

The Human Services Commission approved these minutes on April 20, 2021

CITY OF BELLEVUE
HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION
MINUTES

March 16, 2021
6:00 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chairperson Kline, Commissioners Amirfaiz, Ma, Mansfield, McClure, Mercer, Piper

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Alex O'Reilly, Dee Dee Catalano, Christy Stangland, Toni Esparza, Department of Parks and Community Services; Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis

GUEST SPEAKERS: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m. by Chair Kline who presided.

2. ROLL CALL

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present.

Chair Kline stated that because in-person meetings are prohibited by the Governor's emergency order, the Commission will be holding its meetings remotely for an unknown period of time. As a result, the Commission's by-laws regarding remote participation and the order of business were suspended until such time as meetings were no longer being held remotely.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. February 27, 2021

A motion to approve the minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Piper. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mansfield and the motion carried without dissent; Commissioner Amirfaiz abstained from voting.

4. ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS – None

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

6. STAFF AND COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Major Tarantino informed the Commission that the city had hired a new assistant chief. After a nationwide search, Wendell Shirley was selected from a number of applicants. Mr. Shirley

comes from Santa Monica, California, and has 25 years of police experience.

7. INFORMATION FOR THE COMMISSION

A. Human Services Needs Experienced by the Bellevue School District Students and Families

Human Services Manager Alex O'Reilly noted that in the January the Commission brainstormed a number of speakers to hear reports from throughout the year. One suggestion was to have representatives of the Bellevue School District talk about the needs they are seeing in general and particularly during the pandemic. She introduced Liliana Godinez, Coordinator for the McKinney Vento program and who works with foster kids in the school district; and Cecelia Martinez-Vasquez, the city's Wraparound Services Coordinator; and Cathy Leaver, Director of the Early Learning Program for the school district.

Ms. Martinez-Vasquez addressed the question regarding the primary services students and families need. She said they need help with enrollment, transportation and access to free lunch services; support finding permanent and stable housing, as well as access to child care; assistance and resources in terms of paying for rent, finding low-cost housing, paying for clothing, birthday expenses, holiday gifts, and access to child care and related costs. There is also that there are needs relative to food and food related resources. Prior to Covid, there were some 2200 students in need of supplemental food assistance during breaks from school and out of school times. That number has risen to 3200. The district partners with Jubilee Reach who helps approximately 700 families per week, and the district's Family Connections Centers provides items for another 500 families. It is hoped that the pandemic EBT 2.0 funds will provide some short-term relief, as will the stimulus checks. Ideally food banks in Bellevue are able to provide a variety of food to families every day of the week, allowing the Family Connection Centers to transition out of helping to fill that gap and shifting back to providing food vouchers for out of school breaks.

Continuing, Ms. Martinez-Vasquez said the district also provides legal assistance in the form of helping to make connections to resources through referrals in the areas of domestic violence, immigration, family law and education programs. Referrals are also made to low-cost mental health resources that include counseling, advocates and general information, as well as to low-cost medical services for dental, medical and preventative services.

The employment-related referrals made by the district include connecting individuals to organizations that can help in the acquisition of skills and in finding employment. Academic support is provided through connecting families and students to hot spots, internet access, and tutoring services. Also provided are out of school time and summer programs, and adult and parent education support. Also available are family engagement specialists. The district also supports early intervention services for students with unique learning needs and abilities, and ECEAP families who may also need access to housing, food and other basic services.

Ms. Martinez-Vasquez said one of the biggest needs currently is for additional family engagement specialists. There are currently 12 across the district who serve on a part-time basis in 29 different schools in the district.

Ms. Leaver addressed the question of how the pandemic has affected needs. She stated that the pandemic has only increased the need to access services, particularly in terms of food, child care and housing. Accessing services virtually or online has proven to be an additional barrier for many families, and the result has been a significant gap. Another impact has been the continued growth in the gap of successful academic performance; the students who were struggling before are struggling even more since Covid.

