

SAN FRANCISCO HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION

MINUTES

March 24, 2022 Regular Meeting

The regular meeting of the Human Services Commission was held on Thursday, March 24, 2022 in person at the Born auditorium at 170 Otis Street, virtually via Zoom and telephonically pursuant to California Government Code Section 54953(e) and Mayor London Breed's 45th Supplement to the Mayoral Proclamation Declaring the Existence of a Local Emergency dated February 25, 2020.

MEMBERS PRESENT IN PERSON SCOTT KAHN, President
JAMES MCCRAY, JR., Vice President
RITA SEMEL

MEMBERS PRESENT REMOTELY (VIA ZOOM) DARSHAN SINGH

OTHERS PRESENT IN PERSON Trent Rhorer – Executive Director
Elizabeth LaBarre – Commission Secretary
Dan Kaplan, Deputy Director – Finance and Administration

ROLL CALL President Kahn called the meeting to order at 9:37 a.m. noting the presence of all Commissioners: Commissioners McCray, Semel and Kahn were present in person in the Born auditorium. Commissioner Singh was present virtually via Zoom.

AGENDA On motion of Commissioner Semel, 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 February 12, 2022 Special Meeting as circulated. Due to some confusion as to which special meeting minutes were being adopted, Commission Secretary Elizabeth LaBarre clarified that the February 12, 2022 special meeting minutes were being adopted now and that the March 10, 2022 special meeting minutes would be presented at the next regular commission meeting (April 28) for adoption.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT Executive Director Trent Rhorer furnished an update regarding state and local activities.

STATE

The County Welfare Directors Association (CWDA), of which Executive Director Rhorer is currently president, has released its budget and legislation priorities for 2022. It has been challenging to engage the legislatures in a virtual environment during the pandemic. With the return to in person meetings in Sacramento, the process will improve for counties.

The state rental assistance program is ending April 1. The California Department of Housing and Community Development has committed to providing assistance to all eligible tenants who apply by the end of March. SFHSA, the Mayor's Office and other City departments are doing a communications push locally for this state program, encouraging residents

to apply before the March 31, 2022 deadline as there are still funds available.

LOCAL

The Mayor's annual State of the City Address ("the Address") occurred earlier this month. The Address is meant to highlight areas of focus for the Mayor's Office over the next year (and beyond). Some of the key areas include (i) a commitment to a well-run school system, (ii) a refocus on safety, reiterating her calls for more police officers and a new officer academy, noting a decline of 250 officers from just three years ago and a shortfall of 540 officers according to an independent analysis, (iii) reforming the City's bureaucratic approval system for new housing—both market rate and affordable, (iv) continued action in the Tenderloin to make the neighborhood safer for residents and visitors, (v) increased efforts to deliver mental health services for people in need, and (vi) a multi-year effort to better serve children and families, known as the Children and Family Recovery Plan ("the Plan"). The Plan comprises input from several City departments including SFHSA. SFHSA's emphasis is around support for food, general family needs and foster youth housing as they grow into adulthood.

The Tenderloin Linkage Center ("TLC")—the health and human services component of the Mayor's now expired 90 day State of Emergency in the Tenderloin neighborhood—remains open and operational. Interventions by SFHSA, the Department of Public Health ("DPH"), the Department of Public Works, etc. continue, including daily outreach, care and street cleaning. 20 San Francisco Police Department ("SFPD") officers are assigned to the Tenderloin this week to help the City disrupt drug dealing activity, address violent crime, and make the neighborhood safer for residents and visitors. A supplement to the Mayor's Declaration of Emergency has been issued to allow for extended deployments of disaster service workers ("DSWs") to support the initiative until June 30, 2022. Included in this deployment are SFHSA employees: IHSS director Krista Gaeta who is overseeing the TLC, and Tiana Wertheim of SFBN. SFHSA's role at the TLC is to provide support and access to benefits, such as Medi-Cal, CalFresh and workforce development. Executive Director Rhorer is part of a leadership team that convenes weekly to review the data to determine if the linkage center is making a positive difference in people's lives to where it is worth continuing beyond a few months as it is resource intensive.

