

The Human Services Commission approved these minutes on June 30, 2020

CITY OF BELLEVUE
HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION
MINUTES

March 3, 2020

Bellevue City Hall

6:00 p.m.

City Council Conference Room 1E-113

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chairperson Ma, Commissioners Amirfaiz, Kline,
Mercer

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioners Jain, Mansfield, Piper

STAFF PRESENT: Alex O'Reilly, DeeDee Catalano, Christy Stangland,
Toni Esparza, Devin Konick-Seese, Department of
Parks and Community Services; Councilmember
Nieuwenhuis

GUEST SPEAKERS:

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

2. ROLL CALL

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of
Commissioners Jain, Mansfield and Piper, all of whom were excused.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. February 4, 2020

There was consensus to defer approval of the minutes to the March 17, 2020, meeting of the Commission.

4. ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS – None

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

6. STAFF AND COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Commissioner Kline reported that she participated in the Sophia Way site visit on March 2. She said it was good to receive an update on the progress relative to the new site in Kirkland. She said she learned the agency is not currently participating in the coordinated entry system because of the belief that the population from the Eastside can be better served by keeping things local. The new facility is scheduled to be open in the fall but the agency is already projecting it will not be able to meet the need, so steps are being taken to potentially keep the existing shelter open as well. While that will provide more beds, it will also increase operating costs.

Chair Ma said he attended the Youth Link Gumbo night. He said there were some Councilmembers present along with members of other city boards and commissions. He said he took the opportunity to talk with the youth at his table and learned from them that mental health due to performance is high on their list of concerns, especially in the Bellevue area. They did not have much of an opinion to share with regard to youth homelessness.

7. INFORMATION FOR THE COMMISSION

A. Public Hearing on Housing, Community Development and Human Services

Grant Coordinator DeeDee Catalano explained that the city is required by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to conduct a public hearing on housing, community development and human services needs. The public hearing provides Bellevue residents and human services providers who serve Bellevue residents to weigh in on the needs in the community. The information collected will be used to inform the 2021 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Annual Action Plan and will be used during funding deliberations for program year 2021 CDBG grants. The Commission will also use the information in developing recommendations for allocation of the 2021-2022 general fund grant. She noted that written statements had been received from some and said they would be entered into and become a part of the official record.

A motion to open the public hearing was made by Commissioner Kline. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mercer and the motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Rachel Krinsky, Executive Director of LifeWire, spoke representing the King County Alliance for Human Services and the Eastside advocacy team members Jerry Krone, Executive Director of the Eastside Legal Assistance Program; Helen Banks Routon, Director of Development and Community Relations for Eastside Baby Corner; David Boling, Executive Director of Congregations for the Homeless; and Will Toseframe(?) with Solid Ground. Ms. Krinsky explained that the Alliance member organizations provide essential services to residents across the county, including residents of Bellevue. She said the network is grateful for Bellevue's generous human services funding, for the formula that allows for funding to increase annually, and for the services of the Commissioners on the Commission in making sure human services are addressed in the city. The network is also aware, however, that the

needs in Bellevue have grown well beyond the allocated funding, as evidenced by Bellevue's community needs survey. She asked the Commission to recommend increased human services funding overall. The 2019-2020 community survey calls out the fact that Bellevue is rapidly becoming unaffordable for many segments of the population, and states that across systems there are critical service gaps, including homelessness services; affordable housing; services for children experiencing substance use disorder, anxiety, suicidal ideation and depression; low-cost legal services; services for people with disabilities; coordinated transportation for seniors; and services for specific populations, including veterans and survivors of domestic violence. She said the network would be asking the City Council to take concrete steps toward the human services budget allocation and formula in order to meet the critical gaps in services. Specifically, two things will be requested, first that the human services allocation in the next biennium be equivalent to at least two percent of the general fund; and second that the annual formula be adjusted to accelerate growth in human services funding moving forward. The current formula, while a good idea, does not increase funding sufficiently to meet the growth in needs. The formula should be based on the annual increase of forecasted inflation, plus the forecasted population growth, plus the prior year percent increase to the general fund. The Commission was urged to join with the network in recommending a two percent general fund allocation for human services and the proposed new formula to the City Council, the Mayor and the City Manager.

