

The Human Services Commission approved these minutes on June 7, 2022.

CITY OF BELLEVUE
HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION
MINUTES

May 24, 2022
6:00 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
Virtual Meeting

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chair Piper, Vice Chair Amirfaiz, Commissioners Ma, Phan

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioners Mansfield, Singh

STAFF PRESENT: Christy Stangland, Toni Esparza, Leslie Miller, Asma Ahmed, Department of Parks and Community Services

GUEST SPEAKERS: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

2. ROLL CALL

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present except for Commissioners Mansfield and Singh.

Chair Piper stated that beginning in June the meetings would be held both in-person and virtually.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – None

4. ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS – None

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

6. STAFF AND COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Human Services Manager Leslie Miller explained that to begin conducting hybrid meetings, it will be necessary for the Commission to conduct an in-person-only meeting and to at that meeting change the bylaws to allow hybrid meetings with up to three Commissioners participating virtually. The City Attorney's Office is working on the bylaws language.

7. INFORMATION FOR THE COMMISSION

A. 2023-2024 Human Services Fund Applications – Round One Review

Chair Piper asked if there were any applications in addition to those flagged at the Commission's meeting on May 17 that should also be flagged.

Commissioner Ma flagged as a no Application 42, YMCA of Greater Seattle: Food Trucks at Bellevue YMCA. Also flagged as a maybe or a no was Application 96, Alpha Supported Living Services: Alpha's Health Services Program.

The Commissioners then reviewed all applications that had been flagged, starting with Application 5, Congregations for the Homeless: Outreach. Vice Chair Amirfaiz suggested that with the funding the agency receives from the city and other funders, the outreach program could be supported with other funds. If outreach is conducted that brings in more clients, if the program does not have a sufficient number of beds to accommodate them, it defeats the purpose. The explanation from staff that the program relies on the outreach team and that the service cannot be funded through other means was acknowledged and is relied on.

Commissioner Phan asked what was meant by the statement that the agency has other funders and other ways to obtain the funding for the outreach program. Vice Chair Amirfaiz explained that shelters get money from the city as well as national and regional sources. Some of those dollars could be used to fund outreach.

There was agreement to advance Application 5 to Round 2.

With regard to Application 12, MAPS – MCRC: Housing for Single Women, Vice Chair Amirfaiz said the issue was the lack of specific information. It gives data in terms of homelessness and demographics, but there is a lack of information regarding the program's primary focus, Muslim women. Given that 70 percent of the women served are not Muslim, it is confusing as to the target population. The agency has leased units, but those units are leased to Sophia Way to accommodate their shelter clients. If there is a need to accommodate additional individuals, it is not clear why the leased units would be leased to another agency. The application states clients from Renton are served, but Renton is not being asked to contribute. Clients hear about the program essentially through Sophia Way and New Bethlehem, but apparently not through other Muslims. Mentorship is listed as being part of the program, but the application also states that the clients have language barriers. In 2021 the program had a budget of \$14,220 and with no other funding listed it is unknown how they could have served as many women as they say they did. The budget does not list the total number of FTEs. The application is confusing in regard to the number of residents served, specifically listing 16 then 18 then 20.

Chair Piper noted having several of the same concerns. Of greatest concern is the almost 2000 percent increase in the budget between 2021 and 2023 and the fact that the number of residents served increases by only two.

Commissioner Ma called for the application to go through to the next round. MCRC has worked and collaborated with other organizations, including The Sophia Way. Very few services have transitional housing and a pathway to permanent housing is needed. From the application it is clear the agency has the capability of serving Muslim women in particular due to their organizational background, though they do serve non-Muslim women as well.

Commissioner Phan agreed with Commissioner Ma. It is possible the agency is not seeking funding from Renton because they are looking specifically at Eastside units. With housing and rental costs going up, it is understandable why the program budget would need to be increased. The program serves a valuable function in the community.

Chair Piper voiced support for offering transitional housing. The bigger concern is the projected number of residents served is only eight.

Vice Chair Amirfaiz said the budget numbers do not give a clear picture, especially in regard to any other funding, and added that as drafted the application specifically states that the program is aimed at serving Muslim women.

There was consensus in favor of advancing the application to Round 2 on the understanding that there will be further discussion.

