

SAN FRANCISCO HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION

MINUTES

February 11, 2021 Special Meeting

The special meeting of the Human Services Commission was held on Thursday, February 11, 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 PRESENT REMOTELY (VIA ZOOM)	SCOTT KAHN, President JAMES MCCRAY, JR., Vice President DARSHAN SINGH GEORGE YAMASAKI, JR.
MEMBERS ABSENT	RITA SEMEL (excused)
OTHERS PRESENT REMOTELY (VIA ZOOM)	Trent Rhorer, Executive Director Elizabeth LaBarre, Executive Assistant to the Executive Director / Secretary – Human Services Commission 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 9:34 a.m., noting that three of the five Commission members were present on the Zoom platform based on a visual confirmation. Commissioner Semel had an excused absence and was not present. Commissioner Singh was initially not in attendance because of technical issues but was able to join and be counted present soon after the commencement of the meeting.
AGENDA	On motion of Commissioner Yamasaki, seconded and unanimously carried, the Commission adopted the agenda as posted.
MINUTES	When asked by President Kahn for a motion of the January 28, 2021 regular meeting minutes, Vice President McCray called out an error on page 4, halfway down the page. In the following sentence, “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,” the word “due” should be replaced by “dear.”  On motion of Vice President McCray, seconded and unanimously carried, the Commission adopted the minutes of the January 28, 2021 Regular Meeting as circulated noting the one correction.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT	Executive Director Trent Rhorer furnished an update regarding federal, state and local activities, including COVID-19 information.  <b>COVID-19</b>  There are eight metrics mentioned every meeting that measure the City’s success battling the pandemic: we are now five in the green category and two in the yellow. For number of rolling cases over seven days, SF is at 16/100,000. By comparison, during the third surge we were at 46/100,000. As the DPH Director states, now is not the time to get complacent. There is a bit of concern about the ramifications of Super Bowl parties and the upcoming long holiday weekend. We are concerned that people won’t be vigilant about wearing masks. There is also the new variant that spreads more easily and the City is generally opening up more, for example with outdoor dining.

SF is doing a great job with the vaccine roll out. Out of the 103,210 San Franciscans who have been vaccinated so far, half are over the age of 65 and a quarter are over the age of 75. In total, SF has 232,000 jabs, which includes multi-county HMOs. 114,000 first doses have been administered and 37,000 second doses—a 66% utilization rate. The way DPH commits vaccines to second doses (76,000), we are actually at 99%. The story heard nationally that people aren't getting available doses is not happening in SF. As you have probably read and seen on the news, the max vaccination sites at Moscone and City College are helping us reach the vaccination saturation. We are working in a fluid situation with limited and late information so it is difficult to plan. For example, the City College site had to close for two days this week because there was no supply. Appointments had to be canceled & rescheduled. DPH in partnership with HSA and DEM are doing a great job given the difficulties with planning.

## **FEDERAL**

The House gave final approval on Friday to a budget blueprint for President Biden's \$1.9 trillion stimulus plan. The aid package will move through the House by the end of the month through "Budget Reconciliation" rather than a stand-alone bill so that it is not subject to filibuster but needs 50 votes plus a tie breaker by the Vice President to pass assuming zero support from the Republicans which has been the case thus far. It is looking promising that it will pass so Executive Director Rhorer highlighted a few provisions relevant to our clients, the first being additional food support. The current 15% increase in CalFresh benefits (known as SNAP nationally) gets extended through September instead of a June expiration. \$3 billion goes to the WIC program (to help women, infants and children secure food) and the partnership with restaurants to provide food to needy Americans and jobs to laid-off restaurant workers is extended. Missing from the prior stimulus act that was very important to HSA was \$350 billion in general cash aid going straight to states and localities. Stimulus payments will be increased by \$1400 to eligible recipients plus \$600 from the prior act for a total of \$2000; households with mixed immigration status are eligible. Unemployment payments will get a boost from the current \$300 weekly enhancement contained in the December Congress relief package to \$400/week and extend the payments, along with two pandemic unemployment programs, through September. Everything seems to be tracking through September as that is the end of the federal fiscal year. FEMA reimbursement of 100% to hotels is good through the end of September along with the stimulus items just listed. Hopefully this also aligns with the end of the pandemic.