Ms. Malory Gustave Trusk spoke representing Hopelink. She thanked the Commission for its tremendous and continued support and leadership in the human services arena. Hopelink is a multiservice organization that provides a myriad of programs in Bellevue, many of which help community members stabilize from the crisis of poverty and gain the skills needed to exit poverty. During fiscal year 2019, Hopelink served 64,000 participants in King and Snohomish counties, including 5900 Bellevue residents. In all, 281,000 were served with the heat, rent support and food bank programs. There has been an increase in the number of Bellevue residents who need support, and the need has increased steadily each year. Many programs have a

wait list. Over the last few years there has been an increased need for flexible financial assistance, which includes eviction prevention, move-in assistance and utilities. There has also been an increased need for financial coaching; affordable housing at all affordability levels; mental health and chemical dependency treatment; and child care resources, and more providers accepting state subsidies. Nearly 90 languages are spoken by the diverse populations served by Hopelink, and many have expressed concerns about the new public charge rule. Hopelink has identified the most significant barriers to success as being transportation, affordable housing, living wage and employment, and food and security. A family of four in Bellevue needs to earn up to \$96,000 per year in order to meet their basic needs, and that is more than 300 percent of the federal poverty level. Hopelink has responded to the increased need with innovative programs such as financial resiliency, a mobile food bank serving remote communities, financial capability programs, and has invested in the salaries of its staff. Overall, the agency has achieved amazing results. In fiscal year 2019, 88 percent of the Hopelink housing residents achieved permanent housing. The English for Work program participants are exiting with a \$19 average hourly wage. Ninety-four percent of the families in the Family Development program have achieved and maintained housing. The Commission was urged to continue to invest in the community through the human services grants.

Ms. Cathy Murahashi, Education and Outreach Manager for Community Homes, explained that the organization operates seven adult family homes specifically for people with intellectual and development disabilities on the Eastside, and also offers workshops to help families create shared living opportunities. Community Homes believes that all adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities deserve rich and meaningful lives in their communities, which in turn benefits from including them. She thanked the Commission for support for the Housing Readiness workshops. Affordable housing is difficult for anyone but particularly so for families that have loved ones with disabilities that are uniquely complex. The workshops have helped hundreds of families understand the housing models that can help them live their best lives in the community. Community Homes is grateful for having received funding

from ARCH and the Housing Trust Fund for the purchase of two more homes that will serve a total of eight persons. That is not, however, enough to meet the demand for housing for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The agency continues to receive hundreds of calls from parents looking for homes for their children. Most difficult to hear from are the senior parents who are no longer able to care for their disabled sons and daughters and who are seeking a placement. There is a misconception that the system automatically cares for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities once they reach adulthood. The reality is that the system relies on parents and families to care for them. She said her developmentally disabled daughter lives with her, rides the bus to her job at the Microsoft café, and hangs out with her friends in Bellevue. She said she has worked hard to build a supportive community around her daughter and hopes that affordable housing will be available for her when she is ready to move out on her own. She said Community Homes also supports the recommendations of the Human Services Alliance.

Ms. Colleen Willis, a long-time staff member and an alumni parent of Kindering, pointed out that 85 percent of brain development is completed by a child's fourth birthday. The therapies and trauma-informed care and special education that Kindering provides is crucial for providing children with diverse abilities with the early education and developmental therapies they need. The mission of Kindering is to embrace children of diverse abilities by providing the finest education and therapies to nurture hope, courage and the skills to soar. Families from across Bellevue find an open door at Kindering; no one is turned away. The agency provides consultation services in early care and education settings, and works with child care and preschool providers to support children with special needs in managing challenging behaviors, communicating concerns about a child's development with families, and structure activities to meet the needs of individual children. Examples of consultation services include individual child observations, developmental screenings, resources and referrals, guidance for families, and classroom observation and teacher support. Children who normally may have been expelled from programs are retained in their child care situations where consultation services are utilized, and families are able to

access services and other resources much sooner. Additionally, providers are more comfortable supporting children with special needs and/or behavioral challenges, reducing staff frustration. Kinderling served more than 6500 children and families in 2019, but there remains a significant unmet need. The Bellevue campus located in Crossroads Mall is a beacon for Bellevue residents to find support for their children.

