

CITY OF BELLEVUE  
CITY COUNCIL

Summary Minutes of Regular Meeting

January 19, 2021  
6:00 p.m.

Virtual Meeting  
Bellevue, Washington

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

ABSENT: Councilmember Robertson

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m., with Mayor Robinson presiding.

2. Roll Call; Flag Salute

Mayor Robinson noted that Councilmember Robertson hopes to be able to join the meeting later.

→ Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis moved to excuse Councilmember Robertson from the meeting, and Councilmember Lee seconded the motion.

→ The motion carried by a vote of 6-0.

City Clerk Charmaine Arredondo called the roll. All Councilmembers except Councilmember Robertson were present and participating remotely. Councilmember Barksdale led the flag salute.

3. Approval of Agenda

→ Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis moved to approve the agenda, and Councilmember Lee seconded the motion.

→ The motion carried by a vote of 6-0.

4. Oral Communications

- (a) Christian Dorsett spoke opposed to the City allowing a blue line flag. He opined that the artwork is racist and should be banned from City government. He said that a Councilmember made negative comments about him on Twitter. He suggested that the City Manager should fire the Police Chief and reform the police department. He thanked Councilmember Barksdale for his work on the Council.
  - (b) Laurie Lyford, speaking on behalf of the Washington Sensible Shorelines Association (WSSA), presented historical information regarding flooding along Lake Sammamish.
  - (c) Charlie Lyford recalled that the Willowmoor project was developed to address the recurrent flooding along Lake Sammamish. He said the project scope has broadened significantly, with an enhanced focus on salmon habitat. He noted the need for King County to address the overgrown vegetation and other debris. He said the recurrent flooding damages private property and structures. He offered his suggestions regarding the Willowmoor project.
5. Reports of Community Councils, Boards, and Commissions: None.
6. Report of the City Manager: None.
7. Council Business and New Initiatives
- (a) Council Liaison Recommendation for Appointment to Human Services Commission

Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis recommended the appointment of Shari McClure to the Human Services Commission and noted that she lives in the Bridle Trails area. He described her background in human services and volunteer efforts related to homelessness, transitional housing, child abuse, and international refugees. Mr. Nieuwenhuis said Ms. McClure is currently the Executive Director of the Halvorson Cancer Center at EvergreenHealth.

- Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis moved to appoint Shari McClure to serve a partial term on the Human Services Commission, expiring May 31, 2021. Councilmember Stokes seconded the motion.
  - The motion carried by a vote of 6-0.
8. Consent Calendar
- Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis moved to approve the Consent Calendar, and Councilmember Lee seconded the motion.
  - The motion to approve the Consent Calendar carried by a vote of 6-0, and the following items were approved:
    - (a) Council Minutes of January 4, 2021 Regular Meeting

- (b) Resolution No. 9872 authorizing execution of a two-year agreement with Synergy Building Services, Inc. for custodial services at the Bellevue District Court, with a three-year renewal option, for a total contract amount including contingency funds not to exceed \$270,017.70 plus applicable taxes.
- (c) Resolution No. 9873 authorizing execution of an amendment to the existing Bank of America Agreement for Government Treasury Banking Services by adding lockbox services for the City's business tax returns and related payments for up to an additional \$206,488, plus applicable taxes for the remaining two years of the contract, for a new contract amount not to exceed a total of \$626,279.89. The executed Amendment shall be substantially in the form of the Amendment in the Council Library.
- (d) Resolution No. 9874 determining that a portion of an existing water easement located at 15027 NE Bel Red Road is surplus to the City's needs and is no longer required for providing continued public utility service; and setting a time and place for a public hearing to consider the partial release of this easement.
- (e) Resolution No. 9875 authorizing execution of all documents necessary to implement settlement of the claim brought by Hyong Kim in the lawsuit Hyong Kim v. City of Bellevue (King County Superior Court Cause No.19-2-03114-0 SEA).
- (f) Resolution No. 9876 amending Resolution 9846 to cancel the January 19, 2021 public hearing date and setting a new time and place for a public hearing to consider the release of a public utility easement and a portion of a second public utility easement, all located at 10300 NE 8th Street, which have been declared surplus to the City's needs and are no longer required for providing continued public utility service.

9. Public Hearing: None.

10. Study Session

- (b) Bellevue Centers Communities of Color Initiative: Proposal for Implementation

Mayor Robinson highlighted the previous day's online Martin Luther King, Jr. Day celebration.