Ms. Leaver said the pandemic has increased the need for the previously outlined services, and other challenges have surfaced. There has been a marked increase in the need to access household products, particularly hygiene products. The digital divide in terms of a lack of or limited access to technology, and a lack of understanding in regard to how to use technology, has widened. Families are struggling to keep up with Covid testing sites, vaccine information and phase updates. Crisis services to address the stressors of the pandemic are needed, particularly in regard to move-in costs, domestic violence emergency shelter, medical cost pays, and Covid medical assistance. There is also an increased need for accessible, reduced-price recreational and physical activity programming.

The pandemic took a huge toll on the district's ability to provide successful preschool and child care. The families that qualify for ECEAP, the state-funded preschool, and students with special needs, are the only preschoolers the district is able to serve in preschool. The district is also supporting an as-needed basis some of the staff who have preschool needs. Families that are accessing preschool through scholarships, subsidies and tuition assistance are not able to access preschool because the district has not been able to scale as much as in the past.

Ms. Godinez addressed the question of barriers to families accessing the services they need. She listed the digital divide and noted that marginalized communities are often left behind in advancements in technology. That is particularly true for multigenerational families. Students, even the youngest ones, are often seen assisting their parents and grandparents in trying to access the services they need through technology. Lack of access to convenient and reliable transportation is a barrier for many. There is a need for many in terms of accessing low-barrier funding sources. With regard to affordable housing, there are often long waiting lists for families. Often housing providers require a lot of paperwork and documentation up front; some ask for documents homeless families do not have access to, such as copies of birth certificates for their children. More funding and support is needed for families that are fleeing domestic violence. Along with that comes a need for case management and access to legal resources. There is a need for information to be provided in multiple languages.

Ms. Godinez said the district has seen school schedules that are confusing by virtue of not being unified across the district. Safety procedures and protocols are often unclear and confusing for families. Student assessments, grading and academic progress are not clearly defined by the district. Child care and preschool programs are a big need, but the district cannot operate at a large enough scale to provide the services at the level needed. There is an increased need for child care subsidies or funding to help fund full-day or extended-day services for students, including preschool students.

The question of what the Human Services Commission can do to address the needs was answered by Ms. Martinez-Vasquez who highlighted advocacy for low-barrier processes for the distribution of funding to residents, and a review of housing service policies and procedures through an equity lens to identify potential barriers to accessing the services. She also highlighted the need to close the digital divide via partnerships with tech organizations to provide technology to low-income households. The Commission could also help by helping to reduce the paperwork required from residents to receive rental assistance funding; by providing advocacy around the needs and issues faced by low-income communities; and working with other agencies across the city that are collecting information about the needs of communities to identify gaps in services to identify what is working and what is not working.

Ms. Godinez said there is also a need to continue to support emergency child care subsidies for homeless youth, and to help the district fund more full-day and extended learning preschool programs as well as child care and extended learning services. Also needed is an equitable review of bus zoning and bus lines to ensure that there are frequent bus services in

areas of the city where there are families who are most likely to depend on the services. No communities or neighborhoods should be overlooked for public transportation services. The Commission could also help by supporting more partnerships between the district, the community college and work source programs to support youth who are at risk of dropping out or who have dropped out. A work source program in place in Tukwila that is operated in partnership with the Renton School District and Renton Technical College ensures that no student will fall between the cracks in terms of getting a GED or high school diploma and transition to higher learning or a job. The program provides case management and support.

Ms. Leaver said the Commission can also help by continuing to provide more affordable housing options in Bellevue, and by continuing to provide the district preschool with funds that can be used for tuition, and by looking at possible additional funding for operational costs.

Chair Kline opened the floor to questions from the Commissioners.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Ma, Ms. Leaver explained that preschool is not funded by the K-12 system. In the past, preschool has been a tuition-based program. The district is continuing to serve special education and ECEAP students. Some ECAEP funds had to be used to buy devices for remote learning, but the supply is limited as are the funds available to buy the devices. One goal of the district is to become a P-12 system, which would mean the elementary schools will be incorporating preschool as part of their overall programming. It took a lot of scrounging to come up with enough iPads for students who need them for quarantining or for remote preschool. It has also been challenging to come up with the funds needed to purchase basic classroom supplies such as paper, crayons and pencils. The curriculum developers are looking at what it will take to achieve a P-12 system, and much of it will involve having devices for all students. The hope is that will trickle down to the preschool level as well. Currently, kindergarten and first grade students all have tablets; beyond that they get laptops.

