

SAN FRANCISCO HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION

MINUTES

January 28, 2021 Regular Meeting

The regular monthly meeting of the Human Services Commission was held on Thursday, January 28, 2021 virtually & telephonically pursuant to the Governor's Executive Order N-29-20 and the Twelfth Supplement to Mayoral Proclamation Declaring the Existence of a Local Emergency dated February 25, 2020.

MEMBERS SCOTT KAHN, President  
PRESENT JAMES MCCRAY, JR., Vice President  
REMOTELY (VIA RITA SEMEL  
ZOOM) GEORGE YAMASAKI, JR.

MEMBERS DARSHAN SINGH (excused)  
ABSENT  
OTHERS Trent Rhorer, Executive Director  
PRESENT Elizabeth LaBarre, Executive Assistant to the Executive Director / Secretary – Human  
REMOTELY (VIA Services Commission  
ZOOM) Dan Kaplan, Deputy Director – Finance and Administration  
Joan Miller, Deputy Director – Family & Children's Services  
Noelle Simmons, Deputy Director – Economic Support & Self-sufficiency  
Other department staff and interested citizens

ROLL CALL President Kahn called the meeting to order at 10:04a.m., noting that four of the five Commission members were present on the Zoom platform based on a visual confirmation. Commissioner Singh had an excused absence and was not present.

AGENDA On motion of Commissioner Yamasaki, seconded and unanimously carried, the Commission adopted the agenda as posted.

MINUTES On motion of Commissioner Semel, seconded and unanimously carried, the Commission adopted the minutes of the December 17, 2020 Regular Meeting as circulated.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT Executive Director Trent Rhorer furnished an update regarding federal, state and local activities, including COVID-19 information.

**FEDERAL**

President Biden has signed a slew of executive orders, undoing what Trump had left, regarding COVID-19 support, vaccine distribution, changes in FEMA reimbursement for localities and significant investments in food support for low-income households.

Executive Director Rhorer referenced an SF Chronicle article on the change to FEMA's reimbursement rate. FEMA was reimbursing 75% of the cost of pandemic food and shelter (hotels). With the new Biden administration, FEMA is reimbursing 100% of costs for the alternative housing system and some food interventions. Mr. Rhorer and others leading the emergency housing effort are waiting for details, but what they do know is that SF will be reimbursed 100% of the cost for the vulnerable population—those age 65 and above or with underlying health conditions—and the reimbursement at 100% will be prospective not retrospective. The 100% reimbursement rate will end at the close of the federal fiscal year—September 30, 2021. With more federal support, the team is looking at how the additional dollars will inform the design of the hotel/housing program for vulnerable homeless. The plan so far is to expand the number of hotel rooms in the portfolio to increase the number of vulnerable homeless off the street over the next month or two. Starting this week, Executive Director Rhorer and his team are partnering with the real estate department and city attorneys to find out what other hotel owners would want to lease to the City. They are also working with the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing (HSH) to see if community based organizations

(CBOs) have the capacity to staff the hotels. Hotel staffing was transitioned from disaster service workers (DSWs) to CBOs a while back. There are a lot of moving parts to the housing expansion. The direction from the Mayor is to house more homeless and increase the number of hotel rooms.

Biden is proposing a \$1.9T federal economic relief package that includes \$350 billion for states and schools, along with rental assistance, income tax credits and small business support.

## **STATE**

The governor extended the eviction moratorium through June 30. It isn't clear if the approximately \$2.6 billion from the federal government will be sent out through nonprofits, cities, counties, both or all of the above.

The legislative cycle looks different this year with no in-person meetings. It is difficult for us to get our points across to legislatures remotely. In spite of this challenge, CWDA is pushing forward with several legislation and budget priorities. The first priority is for the state to provide a telephonic signature function for all programs. We have proven during the pandemic that benefits can be initiated and provided remotely, and a telephonic signature is an integral part of that process. Another legislative priority is to provide cash assistance for CalWORKs families whose children are in foster care for up to 180 days/6 months to assist with reunification. The final priority is legislation related to the transition of funds from the federal IV-E waiver to the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA). Title IV-E waiver funds were only accessible once a child was removed from the home. FFPSA allows us to use the money flexibly and helps us prevent children from going into foster care by providing funding up front. In total the cost is \$90 million, comprised of \$10 million in county staff training and \$80 million for counties to invest in front-end services and supports.

## **LOCAL**

Mayor Breed nominated Assessor Carmen Chu to serve as San Francisco's City Administrator, replacing Naomi Kelly. Joaquin Torres, currently the director of the Office of Economic and Workforce Development (OEWD), will fill Carmen's position.