AGENCY

The monthly employee newsletter, which has been well received by staff, will be distributed this week. The newsletter includes helpful information on COVID-19 guidance, trainings, facilities, safety including activities around the Civic Center/UN Plaza area, and the employee of the month. It is an effective way to connect staff to what is going on at the Agency and citywide.

SFHSA is promoting the diaper bank expansion, which begins April 1, in partnership with the Mayor's Office and community partners.

SFHSA annually promotes free tax preparation services. As tax season comes to a close, we remind clients that they can get help filing their taxes to maximize refunds and tax credits.

April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month. Content will be shared on SFHSA social media to drive awareness.

FINANCE/ADMIN

The State continues to receive revenues significantly higher than initially projected from the end of last year and in January. The revenues will be available in the May budget revision. State law known as the Gann limit from Prop 13, however, limits the ways a surplus over a certain size can be spent and pushes the state to send tax rebates or refunds to tax payers rather than spend on programs and services, which is one of the reasons Executive Director Rhorer believes the governor is opting for \$400 gift cards in lieu of, for example, a gas tax break. So while CWDA has a number of budget/legislation requests, including additional supports for child welfare reform, the Gann limit rules make it unclear how the funding will fit within the state's budget.

The budget supplemental for housing programs such as Project Roomkey passed at the Board last week. This will allow SFHSA to draw down state and federal dollars.

Discussions regarding the February budget proposal, including how to sustain the emergency COVID initiatives particularly around food support, continue with the Mayor's Office. As was mentioned in the January and February commission meetings, the millions of dollars for citywide food support (such as food bank support and home delivered meals) was not included in the SFHSA budget because it would be a general fund increase counter to the Mayor's instructions. SFHSA is now working with the Mayor's Office to get the funds approved for next year's budget.

Supervisor Ronen assumes chair of the Budget committee soon. With each new chair is a new set of budget priorities.

Employees returned to a two-day per week minimum on-site work schedule on March 7. SFHSA was granted an extension for the COVID booster requirement deadline for employees who intermittently enter high-risk locations (such as social workers). The new deadline is April 15. 85% of SFHSA employees who fall into this category are in compliance. Agency general health and safety guidelines have been updated to include the removal of the masking requirement on March 18 and the removal of the health screening requirement for employees and clients on April 3. Employees and clients are of course welcome to continue wearing facial coverings. Employees are encouraged to screen themselves before work each morning and stay home if they don't feel well.

The Office of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging ("DEIB") submitted the first of three Racial Equity Action Plan (the "Plan") progress reports to the Mayor's Office and Board of Supervisors, which highlighted the completion of 32 of the 92 Plan action items along with the

implementation of 49 actions. Progress was made in the Agency's recruiting policy whereby there is now a requirement to include questions about racial equity in the interview process. In addition, an equity-focused mentorship program and quarterly racial equity newsletter were launched along with the formation of six Employee Resource Groups (ERGs).

The annual racial equity town hall is this afternoon. Agenda items include a progress update on the Racial Equity Action Plan, results from the first agency-wide racial equity survey and opportunities to get involved in the Agency's racial equity initiatives, such as participating in the 21-Day Racial Equity Challenge.

The Office of DEIB staff attended six city-sponsored career fairs over the past two months held at community centers in Bayview, Visitacion Valley, Western Addition, and Potrero Hill to recruit potential candidates for SFHSA jobs. The job fair along with a partnership with nearly 70 community based organizations ("CBOs") and other outreach efforts have led to a 20% increase in the number of applicants for SFHSA jobs over the last four months. There is a citywide job fair on April 23, hosted by the Department of Human Resources ("DHR"), outside of City Hall. The job market trend reflects the Agency's experience recently whereby there are more job openings than applicants. Therefore, it is particularly important to market the Agency, relaying to applicants the good works of the Agency and that they can make a difference in the community and in the lives of San Francisco families, children and older adults if they join our workforce.