Commissioner Amirfaiz asked for comments regarding the impacts on student academic achievement resulting from the pandemic. She also asked about the interface with the Puget Sound Educational Service District (PSESD), and if the district is operating a Head Start program in addition to ECEAP. Ms. Leaver said the district has in prior years been a contractor for the PSESD. The district no longer has Head Start but has applied to be a Head Start contractor rather than a subcontractor. In terms of gaps, she said she was hearing from her colleagues that students who were having a hard time accessing and being successful in school before Covid are having an even more difficult time. They are not engaged, the teachers do not always know where they are, and their attendance is minimal at best.

Ms. Godinez added that from the perspective of homeless youth, in a normal school year there is a significant challenge with attendance and participation. That has only grown worse under the pandemic. There are a number of barriers in play. For one thing, every time they move they fall into a black hole of lack of access to the internet and the school loses track of them. For others their cell phone minutes run out so the school cannot call them, and the school loses even the opportunity to provide them with resources.

Ms. Martinez-Vasquez said her role within the school district is to bring in the community to identify and address needs in the schools she works at, specifically Stevenson Elementary and Highland Middle School. She said she works to support the engagement of parents in those schools and to connect them with the schools, teachers and administrators to see their needs and concerns addressed. She said what she has been hearing from the Family Connection Center staff and from the teachers and parents is that students are disengaging from the classroom. Since they are online, students can simply shut down the screen and not look at it,

not listen and not engage, and as a result they are losing interest and their academic performance is lagging. Many of the kids that have access to the educational system are learning English, but their parents are not always fluent in English and must trust that whatever their kids say they are doing is actually happening. The kids, however, are not always telling their parents everything that is happening in regards to bullying, homework and other issues. Kids are falling through the cracks as a result.

Commissioner Amirfaiz asked if any help is being received from PSESD. Ms. Martinez-Vasquez said she has a relationship with the organization as an individual and noted that she has brought them in to do some supportive work with parents, primarily about engagement opportunities.

Commissioner Piper said he was curious to know about mental health referrals and if there has been an uptick affecting any certain segment of the student population. Ms. Martinez-Vasquez said that last summer she received a lot of calls from parents saying they needed clothing for their child, who had outgrown their clothes through gaining weight, often due to being too sedentary and less mobile. With that has come impacts on their psychological and mental health. Parents call with all kinds of questions about how they can get their child to be more active, and how to address the physical changes their child is going through. Referrals are often made to YES, Consejo and other agencies that provide mental health services.

Commissioner Ma asked if the increased requirements for using the internet have made it more difficult for the students, or if the students have been able to access the internet through public resources. Ms. Godinez said the families who are experiencing homelessness, and foster youth, are prioritized to receive mobile hot spots. Unfortunately, the families who have completely lost the roofs over their heads often have to move very long distances, including places that are very remote and lack access to the internet and where mobile hot spots do not work. Additionally, where there are three kids in a home, all at different schools and all of whom need to be online at the same time, the internet connection can become slow. Ms. Martinez-Vasquez echoed those comments. She added that many of the older buildings in Bellevue tend to block hot spot signals. Some families have opted to go to the park to look for community hot spots, particularly on nice days. During inclement weather, that is not possible. The school district has been very good at sending staff on home visits to troubleshoot internet connections. Many families have been enrolled in the \$9.99 promotional Comcast internet service, which is the equivalent of a hot spot with low bandwidth. Multiple students logging on at the same time will face connectivity issues.

Chair Kline asked if there are wi-fi hotspots sponsored and made available by the city to the community at city facilities, like community centers. Ms. O'Reilly said it was her understanding that in the past people could gain internet access at community centers and City Hall, but those facilities have all been closed during the pandemic. She said she did not know if the city had any hot spots in parks.