The City will provide \$25 million in grants and zero-interest loans to child care providers to help minimize the financial impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on early care and education programs. These one-time funds will assist licensed early care and education programs and license-exempt cooperative preschool programs with costs associated with COVID-19 such as accommodating smaller group sizes, purchasing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), and staff compensation. City dollars that came through Proposition F in November 2020 will be used.

## **COVID-19 UPDATES**

The post-holiday surge is subsiding. As a city, we track eight categories. San Francisco is in green for five of the eight categories including acute bed capacity and ICU bed capacity. Considering the projection, SF won't run out of beds the next many months. At the peak of the surge we were at 44 cases per 100,000 residents. We are currently at almost half that. The concern is that as the City opens, more people are out and about which leads to more infections. The new strains are also a concern. Dr. Colfax is concerned that there will be a fourth surge if people don't wear masks and let their guard down. The Governor lifted the shelter-in-place (SIP) order for the state as counties enter the purple tier, which means the gates open up as to what we can do. There is a long list including outdoor dining and increased capacity in stores.

There has been a lot of confusion around vaccines for many reasons, the biggest factor being vaccine availability. The City effectively vaccinated patients at skilled nursing facilities (such as Laguna Honda) and frontline healthcare workers and is now vaccinating individuals 65 and older. The challenge of the three groups is that they add up to 210,000

residents and SF has only received 127,000 vaccines. SF needs 420,000 jabs just to get through the three groups if we include the second dose. Even though the 65 and older folks were allowed to get vaccines, SF didn't have enough to accommodate them. The City has 1 large vaccination site at City College up and running, with more ready to go when needed though it is a waste of resources to open another site with no vaccine supply. About 4% of the county has been vaccinated. Issues preventing the county from vaccinating more people include the unpredictable supply chain, the lack of control (the government doesn't control the vaccines; they are controlled by multi-county entities such as Kaiser) and mixed messages from state and federal governments.

Executive Director Rhorer paused for questions. Commissioner Semel shared that she understands the frustrations then asked why is SF doing such a bad job. In response, Mr. Rhorer said that the state is sending out vaccinations based on county populations. The issue with SF is that we have a large number of frontline health workers, many of whom do not live in SF, along with a high number of IHSS providers, many of whom also do not live in the city, and a higher than average population of residents over 65 years of age. These facts were not factored in by the state when vaccines were distributed to counties. Residents are frustrated because they feel like they aren't being provided essential information by the Department of Public Health (DPH). However, it's difficult for DPH to release information they don't have.

### **ADMIN/FINANCE**

Deputy Director Dan Kaplan will present a budget update later in the meeting.

For a facilities update, HSA has health and safety plans approved for all but one agency location. These plans are required by the City Administrator.

### **ESSS**

SFBN

Tied to increases at the federal level, under the new federal stimulus bill, all CalFresh households will receive a 15% increase in monthly issuances starting this month. This will continue for at least six months. So if an average family receives about \$350 per month, a 15% increase is significant at approximately \$60 more per month. Pandemic EBT cards—food benefits for students who normally get fed for free at school but as they aren't in school, they aren't getting school meals—are also getting a 15% increase. Referenced earlier in the report, the Telephonic Signature Waiver is extended through February 28.

Student eligibility rules have temporarily loosened under the new federal relief bill. The work-study exemption expands to include those eligible for work study. An estimated 5,000 – 6,000 students in SF may become eligible as a result, which may cause a significant increase in application processing over the next few months so leadership will need to assess staffing and overtime.

Medi-Cal renewals and negative action continue to be suspended which means people aren't losing healthcare benefits for not returning forms.

CAAP

The CAAP triage services team assesses a client's ability to work. The group has been operational during the pandemic and services are conducted remotely. If determined to be too disabled to work, then the team assists that individual with getting on SSI. Triage is a voluntary service since there are no work requirements currently. With better messaging from intake workers about the benefits of SSI case management, the show rate was 70% for the past four weeks. Referrals to SSI case management increased 32% over the last month, which reveals the screening is working and more people are being served. Clients on SSI get almost twice as much money each month than if they stay on CAAP.

### **FAMILY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES (FCS)**

The Family Urgent Response System (FURS) is for families in foster care who are in crisis. The emergency response system is one of many tools to preserve placements. A foster kid might call to discuss issues they are having with their resource families, or a family calls in with their frustrations, etc. The system allows staff to try to keep families together in real time. FURS is rolling out statewide. Our Family Urgent Response System is in partnership with Seneca. It will be interesting to see what impact FURS has on preserving placements.