City Manager Brad Miyake introduced discussion regarding the Bellevue Centers Communities of Color Initiative and recalled that the Council approved one-time funding of \$150,000 to move this effort forward. The initiative is a community-led effort to ensure that Bellevue commits to addressing racial equity through three focus areas: 1) developing trust and awareness through dialogue, 2) building racial literacy and skills through education and training, and 3) co-creating recommendations for the Council focusing on actions with racial equity outcomes.

Elaine Acacio, Diversity and Inclusion Administrator, said staff is seeking Council direction to proceed with the implementation of the Bellevue Centers Communities of Color Initiative over a three-year timeline. She recalled that Councilmember Barksdale and Councilmember Zahn proposed the budget amendment to fund this initiative during last fall's budget process. Ms. Acacio said staff has engaged in conversations with staff from other cities and jurisdictions; members of the Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities; and other stakeholders. She said this work supports ongoing efforts from the Diversity Advantage Initiative and other City work plans.

Ms. Acacio said the Council vision states that "Bellevue welcomes the world and diversity is our strength," and we "embrace our future while respecting the past." She noted the United States history of governmental and societal institutions that have favored some people over others, with race historically a central target of that systemic discrimination. She said people of color, immigrants, and low-income communities face inequities in key educational, economic, and health outcomes. She highlighted key activities of the Diversity Advantage Initiative and noted other City planning efforts that incorporate elements of equity into their processes.

Yuriana Garcia Tellez, Diversity Outreach and Engagement Administrator, commented on traditional public engagement in which a need is identified, public outreach includes community forums and surveys, and the agency is the ultimate decision maker. The result often does not reflect the input and data from the community. Ms. Garcia described the process of inclusive engagement in which content experts are partners from the beginning. Inclusive engagement focuses on who is participating in the process and the barriers for those who are not participating. It acknowledges that historical systems were often not intended to serve everyone, and it directly engages communities to co-design and support decisions and solutions.

Ms. Garcia said the underlying beliefs and assumptions of the Bellevue Centers Communities of Color Initiative are: 1) the City has the responsibility to represent all people, 2) there is a growing need to understand and center racial equity, 3) the most effective approach involves collaboration with multiple institutions and community members, and 4) the community has the right talent, skills, and resources.

Ms. Acacio said the purpose of the Bellevue Centers Communities of Color initiative is to support a community-led effort to help transform Bellevue into a community that values racial equity through developing trust and awareness, building racial literacy and skills, and partnering with other institutions and community groups. She reviewed the timeline for the implementation of the process, leading to the collaborative development of recommendations and actions by 2023. She said the process is meant to be participatory, and the City cannot say it centers the needs and voices of communities of color if the solutions are pre-determined. Ms. Acacio said there will be an education and training component to building racial literacy and skills.

Ms. Garcia said the process will involve the City Manager's appointment of a coordinating team to work in partnership with the City to build a community that values and commits to racial equity. She noted the City's commitment to strengthen community trust and to foster relationships and healing across diverse communities. The coordinating team will have 11 members with representatives from the African-American/Black, Asian Pacific Islander,

Indigenous, and Latinx communities. Additional considerations in selecting committee members are youth, minority-owned businesses and entrepreneurs, perspectives of partners (i.e., private sector, nonprofit, and educational), and intersectional perspectives within the LGBTQ+, disability, faith-based, and immigrant communities. Ms. Garcia said the project budget is \$150,000, and City will provide the venue, technical assistance, and referrals to other resources and contacts to assist in executing the initiative's work plan.

Ms. Acacio said the desired outcomes are: 1) strengthening trust and relationships within the community, 2) acknowledging and undoing harm from historic racism, 3) elevating the skills and expertise of BIPOC communities to enhance ways to center equity in municipal policy and processes, and 4) using the experience and recommendations to inform the next update of the Diversity Advantage Plan.

Ms. Acacio requested Council direction to proceed with the implementation of the Bellevue Centers Communities of Color Initiative over a three-year timeline and to establish a coordinating team to focus on the three areas of developing trust and awareness, building racial literacy and skills, and developing recommendations to advance and enhance racial equity.

Councilmember Barksdale thanked staff for their time on this proposal and initiative. He said it is important to designate time and space to build relationships with communities of color. He expressed support for the three-year timeline and the community-led approach to listen, learn, and foster change.

