action.

Lindsay Masters, ARCH Executive Director, recalled that ARCH's mission is to preserve and increase housing for low- and moderate-income households in East King County, including through public-private partnerships and the sharing of technical resources and staff between jurisdictions. She said each ARCH city identifies a voluntary contribution toward the Housing Trust Fund and the level of available funding is advertised to the development community. ARCH assists applicants in preparing their projects for application. After projects are approved by the Executive Board they are forwarded to the cities for final approval.

Ms. Masters said ARCH receives funding from a number of sources, including through the low-income housing tax credit program, tax-exempt bonds, state and county dollars, federal funding and other contributions (e.g., Amazon).

In 2024, ARCH completed construction of two projects providing 139 housing units. Three projects with 332 units closed on financing and six projects with 881 units will be under construction by the end of the year. Ms. Masters said there have been 16 pre-application meetings with prospective sponsors. Two of the projects that closed on financing are in Bellevue and 10 of the pre-application meetings relate to potential projects in Bellevue.

Ms. Masters said staff would present the ARCH Housing Trust Fund recommendations now and recommendations for the City's Housing Stability Program later in the evening.

Patrick Tippy, Investments Manager, said the 2024 ARCH Housing Trust Fund priorities were updated to reflect and better align with the 2024 ARCH Strategic Plan. The priorities emphasize the timely delivery of housing with the ability to advance through the permitting process quickly and to secure other funding sources in a timely manner. The priorities encourage maximizing the creation of housing units by leveraging private investment. Other objectives address target populations, geographic equity, preservation, supportive housing and environmentally sustainable solutions.

Mr. Tippy highlighted funding received by ARCH from the State and King County. He said ARCH coordination leverages \$20 for every \$1 used from the ARCH Housing Trust Fund and \$20 for every \$3 of all local funds. The recommended projects are expected to leverage 12 different funding sources.

Mr. Tippy said the Fall 2024 recommended projects focus on serving households earning 50-60 percent of the area median income (AMI). He noted a large development project for senior adults. ARCH received requests totaling \$11.7 million for the \$4.9 million available in the Housing Trust Fund. Mr. Tippy said 11 project applications were received for projects in six

cities, including three previously awarded projects. Project types include multifamily rental, home ownership, group homes for people with disabilities, new construction and the preservation of existing affordable housing.

Mr. Tippy described the Larus project to be located in Kenmore. It will provide 175 units for low-income seniors in households earning 40-60 percent AMI. The recommended award is \$3.4 million and the partners are TWG and Imagine Housing.

The LIHI (Low Income Housing Institute) Aventine project in Bellevue provides 66 units at the 30 percent AMI, 50 percent AMI and 80 percent AMI levels. It is intended to serve families and individuals exiting homelessness, veterans, people with disabilities and workforce housing needs. The recommended award is \$900,000.

The third project is Emily House in Issaquah, a five-bedroom group home for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The applicant is Life Enrichment Options (LEO) and the recommended award is \$482,687 using federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds.

The total funding recommended for the three projects is \$4,782,687 for approximately 246 housing units. Staff is seeking Council direction to prepare legislation to approve Bellevue funding of \$1,810,900.

→ Deputy Mayor Malakoutian moved to direct staff to prepare legislation to approve Bellevue funding of \$1,810,900 for the Fall 2024 ARCH Housing Trust Fund, for future Council action. Councilmember Stokes seconded the motion.

Councilmember Hamilton thanked staff for the presentation. He thanked the ARCH Executive Board and the ARCH Community Advisory Board for their review and recommendations. He thanked staff for the thorough information provided in the meeting packet. He asked for more information about the Crossroads apartment project that withdrew its request.

Mr. Tippy said the applicant, LIHI, was proposing to acquire from an existing owner, who had already income-restricted the property. Following due diligence and a feasibility study, LIHI decided to withdraw its funding request.

Responding to Mayor Robinson, Mr. Tippy said the Community Advisory Board focused on projects that could be permit ready and have funding secured in the shortest time period.

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis said he was ready to move forward. He thanked staff and the ARCH Executive Board for their work. Mr. Nieuwenhuis expressed concern about the lack of larger apartments for families. Mr. Tippy said this year's priorities focused on the timeliness of delivery and maximizing unit creation. He noted that the Aventine project has some two-bedroom units. In further response to Mr. Nieuwenhuis, Mr. Tippy said the Aventine project provides approximately 18 units at the 30-percent AMI level.

Deputy Mayor Malakoutian thanked everyone for their work and concurred with Councilmember Nieuwenhuis's advocacy for larger units for families.

Councilmember Stokes commended ARCH for their longtime efforts, accomplishments and partnerships. He expressed support for moving forward with the recommendations.

Councilmember Lee said ARCH is a model for regional collaboration and has always done a great job. He praised ARCH's partnerships and ability to leverage other funding sources. Responding to Mr. Lee, Ms. Masters said there is a formula for allocating ARCH contributions from member cities. Ms. Masters said ARCH continues to learn about how best to leverage additional funding sources.

Councilmember Lee congratulated Deputy City Manager McCommon for being selected as the ARCH Executive Board Chair.

Councilmember Zahn thanked staff for the presentation. She expressed support for continuing ARCH's legacy of providing housing to allow a range of individuals to live in Bellevue. She said she was glad to see projects with both rentals and home ownership and projects with deeper affordability units, including for senior adults. She concurred with her colleagues about the need for larger housing units for families.