Ms. Kathy Flemming, Executive Ddirector of Attain Housing, said the agency provides housing and support services for families transitioning out of homelessness in both Bellevue and Kirkland, and for families that are at risk for losing their homes on the Eastside. The need for housing is clear and the most cost-effective way to address the housing crisis is to prevent families with children from losing their housing. According to the needs assessment, 30 percent of Bellevue residents are considered cost burdened, which means they are on the fence and at any moment they could lose their housing. It only takes one little thing to put the cost burdened at risk. A parent having to stay home to take care of a sick child does not get paid. A car breaks down and a parent is unable to get to work and is not able to earn what it will take to repair the car. Extreme medical bills not covered by insurance can be a tipping point. All of those things happened to Bellevue families in 2019 who were helped through the financial assistance program. In each case the people needed one-time immediate assistance to help them pay their rent so they could get back to their lives and avoid the hardship of losing their homes or being evicted. In 2019 Attain Housing helped 627 people representing 231 households keep their homes. Of the total, 236 were Bellevue residents, and 107 were children in Bellevue. The average cost for helping keep them in their homes was less than \$600 per household. In follow-up efforts three to six months after receiving assistance, it was found that more than 95 percent were still stably housed. The Commission was urged to carefully consider prevention programs when making funding decisions.

Ms. Sarah Tiffany, an Employment Specialist with Bellevue Clubhouse, a local non-profit that helps people with mental health recovery through communicate engagement, asked her colleague Kimberly Rettig to speak about her experiences

with Bellevue Clubhouse.

Ms. Rettig, a Bellevue resident, said she was diagnosed with bipolar schizoaffective disorder following a traumatic brain injury resulting from a motorcycle accident. She said after accessing the resources available at Harborview Medical Center, she was able to return to college and gain a Master's Degree in architecture. Unfortunately, 15 years later it became necessary to undergo a regime of electro-convulsive shock therapy which negatively impacted her professional and personal memory. Having access to help with mental illness is imperative. She said the Bellevue Clubhouse became a catalyst for her to a sense of belonging. Through the help of the Bellevue Clubhouse two and a half years ago, reentry to the workforce became possible and she said she now works part time at a local restaurant. Bellevue Clubhouse offers hope, empowerment, relationships and opportunity for adults 18 years old and older who have been diagnosed with mental illnesses. The program follows an evidence-based non-clinical psycho-social rehabilitation model of recovery. It does not offer therapy, no degree is required, and the staff and members are all on the same level.

Ms. Tiffany said no task done in the Clubhouse is done solely by the staff, rather members participate in all work and often members are given the self-advocacy to take on projects, come up with ideas and manage the projects. The supported employment program offered by the Clubhouse continues to meet and exceed expectations. Housing is a barrier encountered over and over. It can be difficult for someone without a consistent place to sleep at night to sit down and talk about the minutia of formatting a resume, or how to prepare for an interview. It can be difficult to focus on such things when they really are focused on where they will sleep that night. Those who sleep in shelters face the possibility of their things being stolen, including their cell phones, laptops and other tools they need to apply for work. Even for those who do find jobs find their minimum wage jobs, or even jobs that pay \$19 per hour, find housing costs are beyond what they can afford. The Section 8 wait list is extremely long and coordinated entry is difficult to access, all of which can exacerbate preexisting mental illnesses.

Mr. Devin Santa Maria, a board member of Eastside Baby Corner, said as a fiscal conservative he has found immense value in the kind of dignity organizations like Hopelink, Eastside Baby Corner and others provide to those they serve. Over the last six to eight months Eastside Baby Corner has shifted how it looks at servicing the community. While the organization can say with specificity how many diapers it has handed out, there is an intangible element bestowed on those who are worrying about things like being able to afford things like diapers and car seats. The stress and drop in self esteem that comes along with not having enough money to provide all needs. Organizations like Eastside Baby Corner offer dignity to their clients who truly need a leg up.