ESSS

SFBN

Beginning May 1, full scope Medi-Cal eligibility expands to individuals 50 years of age and older, regardless of citizenship or immigration status, if otherwise eligible. It is anticipated that about 3,000 San Franciscans will benefit from this eligibility expansion. It should be a relatively light workload increase for staff as many of the individuals are already on limited scope Medi-Cal; transitioning to full scope Medi-Cal can be done electronically. The governor is working on eligibility expansion for undocumented individuals ages 26 through 49 years old as a part of his budget package.

COVID-era waivers for Medi-Cal and CalFresh remain in place, meaning no Medi-Cal renewal suspensions or other negative action delays except for a few exceptions. The telephonic signature and interview waivers have been extended an additional three months (until June 30). The waivers will remain valid as long as there is a health emergency at the state and federal levels.

CalFresh fraud has been an issue. The state is replacing roughly 19,000 CalFresh EBT cards in San Francisco with CVV technology-enabled cards as an anti-fraud measure.

CAAP

72 CAAP-eligible clients have been processed for immediate permanent supportive housing through the TLC since its inception two months ago. This housing component of CAAP is the path created through the Care-

not-Cash initiative. In addition, approximately 30 clients are pending for CAAP-eligible housing.

FAMILY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES (FCS)

In April, there will be two Family First Prevention Services Act ("FFPSA") community information sessions to learn more about FFPSA, the planning process, and how participants can share their insights and expertise to build a better prevention system for San Francisco. FFPSA allows the Agency to draw down federal funds for a more robust child maltreatment prevention system. While a prevention system has been in place in San Francisco for many years, these federal dollars help to expand the program.

In an effort to increase the foster youth vaccination rate in San Francisco, DPH in collaboration with SFHSA, UCSF, Independent Livings Skills Program, San Francisco State University Guardian Scholars Program and other community based organizations developed a program to train youth and young adults to educate their peers about the importance and benefits of being vaccinated. As of March 15, approximately 18 youth and non-minor dependents are in the process or have completed the training to become certified ambassadors (not all participants are foster youth). All of the volunteers receive a stipend to participate in the initiative. Peer to peer instruction is a great tool and often more effective than many government interventions. In San Francisco, currently 24% of foster children ages 5-11 are vaccinated versus 64% of the general population in that age range. For foster youth ages 12-17, only 50% are vaccinated compared to 90% of their counterparts. Non-minor dependents ages 18-21 are 54% vaccinated compared to 84% of other San Franciscans in that age group. We hope this initiative closes the vaccination rate gap between foster youth and their peers.

Program Director Nikon Guffey has been appointed by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors to represent FCS on the Local Homeless Coordinating Board. It is important to have the FCS perspective on the Board to give a voice to family homelessness and keep it on the Board's radar.

The annual May resource parent appreciation event in honor of Foster Care Month in May will be virtual, hopefully for the last time, in an abundance of caution. Each family will receive a \$50 gift card and will also have an opportunity to win raffle prizes if they attend a virtual training event on May 14.

The celebration of life for Commissioner Yamasaki is this Saturday, March 26 at 1pm at the Japanese Cultural and Community Center or via Zoom. Executive Director Rhorer was honored to be asked to speak at the service by the family, along with retired planning director Dan Kelly and other friends and family members. Reach out to Commission Secretary Elizabeth LaBarre for additional details, or visit SFHSA social media where the event is posted. Executive Director Rhorer closed with a reflection on the late Commissioner Yamasaki's over 45 years of service on the commission.

President Kahn added that this is the first regular commission meeting without Commissioner Yamasaki. It is a real loss for the commission and for President Kahn personally as he no longer has his colleague's parliamentary procedures expertise to rely on. Commissioner Yamasaki was a wonderful man, and contributed immensely to the Agency and to the foster care system.

Commission Secretary Elizabeth LaBarre reminded the commission that the Mayor requires masking in policy body meetings even though the Agency has relaxed its masking requirement in Agency offices.

EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH AWARD

President Kahn announced Bin Bin Chen, Program Specialist, CAAP, as the March 2022 Employee of the Month. The Commission recognized Bin Bin for her excellent leadership skills and hard work ethic. Bin Bin was awarded an engraved desk clock.