Leslie Miller said staff would reach out to the agency to seek clarification on the budget.

Turning to Application 13, Snoqualmie Valley Shelter Services: River Street Shelter, Chair Piper noted the argument previously made for flagging the application stemmed from the fact that the program is not located in Bellevue proper and is indeed located quite far out in east King County.

Leslie Miller said the program has become part of the regional provision of services. They serve whoever shows up in need of assistance. A small percentage of their clients come from the valley, and more are coming from other cities. Eastside shelters proper are having to turn folks away.

Commissioner Ma commented that with that clarification the application should be passed on to Round 2. The city should demonstrate support for the region and avoid just being siloed.

There was consensus to move the application on to Round 2.

With respect to application 42, YMCA of Greater Seattle: Food Trucks at Bellevue YMCA, Commissioner Ma said the program involves a food truck that pays a weekly visit to the Bellevue YMCA. Families get a ten-dollar meal ticket to make purchases from the food truck. It would appear that to some extent the program is aimed at stimulating business for food trucks in addition to providing warm meals for families. However, as described in the application, the program does not appear to be a wise use for Bellevue dollars in that it will serve only a limited number of Bellevue residents.

Commissioner Phan disagreed, indicating that in fact the program is beneficial for the families who are suffering from food insecurity in the Bellevue School District. Some homeless persons are also getting the vouchers. There are no other similar programs. It should be moved to Round 2.

Vice Chair Amirfaiz agreed with Commissioner Ma, saying the program would not be the best use of the city's dollars. It would be alright, however, to move the program to the next round where there will be further discussion.

Chair Piper agreed with Commissioner Phan. The problem of food insecurity is somewhat addressed by the program, which states it will serve 2400 people.

Human Services Planner Asma Ahmed noted from reading through the application that the program provides culturally relevant food access by offering diverse food options weekly on a rotating basis.

Commissioner Ma allowed being swayed and agreed that food is important. The fact is the total application asks far exceed the available funds and some hard decisions will have to be made. That could be done in Round 2.

Vice Chair Amirfaiz was not sure if the program makes that much of a difference given the frequency.

Commissioner Phan said the program does in fact make a difference. There does not appear to be another program that helps the same families, many of whom are on the edge between being housed and being homeless.

There was agreement to move the application forward to Round 2.

Vice Chair Amirfaiz said the concern regarding Application 46, Bellevue College: Parent Education, was that while the program is longstanding, it has faced trouble with engaging BIPOC families and families with disabilities. The proposal is to have a popup mobile operation to train faculty based on evidence-based information. It is concerning that their evidence-based curriculum is not for the BIPOC community. The application allows the program has had difficulty engaging the two populations. The application says nothing about what will be done differently except for the popup mobile training session. By way of outcomes, the application states parents will increase their knowledge. One outcome should in fact be to increase the number of parents from those two populations, but that is not mentioned.

Commissioner Phan commented that the curriculum to be given to the parents appears to be project-based and centers around the issues of social justice and action. If project based, that means it is based on the experience of the students and the adults, not on the staff. The point of engaging with the two communities is being in the community; that is the point of the mobile popup.

Vice Chair Amirfaiz questioned whether the community could be truly engaged with a single popup session once a month. Nothing is articulated in the application in regard to staffing, the facility and language barriers, and engaging parents with disabilities.

Commissioner Ma said it is fine to engage parents, but when parents are stressed with basic needs, that will be the biggest factor preventing engagement. In the current climate, the program is unlikely to reach the population that needs help the most, and it is not the kind of program that is needed.

Chair Piper agreed that there are more acute needs for the particular communities mentioned and indicated a preference for not moving the application forward. Commissioner Phan concurred as well.

There was agreement not to move Application 46 forward to Round 2.

Chair Piper noted that the concern voiced regarding Application 54, Eastside Legal Assistance Program: Medical-Legal Partnership, was that the program partners do not contribute.

Vice Chair Amirfaiz expressed the understanding that the agency provides similar services as part of its other programs.

Leslie Miller said the clarification received from the agency was that the partners are federally qualified community health centers. The program helps individuals who are facing potential economic crisis because of medical debt. The program beneficiaries are the clients that are at below 200 percent of the federal poverty level.