Councilmember Zahn thanked Councilmember Barksdale and staff for their collaboration on this initiative. She concurred with Mr. Barksdale that the three-year timeline will provide the opportunity to develop genuine trust and partnerships. She acknowledged that co-creating means listening and being open to changes to address systemic equity issues. She said she liked staff's comments about being adaptive and agile throughout the process.

Councilmember Lee noted that the City established its first diversity program 25 years ago, and Bellevue has been recognized as a leader in this area. He expressed support for staff's proposal of how to move forward. He thanked City Manager Miyake and others who are working on the initiative. Mr. Lee said that inclusive public engagement is crucial in order to represent everyone in the community. He commended the focus on trust, awareness, and dialogue. He said that building trust and relationships within the community will produce meaningful actions and solutions.

Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis thanked staff for their successful virtual Martin Luther King, Jr. Day celebration. He thanked staff for moving forward so quickly with the Bellevue Centers Communities of Color Initiative. He thanked Councilmember Barksdale and Councilmember Zahn for their budget proposal to implement this work.

Responding to Mr. Nieuwenhuis, Ms. Acacio said the criteria and considerations for selecting members of the coordinating team include youth, minority-owned businesses and entrepreneurs, perspectives of multiple partners (i.e., private sector, nonprofit, and educational), and intersectional perspectives within the LGBTQ+, disability, faith-based, and immigrant

communities. In further response to Mr. Nieuwenhuis about measuring outcomes, Ms. Acacio said it is difficult to measure trust. Ms. Acacio said the process will generate quantitative information regarding communities of color and their engagement in future events. She said the quality of relationships and conversations will be evaluated in part by the actions and solutions that are implemented. She said the coordinating team will discuss the development of meaningful metrics for the implementation of specific actions.

Councilmember Stokes recalled that he was in law school in Washington, D.C., in 1963 and he attended Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I have a dream" speech. Mr. Stokes noted his background in civil rights law. He thanked Councilmember Barksdale and Councilmember Zahn for developing the budget proposal to support the Bellevue Centers Communities of Color Initiative. Mr. Stokes expressed support for the community-led approach to building relationships and ultimately influencing policies. He said the King County Regional Policy Committee is working to develop a racial equity statement.

Mayor Robinson thanked staff for their work. She concurred with Councilmember Barksdale that it is critical to invest a strong effort in fostering relationships. Ms. Robinson encouraged outreach to a broad range of community groups, including the small business community. She noted that the Bellevue Essentials class has a role in building community relationships as well. She said that inclusive engagement should be a component of every outreach effort in Bellevue.

Councilmember Barksdale said the approach starts from a place of empathy and a sincere interest in fostering organizations and communities. He noted the value of hearing stories from the community and developing performance metrics together.

Councilmember Zahn said the metrics should reflect how the City is actually advancing in addressing racial equity. She would like the Council to receive periodic updates on the Bellevue Centers Communities of Color Initiative. She suggested training opportunities for the Council, East Bellevue Community Council (EBCC), Boards, and Commissions to ensure that they are leading the way in awareness, training, and education.

Ms. Zahn said the Seattle-King County Department of Public Health recently declared racism a public health crisis. She wondered whether there was interest in developing a similar proclamation or declaration about addressing racism in Bellevue.

Mayor Robinson said she liked Ms. Zahn's idea. Ms. Robinson said she did not want to change the goals and focus areas outlined in staff's proposal. However, she expressed support, as a separate item, for creating a statement or proclamation regarding the Bellevue Centers Communities of Color Initiative.

Councilmember Lee reflected on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day and the historical hard work and sacrifices that have contributed to human progress in the area of racial equity. He said the Bellevue Centers Communities of Color Initiative is another step in moving society forward. He acknowledged that it is challenging to measure genuine trust. Mr. Lee encouraged moving forward with ongoing education and training opportunities. Responding to Mr. Lee, Ms. Garcia

said “centers” is being used as a verb to indicate that communities of color are the central focus and priority of the initiative. Mr. Lee commented that the name was somewhat confusing.

Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis expressed support for Councilmember Zahn’s suggestion to develop a proclamation regarding racism and the initiative. He would like the Council to receive periodic updates as well. He suggested that the process will produce relationships with benefits beyond the three-year timeline.

Responding to Mayor Robinson, Ms. Garcia said the scope of work will include some level of implementation of the three focus areas, including the ultimate development of recommendations related to racial equity that will impact future policies and processes in the Diversity Advantage Initiative and other areas.

Councilmember Stokes expressed support for moving forward and noted that issues related to implementation will evolve as the process moves forward.

- Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis moved to direct staff to proceed with the implementation of the Bellevue Centers Communities of Color Initiative to include the establishment of a coordinating team, three-year timeline, and the three areas of focus: 1) developing trust and awareness through dialogue, 2) building racial literacy and skills through education and training, and 3) developing recommendations to move toward greater racial equity. Councilmember Stokes seconded the motion.
- The motion carried by a vote of 6-0.

(a) Update from King County Councilmember Claudia Balducci

Mayor Robinson welcomed Claudia Balducci, King County Council Chair, to provide an update to the Council and community.

Councilmember Balducci said the County’s COVID-19 response has been a major effort involving five supplemental budget amendments. She said the County initially allocated \$2.2 million in March for free child care for first responders and essential workers, and later added funding for emergency child care. Ms. Balducci noted additional funding to shelters; arts, culture and science organizations; small businesses; and community organizations. The County provided \$7 million from federal COVID-19 relief funds to small businesses in incorporated and unincorporated King County. The County also provided funding to organizations with rental assistance services.

Ms. Balducci highlighted aspects of the King County budget. She said the County has been on a journey of trying to work equity and racial and social justice into all of its programs and services and engagement with the community. She described two initiatives to limit the over-incarceration of people of color. One is the restorative community pathways program that will work to disrupt the school-to-prison pipeline by diverting youth to community-based organizations instead of probation. The second initiative focuses on developing a diversion

program for adults that emphasizes restorative justice, to be implemented in 2022. Ms. Balducci said a key feature of both programs is victim restitution.

King County Council Chair Balducci said the Metro transit system is challenged by the decrease in ridership and revenue from both fares and taxes. She said the County hopes to receive additional federal funding to support transit. She noted her support for eliminating the charge for obtaining a youth ORCA transit card. However, Metro cannot support free fares. Ms. Balducci described her work to maintain funding in the budget for the Rapid Ride K line between Kirkland and Bellevue. She also secured \$2 million in additional funding for mental illness and drug dependency programs.

Ms. Balducci noted the goal to provide broadband fiber along the Eastrail. She said she successfully identified \$500,000 to supplement REI's and Facebook's grants to the Eastrail/SR 520 regional trail connection. The trail link is fully funded and will be designed and constructed soon. Ms. Balducci highlighted efforts to protect the Kokanee salmon. To address housing stability, the County provided funding to LifeWire, Mercer Island Youth and Family Services, and the Eastside Legal Assistance Program (ELAP).

Councilmember Balducci said the Puget Sound Taxpayer Accountability Act provides a sales tax related to the implementation of Sound Transit Phase 3, which expands projects into Snohomish and Pierce counties. She commented on the Climate Action Toolkit anticipated for adoption by the King County Council in the coming weeks.

Looking ahead to 2021, Ms. Balducci said the County will focus on COVID-19 recovery and vaccine distribution, renewal of the Best Starts for Kids levy, updating the County's Strategic Climate Action Plan, housing, redistricting, law enforcement reform, and transportation (including South Transit capital projects). She noted the objective to move 1,600 people experiencing chronic homelessness off the streets by October 2022 by acquiring single-room settings (e.g., hotel rooms) while the economic conditions are favorable, and to provide support services as well.

Coronavirus vaccine distribution includes working with businesses, health care organizations, and others. Last week, the County announced \$7 million of investments for mass vaccination sites and mobile vans to provide vaccinations. Ms. Balducci said the County has used two-thirds of its vaccine doses to date. She referred the public to online state and County resources including [FindYourPhaseWA.org](https://www.findyourphase.org) and [CovidVaccineWa.org](https://www.covidvaccine.wa.gov).

King County Councilmember Balducci thanked Councilmember Stokes and others on the Regional Policy Committee for their work to address housing needs. Their plan will be forwarded to the King County Council for discussion and action soon. Ms. Balducci said she will continue to chair the region's affordable housing committee, which has a goal to create or preserve 44,000 units of affordable housing by 2024. She said she anticipates updates to the Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs) this year, and she thanked Councilmember Robertson for her work with the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) Growth Management Policy Board.

Ms. Balducci said the County has established a five-member redistricting committee to redraw the legislative district boundaries for King County. She said Washington and King County do not have the problematic issues of gerrymandered districts because the committee is not politicized as in other areas of the country. Ms. Balducci noted that law enforcement reform includes an oversight body with subpoena power and an appointed sheriff.