Ms. Godinez said shortly after the schools closed in the spring the families in the McKinney Vento program who were experiencing homelessness were hit hard by having the libraries, the community centers and the YMCA closed. The services they normally utilized in those places were no longer available. Homeless families and kids in foster care have seen their needs revert back to basic needs like food and shelter. Often they are in overcrowded and loud spaces that are not conducive to students studying. Access to extended learning and child care has been essential, and the Boys & Girls Club has been phenomenal in making sure students have a place to go to focus on studying.

Chair Kline noted that transportation has been and continues to be a need in the community. She pointed out that Crossroads Connect, a shuttle-type local service, was brought online in

the last few months. She asked if the constituent families are aware of and using the service. Ms. O'Reilly said staff plans to provide the Commission with an update on the service at an upcoming meeting.

Ms. Martinez-Vasquez said she is aware of the service. The challenges lie in where most of the services are located, within a two- or three-mile radius of Crossroads Community Center. There are, however, some apartment complexes on the west side of Bellevue that have limited transportation access.

Chair Kline asked if there have been any discussions with Youth Care about providing services in the Bellevue School District. Ms. Godinez said she was not aware of any. She said there is a team in the district that provides support for students who are needing alternative resources.

B. Financial Eligibility Requirements for Non-Profit and For-Profit Organizations

Ms. O'Reilly reminded the Commissioners that staff had previously presented a draft of the new financial requirements for incorporation into the application process for funding cycles. The Commission noted that the draft did not include requirements for for-profit organizations that may apply for funding.

Ms. Esparza said the research done by staff was in regard to the legal requirements for agencies of various sizes, both those with and without 501(C)(3) status, including what documentation regarding finances and operational structure must be submitted. The draft guidelines and legal requirements for for-profits was reviewed by the legal team and the finance and asset management team. As drafted, for-profit entities will be considered for funding only as a last resort and only after non-profit human service providers cannot be found to provide a needed service. The requirements for documentation for for-profit agencies are modeled after the same requirements for non-profit entities, with breakdowns by entity size based on annual gross revenues of up to \$1 million, \$1 million to \$3 million, and \$3 million and above.

Ms. Esparza stated that for agencies that do not yet have 501(C)(3) status, there are two types of agencies: those that are not required to register with the state as a charitable organization or as a federal 501(C)(3) and which are exempt from the state and federal requirements, provided they have raised less than \$50,000 in the recent accounting year and do not have any paid staff; and organizations that gain tax exempt status through other categories, such as faith-based organizations. The suggestion is that such organizations provide completed financial statements for the last fiscal year, including a final profit and loss statement and a balance sheet. The organizations would not necessarily be required to file a Form 990.

Non 501(C)(3) organizations that are required by state law to register as a charitable organization must follow all state requirements broken down by budget size. Organizations with gross annual incomes of \$1 million or less and which are only registered with the state must provide proof of their current registration and they must report their income to the state. Such organizations are unlikely to remain in the category for long given that donations to organizations not having 501(C)(3) status are not eligible for a tax deduction. By state guidance, organizations with annual gross revenues of between \$1 million and \$3 million, averaged over the previous three completed accounting years, must prove they are registered with the state and provide either a Form 990 or an audited financial statement from an independent Certified Public Accountant. Organizations with gross revenues of \$3 million and above must be registered with the state and must have a completed audit.

All organizations having 501(C)(3) status are required to register as charitable organizations

with the state. They must show their prove of 501(C)(3) status, and those with gross annual revenues of \$50,000 or less must submit a basic Form 990N. For organizations with gross annual incomes of between \$50,000 and \$1 million, a copy of the Form 990 must be submitted in accord with the guidance given regarding who can prepare the form. Organizations with gross annual revenues between \$1 million and \$3 million must provide either a Form 990 or an audited financial statement, and organizations with gross annual revenues of \$3 million and above must submit both a Form 990 and an audited financial statement.

Chair Kline commented that parameters are for agencies as a whole, not for specific programs, and noted that they could apply to the fiscal sponsor of a smaller subsidiary agency. Ms. Esparza confirmed that.

