

SAN FRANCISCO HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION

MINUTES

March 23, 2023 Regular Meeting

The regular meeting of the Human Services Commission was held on Thursday, March 23, 2023 in person at the Born auditorium at 170 Otis Street, virtually via Zoom and telephonically.

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

MEMBERS ABSENT (excused) DARSHAN SINGH

OTHERS PRESENT IN PERSON Dan Kaplan, Deputy Director – Finance & Administration
Elizabeth LaBarre, Commission Secretary
Anna Pineda, Deputy Director – Economic Support & Self Sufficiency
Susie Smith, Deputy Director – Policy, Planning & Public Affairs
Joan Miller, Deputy Director – Family & Children’s Services

ROLL CALL President Kahn called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m.

Commission Secretary Elizabeth LaBarre took roll, noting the presence of Commissioners Coghlan McDonald, Kahn, McCray and Semel in person in the Born auditorium. Commissioner Singh’s absence was anticipated and is excused. The Commission Secretary then noted a correction to the agenda: Katie Albright is presenting item VII.A. instead of Jenny Pearlman.

AGENDA On motion of Vice President McCray, seconded and unanimously carried, the Commission adopted the agenda as posted.

FEBRUARY 15, 2023 SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES On motion of Commissioner Semel, seconded and unanimously carried, the Commission adopted the minutes of the February 15, 2023 Special Meeting as circulated.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT Deputy Director Dan Kaplan provided updates on Human Services Agency (“SFHSA” or the “Agency”) programs and federal, state and local policy and activities as they relate to the Agency in Executive Director Rhorer’s absence.

AGENCY UPDATES

ECONOMIC SUPPORT AND SELF-SUFFICIENCY (ESSS)

SFBN

CalFresh

At the end of this month, the federal SNAP emergency allotment program ends. SNAP is referenced as CalFresh in California. The emergency allotment was an enhanced benefit. On average, CalFresh recipients will receive about half of the benefit they were receiving during the pandemic. Having this come to an end is a big deal. There has been a lot of press coverage about it. On average, the average San Francisco County CalFresh grant will decline by about \$160 per month. Total loss in San Francisco will be about \$11.5 million per month and about \$500 million per month

statewide. This is at a scale that is too big for either the state or the municipality to offset. The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) has launched a text, social media and mail campaign to inform every CalFresh household about the changes in benefits. SFHSA is amplifying those messages and translating them into Spanish, Chinese, Tagalog, Vietnamese and Russian and getting the word out in the community. The Agency is also engaging in outreach efforts to let people know about other resources that are available in the community including the different food distributions sites that we fund. SFHSA plans to track the demand on community-directed resources to understand the local impact of the federal policy change.

Medi-Cal

In Medi-Cal there is also an end to pandemic policy. Since the beginning of the pandemic, SFHSA staff have not been required to certify Medi-Cal recipients. That period is coming to an end and SFHSA will begin doing certifications beginning in June. Everyone who is on the caseload or will leave the caseload needs to be certified, which is estimated to be about 98,000 cases, with 6,000-7,000 cases requiring certification in June alone. This is a huge impact both to SFHSA operations—it is a very big workload that existed in the past, didn't exist for a while and is now existing again—and is coming at a time when eligibility worker headcount is low. SFHSA has about 100 vacancies for eligibility workers; we are working very hard at hiring up. Additionally, SFHSA is transitioning the eligibility system (Mr. Kaplan addresses this transition later in his presentation). High vacancy rates are not just a San Francisco issue. The low staffing of eligibility workers is also a state-wide issue. Every county hires its own workers, and human services departments in other counties are facing the same difficulties that we are with both hiring and retention. The state is very cognizant of the increased workload and can help by adding money to budgets to pay for overtime, which they have done in Medi-Cal allocations with an additional \$3 million next year for funding Medi-Cal eligibility services.

The California Department of Healthcare Services (DHS) mailed letters to all recipients, encouraging them to update their case information so that county human services agencies have correct addresses and up-to-date information on income and family composition. DHS is funding outreach activities in early March along with \$60 million in grants to a range of organizations throughout the state to serve as navigators for Medi-Cal health enrollment services. Locally, the San Francisco Community Clinic Consortium was awarded ~\$2 million of that grant money and our SFBN team is working with them on how to effectively work together to keep as many people as possible on Medi-Cal and reach new populations.