Commissioner Ma voiced support for moving the application forward to Round 2. The program has merit in terms of the benefits. Low-income families face a number of legal challenges in applying for assistance via Medicaid and the like.

Commissioner Phan concurred, noting that more than 70 percent of the clients have families.

Chair Piper agreed the program should be moved forward.

There was agreement to move Application 54 to Round 2.

Turning to Application 59, Kindering Center: ParentChild+, Commissioner Ma expressed between the application and Application 60, Kindering Center: Parenting Plus, a preference for moving forward with Application 59 but not Application 60. The two programs are similarly named, which is confusing. Application 59 is similar to Bellevue College's parenting class. Application 59 is seeking to hire previous participants and as such is more engaged in the community.

Vice Chair Amirfaiz commented that United Way already funds Application 59. According to the application, the ask of Bellevue would fund ten families twice a week for 30-minute visits. With other programs funded, Application 59 should not be moved forward.

Chair Piper concurred with Vice Chair Amirfaiz in terms of the amount of funding from United Way and the need to fund other programs. Chair Piper advocated for not moving Application 59 forward.

Commissioner Phan pointed out that 39 percent of the children in the ParentChild+ program have special needs, which is different from the Bellevue College program.

There was consensus regarding Application 59 to advance it to Round 2. There was agreement not to move Application 60 to Round 2.

Chair Piper noted having previously expressed concern about Application 63, Tenants Union of Washington State: BIPOC Tenant Empowerment Program. The program appears to fall under the category of political activity. The application makes it clear the organization has fought for legislative action and has staged demonstrations. In addition, the number of service units is quite low.

There was agreement not to advance Application 63 for the reasons stated by Chair Piper.

In regard to Application 75, Congolese Integration Network: Health Board Program, Asma Ahmed informed the Commission that in talking to the agency it was learned they did not mean to submit the application to Bellevue. Accordingly, they have withdrawn the application. An updated budget and service unit spreadsheet for Application 75, Congolese Integration Network: Youth Program, will be submitted soon.

Commissioner Ma noted having flagged Application 82, Equity in Communication Noticias Program: Noticias en Espanol Para Familias en BSD y LWSD. The program is not something the Commission needs to support.

Commissioner Phan noted having attended a couple meetings of the group as a member of Eastside Pathways. The translation services that happen throughout the Bellevue School District are very slow going. Spanish-speaking parents tended to be getting their communications from the schools a lot slower than English-speaking parents. When Covid hit, Spanish-speaking parents were not receiving the quick information the English-speaking parents were receiving. The project started with a group taking Lake Washington School District content, translating it, and making it accessible to all by putting it online. It has grown from that and now the group wants to do the same for the Bellevue School District. Community members help with the translations and in deciding what information needs to be

translated.

Asma Ahmed added that both the Bellevue School District and the Lake Washington School District reshare the videos made by the group on their platforms.

Commissioner Ma suggested the application is worth advancing, particularly given that it involves a lot of community engagement.

Vice Chair Amirfaiz commented that the program receives funding from Kirkland and Redmond, but the number of residents served is listed in the application as unknown. Additionally, under service units the application says 2023 city funded 19, which is confusing and needs clarification. Leslie Miller reported being at Kirkland when that city funded the program along with Redmond. There was an issue in terms of tracking because it cannot be said for sure if the views are unduplicated and the number of people watching each video as it plays. It is possible to track how many times each video is watched. Vice Chair Amirfaiz said that clarification would be good to have.

There was consensus to advance Application 82 to Round 2 pending additional clarification.

Chair Piper noted that the concern previously voiced about Application 85, Mission Africa was around services being provided in south King County. The application does project serving 100 Bellevue residents in 2023. It may be more important to focus on programs offered in Bellevue serving Bellevue residents.

Commissioner Ma commented that the application specifically states the program distributes gift certificates to families in south King County communities to buy ethnic and culturally appropriate foods that are not readily available in major chain stores. Food issues are addressed through other programs, including culturally appropriate foods.