King County Councilmember Balducci said the Sound Transit capital program for the Eastside is healthy and moving forward. She said the expansion of light rail to Redmond and the I-405 Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) work are on time and budget. She noted the importance of ensuring that the I-405 BRT program continues to move forward. Noting that she receives a number of inquiries about the South Bellevue Park and Ride, Ms. Balducci said the new parking facility is slated to open in September, two years before light rail begins operating.

Councilmember Stokes thanked Councilmember Balducci for her leadership and noted that he enjoys serving on the Regional Policy Committee. He praised all that the County is doing in response to COVID-19 and to address other priorities, including Eastrail. Ms. Balducci said the Eastrail will ultimately connect to the SR 520 Trail and the Mountains to Sound Greenway Trail.

Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis congratulated Councilmember Balducci for being reelected as the King County Council Chair. Mr. Nieuwenhuis said he is pleased to hear that the South Bellevue Park and Ride will open in September, and he looks forward to the initiation of East Link light rail service in 2023.

Responding to Mr. Nieuwenhuis regarding the proposed tax to support arts and cultural organizations, Ms. Balducci said that Council-manic legislation would impose the Cultural Access Washington sales tax. She said this is the second year that the tax has been considered. Ms. Balducci concurred that arts, culture, hotels, restaurants, and other tourism services are struggling and some will never reopen. She said the King County Council has not discussed any plan of how the County would potentially use that type of revenue. Councilmember Balducci noted the need for more federal dollars to cities and counties to fund public safety, education, and ongoing COVID-19 response and recovery.

Councilmember Zahn thanked Councilmember Balducci for her and the King County Council's support of direct funding to cities, assistance to small businesses, the development of broadband infrastructure on the Eastrail, reopening of the South Bellevue Park and Ride facility, and I-405 BRT. She thanked Councilmember Balducci for her work related to affordable housing and to criminal justice reform and the restorative justice model. Ms. Zahn expressed support for the community court concept. She encouraged more partnerships around climate change and environmental sustainability.

Ms. Balducci said that two of the existing community courts have been closed. She concurred with Councilmember Zahn's suggestion for more partnerships to work on climate change priorities, including through the King County-Cities Climate Collaboration (K4C).

Councilmember Zahn noted her interest in the range of diversion programs available in the criminal justice system.

Councilmember Lee commended Councilmember Balducci's service on the King County Council. Mr. Lee complimented the County and Sound Transit for the construction of the South Bellevue Park and Ride facility that will open in September. He thanked Ms. Balducci for her efforts on behalf of Bellevue residents and businesses.

Mr. Lee spoke about the importance of "last mile" connections to transit. Ms. Balducci said the County has tried vans and other types of vehicles for "last mile" connections. She noted that bike share programs have not been widely successful for a number of reasons. However, she hopes for more opportunities for micro-transit in the future.

Councilmember Barksdale thanked King County Council Chair Balducci for her service. He said it is good to hear what the County is doing to support vulnerable populations and to address criminal justice reform and racial and social equity. Mr. Barksdale encouraged a continued focus on the environmental impacts related to development, including storm water runoff and the protection of fish habitat. Ms. Balducci said the County is moving toward a new, broader approach to water management. She noted that even when the Willowmoor project at Lake Sammamish is completed, it will not be a 100-percent solution to control the lake's water levels.

Mayor Robinson thanked Councilmember Balducci for her report and her work related to affordable housing. Ms. Robinson thanked Ms. Balducci for her continued support of Eastrail and other healthy, safe bike routes through Bellevue.

Ms. Robinson said the COVID-19 relief funding has enabled the City to provide significant assistance to people and businesses that are struggling. Mayor Robinson encouraged moving forward without delay with the implementation of I-405 BRT.

Responding to Mayor Robinson, Ms. Balducci said the King County Council has not yet received the County Executive's proposal for the renewal of the Best Starts for Kids levy. She noted that the tax rate decreased annually under the current levy.

11. Land Use: None.
12. Other Ordinances, Resolutions, and Motions: None.
13. Unfinished Business: None.
14. New Business: None.
15. Executive Session

At 8:08 p.m., Mayor Robinson declared recess to Executive Session for approximately 30 minutes to discuss one item of pending litigation. She noted that the meeting would adjourn following the session.

16. Adjournment

At 8:47 p.m., Mayor Robinson declared the meeting adjourned.

Charmaine Arredondo, CMC  
City Clerk

/kaw