Ms. O'Reilly noted there were questions previously asked by the Commission about whether or not for-profit organizations should be funded. She said the draft guidelines make it clear that funding a for-profit agency would be done only as a last resort where an identified service is not offered by a non-profit.

Commissioner Ma said he was satisfied with the direction outlined in the draft guidelines relative to funding for-profit agencies.

Chair Kline commented that given the guidelines, a for-profit agency would be unlikely to apply for funding if they knew they would automatically be trumped by a non-profit agency. In reality, the only time a for-profit organization would submit an application would be in response to an RFP to fill a specific need. Ms. Esparza agreed that for-profit providers likely would not feel strongly motivated to apply unless the Commission were to ensure that a certain amount of money would be earmarked for a specific cause.

Commissioner Ma asked about including a requirement for for-profit companies to contribute on a one-to-one or two-to-one basis in order to receive funding. Ms. Esparza said that could make sense depending on the size of the for-profit organization. In the case of child care, a large organization may have the capacity to do that, though they would need an organizational motivation to do so given that child care is in such short demand that they can easily fill their slots with paying customers without any sort of a match. Small home-based businesses may not have the capacity to contribute to that degree.

A motion to approve the guidelines was made by Commissioner Ma. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Piper and the motion carried unanimously.

Ms. O'Reilly brought to the table an overview of a pilot potential small grants process. She stressed that it was only a first draft and sought comments from the Commissioners. She said the intent was to increase access to smaller agencies with smaller grants. She added that currently there are no funds that could be applied to the small grant structure. The proposal involves smaller organizations with annual gross revenues of \$50,000 or less averaged over the three preceding accounting years. No 501(C)(3) is required but the organization must be registered with the state as a charitable organization. A preference is given to grants for programs that serve the BIPOC community or other historically underserved communities. Preference is also given to programs that are led by the communities they serve. Programs funded must serve Bellevue residents.

Continuing, Ms. O'Reilly said the grant maximum would be \$5000 per year with the funds fully awarded up front rather than as cost reimbursements. The approach has the approval of the legal and asset management team on the thinking that it poses a minimal risk to the city. The process would run parallel to the regular funding cycle. Agencies could use the funds to

develop skills to apply for the next funding cycle should they chose to do so. The grants would be characterized as one-year grants with a possible extension of a single additional year depending on the type of grant. Funds could be used for a one-time event, in which case there likely would not be a second year of funding allocated, unless the program recurred annually. Funding for a second year would depend on the organization being able to meet the minimal middle and end of year reporting requirements.

Ms. O'Reilly said applications would be submitted by mail rather than on the sharelapp platform. Each application would need to include simple metrics outlining how many events, the estimated number of people to be served, the time frame and a budget estimate. All desired results should also be spelled out, though in simple terms. She said the grants would be offered to organizations only on a one-time basis, though for up to two years. The intent is to see agencies graduate to the regular granting process if they so choose.

There are pros and cons associated with the small grant program. On the pro side, smaller agencies will have funds to be able to do good work in the community. Diverse, grassroots efforts could be funded to address identified issues that have previously been noted to be challenging to access. There is the potential for capacity building for organizations by helping them learn the necessary skills for managing government funding, and there is the potential for building trust between the BIPOC communities and the city. The challenges of doing small grants include a lack of funds to provide technical assistance for agencies to move on to the regular process, though that could be addressed by the Commission setting aside some money during the funding process to contract with an outside agency that specializes in working with BIPOC communities. It could be viewed as a conflict of interest if Bellevue staff provided intensive technical assistance to agencies during the funding process. She noted that a small project funded by the Eastside cities and run by Communities Rise invited agencies to avail themselves of some technical assistance services. However, due to the pandemic there was understandably only a handful of agencies that participated.

It is possible the small grant process could be viewed as not equitable if agencies do not move on or if they view the grant as being too small to allow the agency to do the work necessary to achieve its goals. Activities will need to be right-sized to the small grant amount, and that could turn some off from applying. The lack of current staff to monitor the success or completion of even small grants could be a challenge; there will still be the expectation that the grants are intended to help agencies succeed.