Responding to Ms. Zahn, Mr. Tippy said the recommendations utilize all available dollars from the ARCH Housing Trust Fund.

Responding to Mayor Robinson, Mr. Tippy confirmed that current Aventine tenants who earn above 80-percent AMI will be forced to move out at some point in the future. Ms. Robinson said she hoped assistance would be provided to residents who will be displaced.

→ The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

At 7:30 p.m., Mayor Robinson declared a short break. The meeting resumed at 7:40 p.m.

(b) Housing Stability Program Affordable and Supportive Housing Funding Allocation

City Manager Carlson introduced discussion regarding the Housing Stability Program funding allocations. She said the City released the request for proposals (RFP) in the fall and staff from the City and ARCH evaluated the proposals.

Planning Director Johnson said staff is requesting Council direction to prepare legislation approving the funding allocation for the Fall 2024 Housing Stability Program Capital and Operating/Maintenance funding recommendations.

Sabrina Velarde, Housing Stability Program Coordinator in the Office of Housing, recalled that in July 2022, the Council approved a program framework with funding allocations, priorities, process and evaluation criteria. Up to 40 percent of annual revenue is targeted as bonding for



affordable housing partnership projects and land acquisition, approximately 40 percent is for capital projects and operations/maintenance costs, 15 percent is directed toward behavioral health and housing-related services, and five percent is directed to staff support by ARCH and City staff. The Housing Stability Program's 2024 revenue totaled \$10.2 million. Ms. Velarde said the presentation would focus on capital projects and operations and maintenance funding.

Ms. Velarde said the Housing Stability Program is driven by state legislation regarding the allowed uses of the funding, the Council's funding priorities and the funding process. The Council's priorities are focused on preventing homelessness and housing instability, serving 0-30 percent AMI households and assisting vulnerable, underserved populations.

Ms. Velarde said the capital and operations/maintenance grants are awarded annually. In early 2024, the Council approved \$15 million for three projects. The RFP was released last summer and the City and ARCH coordinated an interdepartmental review committee to evaluate the applications and make a recommendation.

Ms. Velarde said the Housing Stability Program has so far awarded \$23.4 million for capital and operations/maintenance projects. These investments allowed for the creation or conversion of 467 new affordable units overall. The Housing Stability Program evaluation criteria includes alignment with Council priorities and state law, feasibility and cost effectiveness, experience of project sponsor, project readiness, equity for marginalized communities, ability to leverage other sources, relevance to local needs and the adequacy of the management plan and support services.

Mr. Tippy said the three Housing Stability Program funding requests totaled \$12.4 million. Staff recommends funding for one project, the Amani transitional housing project sponsored by the Congolese Integration Network (CIN). The project involves the acquisition of an existing single-family home to serve refugees and single-parent households with young children exiting homelessness. On-site services include a case manager, linguistically and culturally appropriate services and other wrap-around family services. The Amani recommendation proposes a capital award of \$1.3 million and an operations and maintenance award of \$67,530 per year for five years. The grants are fully funded through HB 1590 tax revenues collected by the City.

Mr. Tippy said staff is requesting direction to return with legislation approving the funding allocation for the Fall 2024 Housing Stability Program Capital and Operations/Maintenance funding recommendations.

Mayor Robinson thanked staff for the presentation.

→ Deputy Mayor Malakoutian moved to direct staff to prepare legislation approving the funding allocation for the Fall 2024 Housing Stability Program Capital and Operations/Maintenance funding recommendations, for future Council action. Councilmember Stokes seconded the motion.

Mayor Robinson expressed support for the recommendation and asked how client referrals will be managed. Mr. Tippy said the referrals for the property are handled by the CIN.

Ms. Robinson asked whether Housing Stability Program funds could be used to provide rental assistance. Ms. Velarde said staff would follow up with more information.

Deputy Mayor Malakoutian expressed support for the recommendation to fund the Amani house. He asked whether residents of affordable housing are tracked to determine their long-term self-sufficiency. Mr. Tippy said the program tracks how many people are housed and staff monitors projects for annual compliance and service delivery.

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis expressed support for the recommendation. He suggested tracking the number of individuals/families that are able to transition to the next housing stage in addition to the number of people served. He asked about monitoring the quality and effectiveness of the case management services and culturally appropriate services. Ms. Velarde said staff conducts on-site monitoring visits to ensure that services are being provided.

Councilmember Hamilton thanked staff for the information and expressed support for the recommendation. He believes the Amani project will have a significant impact in the community.

Councilmember Stokes expressed support for the recommendation and the Housing Stability Program.

Councilmember Lee observed that serving Congolese refugees is an important need deserving of the City's attention. He expressed support for the funding recommendation and encouraged ongoing monitoring of the program.

Councilmember Zahn thanked staff for the presentation. She said the City has been able to collect significant funding for housing needs through the HB 1590 tax. She expressed support for the Amani funding recommendation.

→ The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

11. Land Use: None.

12. Other Ordinances, Resolutions, and Motions: None.

13. Written Reports: None.

14. Unfinished Business: None.

15. New Business: None.

16. Executive Session: None.

17. Adjournment

At 8:12 p.m., Mayor Robinson declared the meeting adjourned.

Charmaine Arredondo, CMC  
City Clerk

/kaw