The federal eviction moratorium will be extended to September 30 along with \$25 billion nationwide in rental assistance for low- and moderate-income households who lost their jobs during the pandemic and \$5 billion to help states and localities assist those at risk of experiencing homelessness. As of late January, there were over 341,000 unduplicated open unemployment claims with an SF address. The current population of San Francisco is about 840,000 so 341,000 unemployed individuals is a huge number. One ramification of such large unemployment is the inability of San Franciscans to pay rent. UC Berkeley conducted a study that estimates there are 33,200 San Francisco tenant households with COVID-19-related job loss. Half of these households have lost at least half of their income. Half of the households were low-income to begin with. 2/3 are people of color and 1/3 were already rent burdened meaning a higher than average percent of their income goes toward rent. Now 2/3 of the households are rent burdened. The Late December Federal Relief Bill included \$25 billion nationally for emergency rental assistance with California receiving \$2.6 billion and SF receiving \$56 million. This is a significant amount of money – it could reach almost everyone who needs it. That money will go directly to the Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development (MOHCD). HSA has already reached out to MOHCD to assist with how to get the dollars to those most in need already connected with HSA. The County Welfare Directors Association (CWDA) has a \$100M budget proposal also related to rental assistance for a Flexible Housing Pot for CDSS-

Administered Housing Programs that will target a different population than the federal funds. We really fear a cliff at the end of September when the eviction protections are gone. We want to make sure people can continue to remain in their homes.

### **ESSS**

HSA and community partners are preparing to launch the 2021 Free Tax Prep season and Working Families Credit Program. As in years past, a local coalition of nonprofits organized by the United Way will offer free tax preparation services to low income households, and help them to enroll in federal, state and local earned income tax programs. The Working Families Credit Program provides \$250 local dollars to qualifying tax filers with children. As Executive Director Rhorer mentioned last month, new this year, ITIN filers can qualify for both the Working Families Credit Program and the State's CalEITC program, not the federal program. ITIN filers include primarily working undocumented and immigrant households with no social security number however they do pay taxes.

### **ADMIN/FINANCE**

Deputy Director Dan Kaplan will present a budget resolution later in the meeting which is of course the reason for this special meeting. He and his team have been busy finalizing our budget to submit to the Mayor's Office.

Through our HR department, the Racial Equity Action Plan was published and submitted to the City's Office of Racial Equity. It is a three-year roadmap to address racial disparities within HSA's workforce. Under the leadership of our Office of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB), a few of the many budget initiatives include the expansion and improvement of the hiring and recruitment process, standardizing onboarding processes, providing staff with development and advancement opportunities, and access to mentors and learning to help with career advancement. Another important priority is to foster a culture of inclusion and belonging. The organizational culture of HSA will encourage shared decision making, shared learning about racial equity and the creation of employee support groups.

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

FCS is grappling with how to handle COVID positive kids. Resource families are concerned about the foster kids getting COVID. FCS is working with Alternative Family Services (AFS) to solidify two resource families who are specially trained and will take minors who are positive or exposed to COVID-19.

As mentioned in last month's report, the resource family recruitment campaign is in full swing. Data shows a lot of interest in the campaign already which is really promising and exciting.

February is Black History Month. This is a time for the Agency to honor the work and contributions of HSA Black and African American employees, current and past employees. Last year we had a great live event. Unfortunately that is not possible with the ongoing pandemic so instead we are hosting a virtual celebration. On February 25, Mayor Breed agreed to attend our Agency-wide celebration which will commence at noon. We also have smaller celebrations within the divisions, for example FCS is having their department celebration on February 24.

At the conclusion of Executive Director Rhorer's report, Vice President McCray commended the City and work we do to support the Moscone operation and other centers around the City. He stated that he had his job and was very thankful. The staff were excited, upbeat and warm. Executive Director Rhorer promised to pass along Vice President McCray's compliments to Dr. Colfax, the Department of Public Health's Executive Director.

EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH AWARD

President Kahn announced Dina Austin, SIU Investigator, as the February 2021 Employee of the Month. The Commission recognized Dina for her tremendous work as an investigator and as a deployed disaster service worker (DSW). Dina was awarded an engraved desk clock.

CONSENT CALENDAR

On motion of Commissioner Yamasaki, seconded and unanimously carried, the Commission approved and ratified actions taken by the Executive Director since the January 28, 2021 Regular Meeting in accordance with Commission authorization of February 11, 2021:

1. Submission of request to encumber funds in the total amount of \$5,883,188 for purchase of services or supplies and contingency amounts.
2. Submission of 7 temporary positions for possible use in order to fill positions on a temporary basis made during the period of 1/13/21 to 2/5/21.
3. Submission of 12 temporary appointments for possible use in order to fill positions on a temporary basis made during the period of 1/13/21 to 2/5/21.

DEPARTMENT OF BENEFITS AND FAMILY SUPPORT AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY FISCAL YEAR 2021-2022 AND 2022-2023 BUDGET PROPOSAL

In advance of the budget presentation, Commissioner Yamasaki brought up a concern about the name of the commission listed on the budget memo, to which Executive Director Rhorer replied that it is a typo and that the memo will be corrected and resubmitted on the commission website as soon as the meeting is over.

Deputy Director, Finance and Administration Dan Kaplan then presented the Human Services Agency (HSA) and Department of Benefits and Family Support (BFS) Fiscal Year 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 Budget proposal. Dan Kaplan stated that the next step is to submit the proposal to the Mayor's Office. HSA must propose its budget by February 21 of each year.

As noted during the January 28, 2021 commission meeting, the COVID-19 pandemic and recession have significantly reduced City revenues. To balance the budget, the Mayor's Office has directed discretionary general fund budget reductions of 7.5% in FY 2021-22 and FY 2022-23. For the Human Services Agency, this translates to general fund reductions of \$7.3 million in each year. Nevertheless, due to rising state allocations in a number of human services program areas, HSA should be able to maintain critical client aid and services.

HSA's proposed FY 2021-22 budget for BFS and HSA Administration of \$608.6 million is \$4.2 million, or 0.7% more than the FY 2020-21 budget of \$604.4 million. HSA's revenues of \$469.7 million in FY 2021- 22, are \$9.2 million, or 2% more than FY 2020-21 revenues of \$460.5 million. General Fund support for BFS and HSA Administration of \$138.9 million in FY 2021-22 is \$5 million, or 3.5% less than the \$143.9 million in FY 2020-21. These changes reflect the higher revenues HSA anticipates in the upcoming fiscal year, and a handful of cost reductions, some of which relate to COVID response programs that were limited to FY2020-21.

Vice President McCray asked Deputy Director Kaplan what were the places where you were most satisfied in light of the \$7 million push upon the budget, that you've been able to get strength and get the Agency in an even stronger position, to which Mr. Kaplan responded that this would work differently from county to county. In SF, we invest a lot of money in human services and we have a lot of flexibility as to how we use our dollars. We have a relatively large general fund that allows us to move local support from program area to program area as needed. In better years we make use of that flexibility for expansion. In years like 2021, we may use that same capacity to avoid reductions. We had access to additional state & federal revenues because of the moment we are in, and we move general funds to shore up holes to keep all the programs together. Another reason my budget team should be proud is their flexible

and creative thinking with regard to spending during this year and the opportunities that lower spending in some areas and higher revenue in other areas in the current year that gave us the ability to deal with problems and additional programming next year. We have been working closely with the Mayor's Office and Controller's Office and have received very positive feedback. We have taken a difficult financial situation and have done as well as we can—we managed to hold things together on the one hand and increase programming in at least one major area.

On motion of Commissioner Singh, seconded and unanimously carried, the Commission approved the Department of Benefits and Family Support (BFS) Fiscal Year 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 Budget proposal.

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

ADJOURNMENT President Kahn adjourned the Human Services Commission February 11, 2021 Special Meeting at 10:48 a.m.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Elizabeth LaBarre', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Elizabeth LaBarre, Commission Secretary  
Human Services Commission

Posted:  
3.10.2021