A motion to close the public hearing was made by Commissioner Kline. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mercer and the motion carried unanimously.

B. Youth Link Board Human Services Commission Youth Grant Review Proposal

Mr. Maxim Derkachev, a junior at Interlake High School and a Youth Link Board member, began his presentation with a five-minute video about the Youth Link organization. Following the video, he explained that Youth Link was formed in 1990 by the City Council and some community members. There are 12 students appointed to the board to address issues that are of specific interest to youth. Youth Link works in partnership with businesses and non-profit organizations to deliver world-class and innovative youth leadership programs. Projects addressed by the organization to date include the Ground Zero teen center, the skate park, the Teen Talk radio program, the Community Leadership awards, the Youth Involvement Conference and the Bellevue Youth Court. There are students from both public and private schools as well as from other learning communities.

Continuing, Mr. Derkachev said the Youth Link Board meets on the second and

fourth Wednesdays of each month from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. The meetings are held at various schools and community sites. There are 12 youth and six adults on the board charged with responding to the interests and concerns of young people in the community by engaging youth in the decision-making process. The organization represents the youth voice to leadership in the community. The Bellevue Youth Council, a larger group of students, meets on the first and third Wednesdays of each month from 3:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. at Sammamish and Interlake high schools. Their focus is on planning service projects, social events, and convening a dialogue around trending youth topics.

The citywide Youth Involvement Conference takes place every two years and it is aimed at engaging youth across the city in dialogue around important youth topics. The members decide on the theme for the conference, the keynote speakers, the workshops and the marketing strategy. The 2020 Youth Involvement Conference is scheduled for April 10 from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at Bellevue City Hall. The Community Leadership Awards serves as an opportunity to recognize youth in the community and the event occurs in the spring of every year. The youth members work in committees to plan the program and to review and select all youth award winners. The 30th annual Community Leadership Award ceremony is scheduled for May 27 from 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at Bellevue City Hall.

With regard to the grant application proposal, Mr. Derkachev said the intent of the Youth Link Board was to partner with the Commission as a way of including a youth voice and perspective in the Commission's work. He said the idea was to have the Youth Link staff review the applications and identify the ones that pertain to the work of Youth Link with youth in the community. The staff would delegate to subcommittees the work of reviewing the pertinent applications, and the Youth Link Board would then report back to the Commission with feedback and recommendations with the intent of having the work of the Commission reflecting a youth voice in its decision making.

Mr. Derkachev noted the Commission's current application includes under the heading "Program Impact" the question "How do you ensure program services are culturally relevant and accessible to all eligible clients? Provide one or two examples that best demonstrate how this is achieved (e.g. staff composition, community partnership, best or promising practices, etc.)" Youth Link plans to develop a thorough strategy for reviewing the applications that will focus on 1) *Who* –Who are represented in the youth population with the program or project? Who are not represented or served in the program or project? 2) *What* –What current services are in place to meet the current need of the youth population being served? What are some potential barriers for the delivery of services to underrepresented youth? 3) *How* –How are the current services providing and meeting the needs of the youth population being served? How are they different? How are the youth in the program or project satisfied with the services that they are receiving? and 4) *Why* –Why is the project or services important for the identified youth community?

Patrick Alina, Youth Link Program Coordinator, thanked the Youth Link Board for their work in developing the proposal. He said working with the Commission has been an interest of the board for some time. The focus point of the proposal is to add a layer to the application review process. He pointed out that recently the composition of the Youth Link Board was changed from having six youth and six adults to having 12 youth and six adults to increase the youth voice at the table. Additionally, the board moved to meeting twice each month, with the subcommittees operating at the second meeting. As proposed, it would be the subcommittees doing the work of reviewing the applications.

Commissioner Mercer asked if the questions put forward by the Youth Link Board would be asked internally or if the desire was to see them added to the application. Mr. Alina said they would be asked internally, and Ms. O'Reilly said they would not be made part of the application.