The number of grants per year should be limited to between two and four in order to allow for some oversight with available city staff.

Given the suggestion to limit the grants to between two and four, Commissioner Amirfaiz asked if it would make more sense to increase the amount to \$10,000 but limit the total grants to two in the first year. She said she was concerned that \$5000 may be viewed as just too small for anyone to be successful. Ms. O'Reilly agreed the approach was based on expecting smaller agencies to do smaller projects, which may not be seen as equitable.

Ms. Esparza said she was clear about the concern raised, but given that the proposed program has been reviewed by both legal and asset management staff, increasing the allocation to \$10,000 would have to be considered an incremental change that increase the level of risk to the city. The \$5000 cap is a level of risk the city is willing to accept. A degree of success would need to be shown before moving up, and perhaps what constitutes success could be lowered to some degree, but launching the pilot with a larger allocation likely will meet with opposition.

Chair Kline asked if the city would be willing to entertain the \$10,000 grant level if the

number of grants were limited to only two. Ms. Esparza said she was willing to put that question forward to see what the response might be. She said her sense has been that it is less about the total amount of the grants and more about allocating the funds to agencies that would have no capacity or intention to recoup the dollars if there is a lack of follow through. Limiting the allocation amount per agency minimizes the risk.

Chair Kline said there could have been an unintentional focus on the \$5000 level given that that has been the cutoff level for the Commission. She noted that there have been in the past requests received from some very small agencies for just slightly more than \$5000 and the Commission concluded it was impractical to fund them at that level. A higher threshold is needed even if it means limiting the overall number of grants allocated in the pilot program.

Commissioner Ma agreed with the issue raised by Commissioner Amirfaiz but said he also understands the concerns in regard to the city's liability. With regard to expecting agencies to use the small funding amount and bootstrapping themselves to the next funding level, he said that may be too much. That certainly should not be a measure of the success for the pilot.

Commissioner McClure commented that while \$5000 is a small amount, it is as much as ten percent of the budget for the qualifying organizations given that they must have budgets of \$50,000 or less. Such organizations are already doing great things with less money. She agreed that graduating to the next level should not be considered a metric of success. Once the Commission has funded an organization and gets to know its capabilities, there might be more of a desire to see them funded again.

Commissioner Mercer agreed. She said she would like to give more money to all sorts of organizations. Since \$5000 is the Commission's minimum in the primary funding process, it seems reasonable to set the pilot program grants at that level.

Commissioner Mansfield agreed with both Commissioner McClure and Commissioner Mercer. He said the smaller allocation is in the best interest of the city for the pilot program. Once the program proves to be successful, a higher level of funding could follow.

Commissioner Amirfaiz said the question for her was what would be achieved by spending \$5000 and having the success bar set very low. She said the better approach would be to be clear about what outcome the Commission wants to see achieved, spelled out in the criteria.

Commissioner Mercer said what she wanted to see is smaller organizations funded with the hope, but not necessarily the requirement, that they use the experience to graduate to the next level. The idea is to help out smaller organizations and bring them into the Commission's sphere by giving them a certain amount of exposure. There is some degree of risk involved, but the hope is that the organizations will use the funds to build their programs and successes in the community.

Commissioner Piper said he had concerns about smaller organizations being able to demonstrate a meaningful impact with only \$5000. If the intention is to incubate organizations, it must be asked what can realistically be demonstrated with such modest grants.

Commissioner Amirfaiz said the pilot program seeks to target underserved organizations. It is all about access for communities that are not traditionally invited or at the table. The underpinnings of the program is capacity building, which may not hit the mark with only \$5000.

Commissioner Ma agreed that while capacity building could be an outcome, another could be

the promotion of front-line actions in ways that could potentially have big rippling impacts through the community that could be measured through narrative stories.