CONSENT CALENDAR

On motion of Commissioner McCray, seconded and unanimously carried, the Commission approved and ratified actions taken by the Executive Director since the February 17, 2022 Special Meeting in accordance with Commission authorization of March 24, 2022:

1. Submission of request to encumber funds in the total amount of \$7,317,102 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 2/10/22 to 3/4/22.
3. Submission of 29 temporary appointments for possible use in order to fill positions on a temporary basis made during the period of 2/10/22 to 3/4/22.

COMMISSION TELECONFERENCED MEETINGS RESOLUTION

President Kahn presented the request to approve the resolution making findings to allow teleconferenced meetings with some members possibly appearing remotely under California government code section 54953(e).

On motion of Vice President McCray, seconded and unanimously carried, the Commission approved the resolution making findings to allow teleconferenced meetings with some members possibly appearing remotely under California government code section 54953(e).

THIRD-PARTY PRESENTERS ATTENDING VIRTUALLY

President Kahn presented the request to allow third-party presenters who are not City employees to attend commission meetings virtually, pending any California Government Code change or mayoral supplement to the emergency proclamation.

On motion of Vice President McCray, seconded and unanimously carried, the Commission approved the request to allow third-party presenters who are not City employees to attend commission meetings virtually.

UNITY CARE, INC.

Geoffrey Nagaye, Analyst with Family and Children's Services, presented the request to modify an existing grant agreement with Unity Care, Inc.

On motion of Commissioner McCray, seconded and unanimously carried, the Commission approved the request to modify the existing grant agreement with UNITY CARE, INC. for the provision of housing services for transitional aged youth; for the period of July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2023; for an additional amount of \$1,018,619, plus a 10% contingency, for a revised total not to exceed \$2,292,444.

ZORAH
BRAITHWAITE

Jennifer Williams, Administrative Law Judge, presented the request to modify the existing contract agreement with Zorah Braithwaite.

Executive Director Rhorer asked what is the nature of the significant increase in fair hearings: are they discontinuances or denials? Ms. Williams responded that the increase in hearings is due to both. About half of the increases are a result of the denial of new cases and half are due to the discontinuing of existing benefits. During COVID, Ms. Williams noticed a trend of increased access to hearings, with more people scheduling and actually showing up to hearings because they are able to attend virtually/call in as opposed to being required to physically appear at a service center. Executive Director Rhorer then asked if there are any patterns SFHSA can address programmatically to reduce the burden on the fair hearings officer and/or reduce the number of denials and discontinuances. Jennifer Williams responded that she is unable to cite a pattern, as historically the number of hearings goes up and down (ebb and flow). She did note that hearings have steadily increased monthly for the last six months and she is not sure why that is the recent trend. She is attempting to schedule hearings within a 30-day period so that clients don't receive aid paid pending. Increasing Zorah Braithwaite's hours will make that timeline possible.

On motion of Commissioner Semel, seconded and unanimously carried, the Commission approved the request to modify the existing contract agreement with ZORAH BRAITHWAITE to provide part-time fair hearing officer services; for the period of April 1, 2022 through June 30, 2024; in the amount of \$382,200, plus a 10% contingency, for a revised total amount not to exceed \$420,420.

MAXIMUS HUMAN
SERVICES INC.

Vlada Gulchin, Administrative Analyst with Family and Children's Services, requested authorization to modify the existing contract agreement with Maximus Human Services Inc.


On motion of Commissioner Semel, seconded and unanimously carried, the Commission approved the request to modify the existing contract agreement with MAXIMUS HUMAN SERVICES INC. to provide supplemental security income screening, application assistance and benefit maintenance/retention; for the period of July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2024; for an additional amount of \$342,710, plus a 10% contingency, for a revised total not to exceed \$883,378.

GENERAL PUBLIC
COMMENT

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

ADJOURNMENT

President Kahn adjourned the meeting in memory of Madeleine Albright at 10:35am.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Elizabeth LaBarre", followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Elizabeth LaBarre, Commission Secretary
Human Services Commission

Posted: April 25, 2022