Commissioner Amirfaiz asked about the diversity of the 12 Youth Link Board

members. Mr. Derkachev said during the selection process staff works to reflect the diversity of the community on the board. There is diversity in terms of the schools, with each public and private high school represented. Mr. Alina said diversity is intentionally addressed in seating new board members, not only in terms of schools but also in terms of ethnicity.

Commissioner Mercer asked how many subcommittees the Youth Link Board has. Mr. Alina said there are four: youth homelessness, diversity/equity, environmental sustainability and transitions.

Chair Ma asked if he were correct in understanding that only a subcommittee rather than the full Youth Link Board would be reviewing the applications. Mr. Alina said as envisioned the proposals having to do with youth would be split up among the various subcommittees by topic. All Youth Link board members are assigned to a subcommittee, so in that way every member of the board would be reviewing applications.

Commissioner Mercer said she wanted to be sure that all of the board members would have a chance to review applications. Ms. O'Reilly pointed out that the Commission does not receive applications related to environmental sustainability, so there would be none for that subcommittee to review. Accordingly the board may want to consider how to give those subcommittee members some applications to review.

Commissioner Mercer asked how many applications might qualify for review by the Youth Link board subcommittees. Ms. O'Reilly said that will not be known until the applications are submitted. Based on the applications submitted in the previous funding cycle, less than 15 had a youth element.

Commissioner Mercer asked if the Youth Link Board and staff reviews would be conducted before the Commission receives its application folders. Ms. O'Reilly said

staff's first inclination was to sort and flag the applications as they come in, and those would be presented to and reviewed by the Youth Link Board members. The process could be scripted to allow the Commission to flag which applications the Youth Link Board should review, but that would not necessarily need to happen.

Chair Ma voiced his support for the Youth Link proposal and said his only concern was how to fit their work into the work of the Commission. The Commission, of course, reviews all of the applications and sees how they are interconnected. If the Commission will not be receiving feedback from Youth Link until somewhat late in the process, the influence of the Youth Link Board may as a result be limited.

Commissioner Mercer suggested it would be useful for the Commission to be informed upon receiving the applications which ones had been flagged for Youth Link Board review. With that information in hand, the Commission could think about how it might want to receive some late feedback. Ms. O'Reilly said the current schedule calls for the Commissioners to receive their applications notebooks at the second meeting in April. The Youth Link Board would receive them about that same time.

Commissioner Kline said what will be most useful to her as a Commissioner is qualitative comments from Youth Link on the applications and the services provided. Commissioner Mercer agreed but said it would also be helpful to have some level of ranking. Ms. Esparza suggested where ranking is done it should be in regard to similar services. Ms. O'Reilly stressed that any ranking would be only advisory.

Chair Ma agreed that receiving a collective narrative from Youth Link would be most insightful for the Commission. Though it might be difficult, one option would be to move up the timeline to allow for getting the Youth Link comments to the Commission earlier. Assistant Director of the Department of Parks and Community Services Toni Esparza said the proposal as drafted was predicated on the standing structure of the Youth Link Board meetings, which has the subcommittees meeting on the second meeting of the month. That could be revised by flipping the order in the month of

May, which would mean the Youth Link report could be delivered at the Commission's second meeting in May. Ms. O'Reilly said that would mean moving up the deadline for staff getting their reviews of the applications completed, though she allowed that some of the reviews could be moved to the head of the line instead of doing them by goal area.

Commissioner Kline said it would work best for the Commission to have the information while still in the first round of deliberations.

Ms. Esparza noted that based on prior conversations, the term "youth" applies to anyone who is not considered an adult. That would range from preschool to high school ages.

C. Commission Strategy for Application Review Process

Ms. Catalano stated that following completion of the previous funding cycle, the Commission discussed the process and outlined what was good, what was not good, and what should be changed. One issue the discussion highlighted was the need for a better financial analysis of the applications. Ms. Catalano said to that end the staff will include a financial segment in the staff reviews, with a particular focus on things that cannot be drawn directly from the application alone.