Ms. Esparza commented that the Commissioners were possibly using terms differently. She said the staff's exploration with legal and asset management did not include the perspective of capacity building for organizations. Consideration was not given to using the funds for organizations to effect an audit, hire a consultant, or get their 501(C)(3) status. The references to capacity building were more focused on organizations building their capacity to interact with government processes and to gain experience with the grant process. The basic intent of the program was along the lines of giving grants that will result in services to populations that qualify for human services funds. The program will need to meet the city's criteria relative to the gift of public funds, one of which is using funds for the poor and indigent. The opportunity was explored for the program to be purely a grant that the city would not try to pull back, meaning there would be no contract for services, under the stated intent of meeting the poor and indigent criteria.

Ms. O'Reilly added that granting up to \$5000 to an organization would not preclude it from asking for funds from other granting agencies. A grant of \$5000 from the city may in fact help organizations leverage funds from other sources. In that sense, the total impact of the program may not just be \$5000. She said if an organization had activities that exceeded the \$5000 limit, they presumably would have to show where the additional funding would come from. Ms. O'Reilly said another option would be to set aside a separate pot of funds specifically for the purpose of building capacity. Other organizations have taken that approach, and that is something that could be explored as a separate process.

Commissioner McClure said she was thinking less along the lines of capacity building and more along the lines of capability building. She said she understood the intent to be to focus on small and young organizations that have not previously had experience working with grants. Like credit, where the small organizations show they can use the small allocation effectively and well, the city can extend essentially elect to extend additional credit by granting funding for a second year. By that point, other funders might be willing to take a risk on them.

Chair Kline agreed with Commissioner Ma that ultimately the desire is to see positive impacts in the community through the program, which could in fact come in smaller doses. If an agency demonstrates that it can stay small and still do good work, they should not be penalized.

Ms. O'Reilly said staff would explore with legal and asset management what the city's level of comfort might be relative to increasing the grant from \$5000 to a larger amount. Ms. Esparza added that staff would seek a read from the Councilmembers who initially raised the issue that is the basis for the pilot program as to whether the proposal meets their expectations.

Commissioner McClure said it might be helpful to add a purpose statement to the small grant process outline.

8. OLD BUSINESS

With regard to the Needs Update, Commissioner Ma highlighted the need to look at infrastructure and opportunity gaps. The previous Needs Update includes the number of affordable housing units built, but does not say anything about the actual gap between the need and the supply. While that might be hard to find, the data analysis would be helpful in better visualizing the gaps. He also mentioned that there is a rising sentiment in the city that

those experiencing homelessness are reaping their own personal failings, or that those who are homeless have mental health and substance abuse issues. While that is true to some degree, there is documentation showing that many develop mental health and substance abuse issues due to the stress of being homeless. Scarcities in one's life changes one's psychology when it comes to decision making. It would be helpful to have that outlined in the narrative of the Needs Update.

Grant Coordinator Dee Dee Catalano reported that the city may be receiving additional CDBG-CV dollars in the not-too-distant future. When the CARES Act was passed in March 2020, it contained \$5 billion for CDBG divided into three pots. The first, CV1, went to all of the entitlement cities and the allocation was based on the historical formula. Bellevue's share was \$489,623. The second allocation, CV3, brought \$897,287 to the city. CV2 totaled \$1 billion that was allocated to the states which were given the option of allocating the funds to cities and counties. On March 1, 2021, the Washington State Department of Commerce announced a process for cities and counties to apply for the CV2 funds. Details are still lacking but the city may be applying for an unknown amount of money based on low- and moderate-income populations. The total allocation statewide amounts to only \$10 million. She said the Commission will be asked to weigh in regarding what CDBG-eligible needs might be addressed.

Ms. O'Reilly said a webinar to outline the details was scheduled for March 22. Staff will bring recent data to the Commission's April 6 meeting to help the Commission have a robust discussion about the potential Covid-related needs in the community. The most recent CDBG-CV allocation was earmarked for food assistance, emergency financial assistance, and behavioral health, but other issues, such as child care, shelters, and even possibly outreach around vaccinations, could also qualify.

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

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Ma. The motion was seconded by Commissioner McClure and the motion carried unanimously.

Chair Kline adjourned the meeting at 8:06 p.m.

Secretary to the Human Services Commission

Date

Chairperson of the Human Services Commission

Date