

SAN FRANCISCO HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION

MINUTES

July 23, 2020 Regular Meeting

The regular monthly meeting of the Human Services Commission was held on Thursday, July 23, 2020 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  
RITA SEMEL  
DARSHAN SINGH  
GEORGE YAMASAKI, JR.

OTHERS PRESENT  
REMOTELY (VIA  
WEB-EX) 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 9:32 a.m. An audio roll call confirmed that all members were present.

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

MINUTES On motion of Commissioner McCray, seconded and unanimously carried, the Commission adopted the minutes of the June 8, 2020 Special 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 UPDATES**

HSA/DHS is paying close attention to the weekly \$600 supplement to unemployment benefits set to expire at the end of this month, a deadline for Congress to act on another round of economic relief before tens of millions of workers lose this supplement. The implication for the agency is not only the loss of income for individuals and families who have lost their jobs but also the potential trigger for eligibility for some of our programs depending on the circumstances of the household. Senate Republicans are discussing a reduced amount to the \$600. In terms of a broader relief package, the biggest [relevant] piece is the relief for state and local governments. San Francisco was hit hard with the budget impact of COVID resulting in a \$1.6B deficit, and the state with a \$40B-\$60B deficit. We hope the continuation of pandemic EBT (CalFresh) benefits for school-aged children is included in the relief package.

**STATE**

The state budget provides a fair amount of relief for cities. The biggest piece in the state budget that was restored is the realignment funding stream. The funding comes from state tax revenue that flows directly to counties to support human services programs, health programs (including public health, behavioral health) and public safety. Because the source of realignment funds is tax revenue—vehicle license fees and state sales tax being the two big sources, which are both currently greatly reduced due to COVID—the revenue to support human services was projected to decline significantly. The governor and legislature did agree on a \$1B general fund restoration of realignment, out of general fund not from tax revenue streams, to backfill the losses of those revenue streams. \$750M will go out immediately. The remaining \$250M will be held pending a federal stimulus package with revenue relief for the state. The funds flow from the state directly to the City Controller's Office. In partnership with the Mayor's budget office, they decide where the money should go. Of the \$750M that will immediately go to counties, the SF Human Services portion is \$12.7M. Of the \$250M currently on hold, we will receive \$4.2M. This will go to support general fund programs such as IHSS, some CalWORKs grants and child welfare. The governor projected that the CalWORKs caseloads would double during COVID; his budget increased funds for grants & employment services. Legislature rolled back projections of caseload but maintained the support for CalWORKs employment services which is an increase of \$600M statewide. SF usually gets 1.5-2% of statewide

though we have yet to see the final allocation number. \$80M was added to the general fund for CalFresh administration.

The governor proposed in the May revise to do away with subsidized employment funding, which for us is a huge loss because we have a large subsidized employment program (the largest per capita in the state). The legislature restored the full subsidized employment program amount. We currently have a large proposal to Mayor Breed to expand the subsidized work program to get people back to work.

The legislature eliminated the 24 month welfare-to-work clock for CalWORKs and increased the lifetime "time on aid" amount from 48 to 60 months. The legislature recognizes that it is going to be harder to get back into the work force and aid will be needed for a longer amount of time. The additional 12 months will help our families.

The governor had proposed eliminating the Family Urgent Response System (FURS) from the May budget. The legislature restored full funding with the original implementation date of January 1, 2021.

## **LOCAL**

Executive Director Rhorer then provided an overview of citywide COVID-19 updates and tied in the critical role of the Human Services Agency. As of yesterday, the City had about 5,500 COVID-19 cases, 53 deaths and around 222,000 test results reported. Last Friday, SF was put on the state's "watch list" for the first time, which was triggered by an increase in COVID-19 cases and the increased risk of a surge. The mayor delayed the reopening of many businesses so being on the watch list will not create much change, but it does create an extra hurdle for reopening. We did such a good job flattening the curve with the onset of COVID-19, it seems like San Franciscans have let down their guard. People aren't wearing masks diligently and are attending group events.

Then came the protests and holiday BBQs and now the City is officially experiencing a surge. WE ARE IN A SURGE. Cases, positivity rates and hospitalizations have more than tripled in San Francisco since early June. The mayor and public health director have paused reopening plans indefinitely as a result. The goals we must reach in order to get out of a surge and begin reopening the city include a COVID-19 weekly hospitalization rate of less than 10% (we are currently at 34% which is considered "level 4, high alert"), a 15% availability rate for the 7-day average percentage of acute care beds available for extended hospital stays (we currently have 23% availability so we are meeting target), and a minimum 20% availability rate for ICU beds (SF currently has 27% of the 7-day average percentage of ICU beds available so we are meeting target). The last two goals are directly related to the work the Human Services Branch (HSB) is doing, to open, oversee and operate sites to help the medical system manage the surge, make sure beds are available for those who really need them and to provide alternatives to hospitalization such as isolation & quarantine rooms.