One of many challenges during the pandemic is the adoption process. On Monday we will be finalizing eight adoptions. We have been finalizing about six adoptions per month during the pandemic, all virtual. This is in line with pre-pandemic numbers, which is a testament to Sophia Isom's hard work and the work of her team. In spite of COVID they continue to find loving families to adopt children.

FCS and HSA Communications launched a second public awareness campaign to educate San Franciscans on the need for foster homes. The first ad campaign was halted due to the pandemic. However, it was a success while it lasted, resulting in 30 people applying to become resource parents.

Picking up where we left off, the new campaign focuses on the fact that more than half of our foster children are placed outside the City due to a shortage of resource families in SF. The advertisements depict San Francisco icons, such as the Golden Gate Bridge, missing architectural elements. The missing elements represent foster children placed outside the City. The ads state, "We lose a piece of our city when foster kids are placed outside SF. Right now there are more foster kids than safe, loving homes available. You can help change that. 100 foster families needed today. #FosterItForward." The ads are currently running on billboards, streetlight banners and on social media channels. Kudos to Chandra Johnson and her communications team and to Sophia Isom and her team.

Commissioner Semel applauded the work with foster kids. It is so important that they find good homes. "Thank you for that work."

Commissioner McCray stated, "ditto." Finding good homes in the City has been historically due to the heart of the community, particularly the hearts of the African American faith community for years. We need response from the community so this campaign is really great. "Regarding the adoption numbers, great job, Ms. Isom and team."

President Kahn shared an anecdote about attending the annual adoption event at the superior court building. Sophia Isom stated that last year's event, in November, was canceled due to the pandemic but hopefully the event can happen this November. She gave kudos to her team.

Alan Botts with Family and Children's Services shared that the event takes place on National Adoption Day during Foster Care Awareness month.

President Kahn stated that it is a very loving event.

EMPLOYEE OF  
THE MONTH  
AWARD

President Kahn announced DAVID NGUYEN, Child Protective Services Worker, as the January 2021 Employee of the Month. The Commission recognized David for his hard work and initiative, along with his ability to take on a large case load and subject matter expert (SME) designation. David was awarded an engraved desk clock.

DEPARTMENT  
OF BENEFITS  
AND FAMILY  
SUPPORT

Finance and Administration Deputy Director Dan Kaplan presented on the process for the development of the Department of Benefits and Family Support's proposed budget for fiscal years 2021-2022 and 2022-2023. No action was requested of the Commission at this time. Presentation of the final proposed budget to the Commission will occur at the February 11, 2021 Special Meeting.

PROPOSED  
BUDGET

CONSENT  
CALENDAR

On motion of Commissioner Yamasaki, seconded and unanimously carried, the Commission approved and ratified actions taken by the Executive Director since the December 17, 2020 Regular Meeting in accordance with Commission authorization of January 28, 2021:

1. Submission of request to encumber funds in the total amount of \$11,297,307 for purchase of services or supplies and contingency amounts.
2. Submission of 0 temporary positions for possible use in order to fill positions on a temporary basis made during the period of 12/10/20 to 1/12/21.
3. Submission of 20 temporary appointments for possible use in order to fill positions on a temporary basis made during the period of 12/10/20 to 1/12/21.

RESOURCE  
DEVELOPMENT  
ASSOCIATES

Dr. Ramandeep Kular, Manager of CAAP Health Services, requested authorization to enter into a new contract agreement with RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATES.

On motion of Commissioner Semel, seconded and unanimously carried, the Commission approved the request to enter into a new contract agreement with RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATES to provide case management system assessment for CAAP; for the period of February 1, 2021 to October 31, 2021; in the amount of \$64,925, plus a 10% contingency, for a total amount not to exceed \$71,417.

ELECTION OF  
OFFICERS


On motion of Commissioner McCray, seconded and unanimously carried, the Commission elected Scott Kahn as Human Services Commission President, commencing February 1, 2021.

On motion by Commissioner Yamasaki, seconded and unanimously carried, the Commission elected Dr. James McCray, Jr. as the Human Services Commission Vice President, commencing February 1, 2021.

PUBLIC  
COMMENT  
ADJOURNMENT

President Kahn's call for public comment yielded no responses.

President Kahn adjourned the Human Services Commission January 28, 2021 Regular Meeting at 11:55 a.m.



Elizabeth LaBarre, Commission Secretary  
Human Services Commission

Posted: 2.9.2021