Commissioner Phan stated that there are African families in Bellevue and noted that no one previously raised a concern about Application 87, Ubumwe Women Association: Immigrant Single Parent Family Empowerment Support Group, which specifically targets women from Rwanda. That application allows that while there are not many such families in Bellevue and that most African families are located in the south King County area, the Bellevue families feel isolated and often go searching for services not offered in Bellevue. It would be disappointing to pass on a service offered to Bellevue families that do not otherwise have access to the service.

Vice Chair Amirfaiz said it was not clear how the program was going to go from serving 35 persons to 100 persons. The recommendation was made not to move the application forward.

Commissioner Ma noted not having flagged Application 87 because of the nature of the program. Application 85 was flagged specifically because of the nature of the program and its geographical location.

Chair Piper expressed sharing the same concerns voiced by Vice Chair Amirfaiz in terms of the increase in the number of residents served. The application should not be advanced.

There was consensus not to advance Application 85.

Commissioner Ma agreed that there are merits to Application 96, Alpha Supported Living Services: Health Services Program. The program focuses on the population with disabilities. From the application, however, it appears the program is more about education to clinicians than a service to residents.

Chair Piper pointed out that the ask is very small and if funded may not move the needle that much if at all. While it would be okay to move it forward, the Commission will need to have a discussion down the line about Goal Area 4 because some cuts will need to be made.

Commissioner Phan expressed uncertainty with regard to exactly what the program would accomplish.

Commissioner Ma allowed that there might be a gap the program aims to address, but it only a \$5000 ask that may not end up accomplishing much.

Vice Chair Amirfaiz pointed out that according to the application the overall agency budget for 2023 is \$2.154 million. The \$5000 could be earmarked for another organization that provides valuable services. At its core the application is about case management.

There was agreement not to move Application 96 forward.

Chair Piper noted the reason Application 126, Indian American Community Services: Small Business Support Program, was flagged was because it primarily involves economic development. While related to some extent to human services, it is not completely within the Commission's scope.

There was consensus not to advance Application 126.

B. Review Round 3 Process

Leslie Miller reviewed with the Commission the schedule for the next few weeks, noting that meetings were scheduled for June 7, June 23, July 7 and July 19, and indicating that the applications would be reviewed beginning with Goal Area 5.

Commissioner Ma suggested that as the Commissioner teams review their assigned applications, they should roughly assign funding numbers to them and pass that information along to staff to facilitate their Round 2 process. Leslie Miller said there have already been some conversations at the staff level about priorities, especially those voted on by the Commission related to the Needs Update and Council priorities. The staff will welcome input as the process moves forward and will also gladly answer any questions raised by the Commissioners as part of their review efforts. The Round 3 application reviews will be led by the team assigned the applications being discussed.

Chair Piper agreed with Commissioner Ma and proposed that the teams reviewing the first Goal Areas to be discussed should meet as soon as possible and pass on to the staff their initial funding recommendations. Leslie Miller said the struggle for staff was that there was only a week of time before the staff process is to be completed.

Commissioner Ma suggested that absent input from the Commissioners to inform the staff's Round 2 work, their work may be meaningless, and the Commission will have to end up conducting its own Round 2 exercise. The whole point of the approach is to save time, but it may not do that unless the Commissioners give input.

Leslie Miller said if the Commission intends to give the staff guidance with regard to funding the individual applications, the timeline will need to be discussed. The intent of the staff is to have at the end of their Round 2 work a balanced budget.

Chair Piper allowed that the Round 2 work of the staff, that will include a balanced budget,

will serve to inform the Commission's work. Undoubtedly there will need to be tweaks made by the Commission at the June and July meetings. Leslie Miller allowed that because the funds available for allocation are far outweighed by the total asks, the Commission will be faced with having to say no more often than has been necessary in the past.

Commissioner Ma agreed that the schedule would not allow for the teams to meet, review their applications, and pass on their funding recommendations to the staff ahead of the staff doing their Round 2 work. It would be a good idea for the Commission to set some ground rules with regard to funding, such as not recommending funding that is twice the program's previous year's budget.

Chair Piper agreed, suggesting that the baseline should be no more than a cost-of-living increase. Calibrations can be made from there as the Commission deems necessary.

Commissioner Ma commented that the available funds for allocation may not be sufficient even to support flat funding. One option would be to group similar service programs together and applying any percentage reductions equally to them.

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

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

Chair Piper adjourned the meeting at 7:45 p.m.