With San Francisco on the State's watch list, schools cannot reopen in person until we are off of the list for at least 14 days. SFUSD will do distance learning through the end of the year and then implement hybrid in-person/distance learning, possibly prioritizing vulnerable populations for in-person instruction.

The SF unemployment rate in June was 12.5%. There are about 180,000 unemployment insurance claims open and active, 10 times more cases than this time last year. For comparison, during the Great Recession in 2008-09, the peak was around 44,000 claims. We are currently four times that amount. This number truly demonstrates the devastating effects of COVID-19.

The emergency operation center (EOC) has been renamed the COVID-19 Command Center (CCC). We have been under unified command structure since July 6. Our agency, the Department of Emergency Management (DEM), the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing (HSH) and the Department of Public Health (DPH) are the four City departments responsible for overseeing the citywide activation. Unified Command has three representatives: Dariush Kayhan with HSA, Adrienne Bechelli with DEM and Ayanna Bennett with DPH. They report up to the unified command which consists of Executive Director Rhorer, Mary Ellen Carroll (with DEM), Dr. Colfax (DPH) and Abigail Stewart-Kahn (HSH). This means that Noelle Simmons and Dan Kaplan, who activated the response and were at the EOC for almost four months, have returned to their day jobs with HSA. The system they built up is the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest in the state with 2500 hotel rooms and several congregate sites for COVID. Executive Director Rhorer took the opportunity to thank both deputy directors for their incredible work activating and overseeing an operation center of over 100 people all the while continuing with their day jobs. Noelle and Dan worked 14 hour days, 7 days a week with no vacation. The system they built is fantastic. They have a lot to be proud of. To review what the system they built looks like, there are 20 hotels with 2,527 rooms, 2400 of which are for the vulnerable homeless population to shelter in place. The remaining rooms are for vulnerable residents to isolate and quarantine. We will ultimately have 2600 rooms.

The Human Services Branch is now preparing for the surge, focusing on COVID positive surge sites. These sites are congregate sites similar to what we prop up each winter with the Interfaith Council for respite from extreme weather. The sites serve as a relief valve for hospitals, and house homeless San Franciscans and others who can't quarantine at home. They are staffed with support from DPH, disaster service workers and nonprofits. The HSB is currently identifying sites and equipping them so that they are ready with a 24-48 hour notice for up to 1100 people.

Because we will have housed 2600 homeless people in hotel rooms, and the mayor and agencies made a commitment that they will not be returned to the streets, the homeless recovery plan is to transfer everyone to

either rental-subsidy housing, permanent supportive housing, Homeward Bound or other shelters. Mayor Breed recently announced the homeless recovery plan for the City, which is to use coordinated entry to move the homeless currently residing in hotels into care at HSH. There are about 400-500 vacancies in supportive housing sites currently so we can begin to exit individuals out of hotels, close the hotels and save some money. The City plans to purchase 1000 supportive housing units now and add 500 more the following year. The cost of the hotels is \$500,000/day to support 2600 rooms. This cost is loaded (it includes food, laundry, security, etc.). FEMA can reimburse up to 75% of the cost depending on the population. The state's Project Roomkey also provides funding. Funding from the Federal Cares Act will be used to support non-FEMA costs. The general fund is not bearing the bulk of these costs. Nonetheless, 25% of \$500,000/day is not a small number. The cost of the hotel rooms is built into the mayor's budget to the Board of Supervisors (BOS) on August 1.

At this time, Executive Director Rhorer paused and asked if the commissioners had any feedback or questions. Commissioner Semel stated that she was impressed with the agency's emergency response and was pleased that the agency was working with other city departments. Commissioner Yamasaki echoed Commissioner Semel's sentiments. One of the positive byproducts of the emergency housing effort is that we have developed relationships with colleagues of all levels at partner agencies. As we serve so many households in common, we will be able to provide better service post-COVID thanks to multi-agency partnership. Commissioner Semel added that it has always been her belief that collaborating makes more sense than to go it alone.