Commissioner Kline said the financial review by staff should include whether units of service are comparable on an apples to apples basis within a service area. Ms. O'Reilly pointed out that the unit costs from different applications cannot easily be compared directly with each other. Agencies have different ways of registering their costs.

Commissioner Kline said what she would like is for staff to provide an indication of whether or not program costs are comparable. Ms. O'Reilly noted that an agency with a large number of volunteers, such as Eastside Legal Assistance Program, may show

unit costs much different from the unit costs for the same service offered by an agency such as a mental health agency required to use counselors trained in evidence-based practices. She allowed that staff should be able to offer some of the underlying reasons and context behind the unit costs.

Ms. Catalano said another issue discussed by the Commission was the fact that during the review process some Commission meetings ran longer than two hours, and that additional meetings had to be plugged into the schedule. The preference voiced by the Commissioners was that the review meetings should be slated to go for three hours rather than adding additional meetings.

There was agreement on the part of the Commissioners to schedule the application review meetings for three hours each instead of scheduling additional meetings. There also was agreement to add to the schedule one meeting beyond the estimated number of meetings needed to complete the review process, and to allow for canceling that additional meeting if it is not needed.

Ms. Catalano said it had been Commissioner Kline who during the process review suggested arranging the applications relative to the kind of services provided while also keeping them arranged by goal area. She said the applications would be sorted by goal area and listed alphabetically, but then split up among the review teams by subsets determined by the services provided.

Commissioner Mercer agreed the approach would better support comparing apples to apples. She suggested the most difficult element of the approach would be in the work of doing the sorting.

Commissioner Kline asked what format will be used to deliver to the Commissioners the applications for review. Ms. Catalano said as was the case in the previous funding cycle, the applications will be available online and downloadable as a pdf document. Ms. O'Reilly added that the applications will also be printed out and placed

in binders for those who would prefer to have hard copies, and they will be offered on a thumb drive.

Chair Ma stressed the need to discuss prioritizing the goal areas and identifying the specific population groups that need to be given particular attention.

8. OLD BUSINESS

Ms. O'Reilly shared with the Commissioners a news release about the information sessions related to the funding cycle. She reminded them that the application would go live on March 4, the day of the first of the three information sessions.

Ms. O'Reilly informed the Commissioners that the East King County cities have contracted with Communities Rise, a new organization formed by the merger of Non-Profit Assistance Center and Wayfind. The new agency will offer agencies that will be seeking grants from the East King County cities the opportunity to attend a grant writing clinic. The grant will provide technical assistance to support community based non-profit organizations that serve communities impacted by systemic oppression and which do not have the internal capacity to hire a grant writer, or have staff dedicated to grant writing. A representative of Communities Rise will attend each of the three information workshops. Up to 16 different agencies will be able to receive coaching through the contract. The qualifications for the agencies are that they must have budgets of \$500,000 or less; serve communities impacted by systemic oppression, which includes communities of color, immigrant and refugee communities, LGBTQ communities, and persons with disabilities; and their service area must be within the Eastside.

Ms. O'Reilly explained that in addition to handing out flyers about the pilot program, the notice will be sent to the Eastside Refugee and Immigrant Coalition. She said Ms. Catalano also gave a presentation about the pilot at the last meeting of the Bellevue Diversity Advisory Network. The program will also be listed on the Share 1 application

in the resources section.

Ms. Stangland sought RSVPs from the Commissioners for the equity training sessions.

Ms. O'Reilly informed the Commissioners that the Guide To Community Resources has been updated and printed and are available for distribution.

9. NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Stangland stressed that city staff are working closely with King County and Seattle staff relative to the Covid-19 issue. She noted that they are making an effort to work with the homeless and those who are the most vulnerable. They are working on trying to identify places for people to go if they are infected with the virus.

10. CONTINUED ORAL COMMUNICATIONS – None

11. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Mercer. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Kline and the motion carried unanimously.

Chair Ma adjourned the meeting at 8:12 p.m.

_____	_____
Secretary to the Human Services Commission	Date
_____	_____

Chairperson of the Human Services Commission

Date