Executive Director Rhorer returned to his report. He noted that Shireen McSpadden with DAS (Department of Disability and Aging Services) led the COVID food support effort. Shireen and her team partnered with the San Francisco Marin Foodbank (SFMFB) to reach 48,000 San Francisco households per week through "Pop-Up Food Pantries," which provide bags of groceries and food boxes, and "Pantry at Home" distribution of home-delivery groceries to older adults and people with disabilities. SFUSD has been providing free meals to all children and youth in response to school closures. There are other pop-up food pantries or food distribution efforts in the Mission, Bayview, Hunter's Point, OMI and other low-income neighborhoods. We leveraged the City's Give2SF fundraising arm of COVID for food support. The governor's Great Plates initiative is a temporary meal delivery program for older adults who don't have access to food, need to shelter in place and are up to 400% of federal poverty rate. The program has delivered 266,000 meals to 2400 seniors, buying the food from local restaurants to help keep people employed and small businesses afloat. It is a statewide program, largely underwritten by FEMA.

### **COMMUNICATIONS**

Our communications team will be launching a social media campaign to encourage unemployed San Franciscans, immigrants in mixed status households, and older adults to apply for CalFresh food benefits. The team is working with the Workforce Development Division (WDD) on a communications plan to revive and expand the JobsNOW! employment program. JobsNOW! will be offering virtual and socially distant services and providing support to local businesses. With the record number of San Franciscans filing for unemployment, the agency is proposing to the Mayor to triple the current number of subsidized employment opportunities in the private-sector and add additional tiers of wage subsidies to help businesses reopen and hire. This is very similar to the approach we took in 2008 when the federal government, through President Obama's recovery act, supported expanding subsidized employment at the local level. We employed over 5,000 people between 2008 to 2010. We don't have the federal support now unless it comes through a new stimulus package, but we do have state support. We are hoping that, as in 2008, businesses are able to reopen when they otherwise couldn't because we are supporting a lot of their wage cost.

### **FINANCE/ADMIN**

One of the assumptions in the mayor's budget moving forward is that our employee unions and employees would agree to forego the cost of living adjustments and wage increases stated in employment contracts over the next two fiscal year. This will save the City over \$220M. This assumption is built into the budget. However, unions have not agreed to these concessions. So the mayor has asked departments to come up with contingencies to account for the possible \$220M in lost savings. Our portion is \$4M for this year and \$16M for year two. \$16M is not a number we will be able to manage through small cuts here and there. The \$4M would be made up of salary savings (i.e., holding vacancies open longer). The \$16M we do not yet have a contingency plan.

The mayor directed departments to provide telecommuting opportunities to employees as much as possible. Before the directive, about 2200 HSA employees came into the office daily. Now, the number is about 325 per day. IT and HR undertook a herculean effort to get 85% of the workforce working remotely. Out of the 325 employees coming into the office, the majority (about 150) are ESSS service center workers. We are watching the programmatic dashboards to ensure there is not a degradation in services both on the benefits side and

Family & Children's Services side. We are keeping up with FCS casework, emergency responses, and benefit processing timeframes.

## PROGRAMS

### ESSS

#### SFBN

Medi-Cal renewals are suspended until the federal government declares the emergency over. No negative action can be taken on Medi-Cal cases until October 25 and that deadline will likely be extended. Maintenance of Medi-Cal/healthcare support for households is critical during this time and the federal government has allowed this. CalFresh renewals were suspended but they are now reinstated as of this month (July). Workloads will increase 2.5 times the usual amount because the renewals suspended from March to June will be added to the September to November renewals. The additional workload, not only from backed up renewals but also from an increase in new applications due to the pandemic, will be covered by overtime, not through the hiring of new staff. It takes too long to hire and train new staff as the need is now. We will use state funding to cover the overtime costs. The ABAWD work rules, which require individuals aged 18-49 who are employable to work in order to receive CalFresh benefits, have been suspended until June 2021 due to the pandemic.

#### WDD (Workforce Development Department)

CalWORKS is experiencing a 25% increase in applications.

#### CAAP

For homeless individuals on CAAP, a portion of their monthly stipend goes to the shelter system to cover the cost of a bed as part of the Care not Cash program (cash aid also reduced to account for food benefits received). With COVID, we had to reduce the shelter population due to outbreaks and social distancing, which meant we could not provide enough shelter beds for everyone. 486 homeless individuals are now receiving their full cash grant amount as no shelter slot is available. The current homeless population on CAAP is 996. Prior to COVID CAAP had about 400 homeless clients. This workload increase and increase in grant amount will affect our budget. There is also the concern, which was one of the impetuses of Care not Cash in 2003, that CAAP clients in the throes of addiction will spend the extra cash on drugs and overdoses will increase. We have already seen an increase in overdose deaths in the Tenderloin and in some of the hotels.

Executive Director Rhorer highlighted a new hire, Dr. Ramandeep Kular, the new CAAP Health Services Manager as of July 1. Dr. Kular will be in charge of the DECU unit, SSI advocacy and triage in CAAP. Raman has been with Health Services since 2015, most recently as the psychologist supervisor for DECU.

### FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES (FCS)

Three non-minor dependents tested positive for COVID so far; they are all doing fine. FCS connected 45 resource family caregivers virtually on July 14 via Zoom. The feedback was positive—they enjoyed seeing each other from their homes via Zoom. We will continue to hold virtual meetings with foster parents and hope the word gets out so that more parents participate. The Annual Resource Family Appreciation event was cancelled due to COVID. In lieu of the event, each caregiver who had a placement during the past fiscal year was sent a \$50 Target gift card and a care package with PPE equipment including a mask, gloves and first aid kit.

FCS was awarded a \$147,020 grant from the California Department of Housing and Community Development department to support a pilot Housing Navigators Program (HNP) that will assist young adults aged 18-21 secure and maintain housing, with priority given to young adults exiting the foster care system.

Executive Director Rhorer wrapped up his report with a retirement congratulations to Christiane Medina, Program Manager with FCS, for her 30 years of service. Ms. Medina thanked Mr. Rhorer and her colleagues, sharing that she is looking forward to retirement.

#### EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH

President Kahn announced PATRICK KRAMER, Management Assistant, Family & Children's Services (FCS), as the July 2020 Employee of the Month and the second virtual winner of the award. The Commission recognized Mr. Kramer for his many contributions, along with his commitment to FCS and the overall agency, and his congenial attitude. Patrick was awarded an engraved desk clock, which he graciously accepted with thanks to all.

#### CONSENT CALENDAR

On motion of Commissioner Semel, seconded and unanimously carried, the Commission approved and ratified actions taken by the Executive Director since the June 8, 2020 Special Meeting in accordance with Commission authorization of July 23, 2020:

1. Submission of request to encumber funds in the total amount of \$27,606,181 for purchase of services or supplies and contingency amounts.
2. Submission of 2 temporary positions for possible use in order to fill positions on a temporary basis made during the period of 5/23/20 to 7/10/20.

3. Submission of 0 temporary appointments made during the period of 5/23/20 to 7/10/20.

CALIFORNIA  
DEPARTMENT OF  
SOCIAL SERVICES

John Tsutakawa, Program Director with Family and Children's Services, presented the request to enter into an agreement with the CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES.

Before approving the contract, Commissioner Yamasaki shared that he was pleased with, and quite surprised, that we received this service without charge. It would be nice if more services would fall into that process.

On motion of Commissioner Yamasaki, seconded and unanimously carried, the Commission approved the request to enter into an agreement with CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES for the provision of legal consultation and representation related to the Resource Family Approval Program; for the period of July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2021; at \$0 cost to the county and for Trent Rhorer to sign the agreement on behalf of the county.

SUBVERTICAL, LLC.

Wei-min Wang, Data, Policy, and Impact Manager with the Office of Early Care and Education, presented the request to enter into a new contract agreement with SUBVERTICAL, LLC.

On motion of Commissioner McCray, seconded and unanimously carried, the Commission approved the request to enter into a new contract agreement with SUBVERTICAL, LLC for the provision of an OECE Child Care Enrollment Database; for the period of April 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021; in the amount of \$454,650 plus a 10% contingency for a total contract amount not to exceed \$500,115.

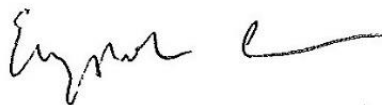
PUBLIC COMMENT

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

ADJOURNMENT

President Kahn adjourned the meeting, at the request of Commissioner Yamasaki, in memory of former Commission President Jane Morrison. Commissioner Yamasaki shared that Jane passed away at the age of 100 on Independence Day, July 4, 2020, which is certainly appropriate as independent acting and thinking were her hallmarks. She was married to one of the best supervisors, Jack Morrison, who also served on our commission. In fact, Mayor Agnos nominated Jane to take his seat on the commission when Jack passed away, and she did. Commissioner Yamasaki is confident that she and Jack are rejoined. Executive Director Rhorer shared that Jane was president of the commission when he was hired for his current role and that she supported his appointment because she valued what Mr. Rhorer valued, service to those who most need it, and that is what drove Jane. She would not approve budget cuts that hurt clients because she truly believed that everyone is deserving. She knew everyone in San Francisco and had a sharp memory. She was born in 1920, the year, as she is quoted as saying, "men finally admitted that they had been wrong and women did have the right to vote." Commissioner Semel shared her friendship with Jane and Jack.

Adjournment of the Human Services Commission July 23, 2020 Regular Meeting occurred at 10:38 a.m.



Elizabeth LaBarre, Commission Secretary  
Human Services Commission

Posted: 8.4.20