County Adult Assistance Programs (CAAP)

CAAP, like other programs, is coming to the end of pandemic policy. Since the current cash program went into effect in the early part of the century, clients who are homeless are offered shelter in lieu of the full grant amount. The reduced grant amount for people who go into shelter was

suspended at the beginning of the pandemic. CAAP has been reinstating that policy, and at this point everyone who is facing either a redetermination or resignation is being offered shelter. Currently, about 100 unhoused recipients are still receiving the housed grant. They haven't come up for redetermination, and when they do, they will be offered shelter.

Workforce Development

SFHSA faced a lot of challenges helping people into the workforce during the pandemic. However, this year the workforce development team has successfully made 910 unsubsidized and subsidized JobsNOW! placements and that number is expected to rise over time.

The digital divide initiative has served 366 clients with a combination of providing laptops and tablets paired with digital literacy services.

In the Working Families Credit program, the team closed out the 2021 tax year. 3,400 clients were served and approved for the local tax credit. The team has begun work on the 2022 tax year.

FAMILY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES (FCS)

FCS was awarded a multi-year grant for \$8.5 million for a Continuum of Care pilot program. Foster care caseload has been going down in San Francisco for many years, which is a good thing. However, a higher percentage of cases is facing mental and behavioral health issues, making it difficult for children to be successful in traditional foster homes and traditional congregate care settings. The pilot is around building a system that is more robust at working with kids with intense behavioral healthcare needs. It is a multi-county pilot. San Francisco is the lead agency. We will work with Contra Costa, Sonoma and Solano counties, and the goal is to have a regional program that enables foster youth in crisis to receive the kind of stabilization services they need, which will allow them to continue in their placements. It will provide intensive supports with a very strong mental health program, and it will have the goal of being able to step down children who can be stepped down to lower levels of care. In addition to working with the other 3 counties, the FCS team is partnering with the Department of Public Health, Juvenile Probation and other service providers in the region who are well positioned to be providing these intensive services. More and more states around the country, and California in particular, are realizing that the foster care system is not at all robust. Mr. Kaplan, in his role as Deputy Director of Finance, has spoken with the chief financial officers of child welfare systems from other states, and what they all say is that we have this small number of children who have needs that are way beyond what our system provides. They continue to attempt to make placements and provide good services. However, "we spend a lot of money and we fail." This is also true in California, so the state over the last few years has been looking for ways to address the problem and this pilot is within that that general effort.

In recognition of Child Abuse Prevention Month, City Hall will be lit up blue at some point in April.

The annual caregiver appreciation event will be in person on Friday, May 5 at the South San Francisco Conference Center. A more formal invitation is forthcoming.

Deputy Director Kaplan then circled back to his mention of eligibility worker hiring and retention challenges. The County Welfare Directors Association (CWDA) is working on a \$35 million general fund program to increase recruitment of human services workers. There is a focus on recruiting people with lived experience, which is something that San Francisco has been doing for a while through the PST and Career Pathways programs. It is catching on throughout the state. The initiative has various pieces, including a high school to college and then college to career track for identifying folks early on and encouraging them to take on careers in human services and tracking them and supporting them in that, and then a community to career track as well. It makes a lot of sense and SFHSA looks forward to participating in pushing this forward past the development phase.

Dan closed with an update on CalSAWS, the statewide welfare and eligibility system. After 18 years with the 18-county consortium CalWIN system, which SFHSA uses for determining eligibility, tracking clients, and making payments, all state counties are moving in waves to the CalSAWS system. Up until the present time, California has had 3 automated systems. These systems comprise many, many pieces and are very large and complicated. A few years ago, the federal government declared that it does not want to support multiple systems in California but will support 1 system. And so, the single system called CalSAWS (the California State Automated Welfare System) was developed and counties have been transitioning to it. In October, the final wave of counties (the 18 CalWin counties, which include SF) will transition to CalSAWS. There is a great deal of work happening within ESSS, Administration, FCS and DAS to get staff onboarded with the automated welfare system. Teams are currently engaged in the business reengineering process to determine how we work differently with the new system compared to the old system. There have been numerous internal communication efforts to help staff understand these differences. What follows is a major training initiative that will be launching soon. It involves web-based training for all 1,000+ staff who need to know this system, figuring out what parts of the system each worker needs to understand, along with in-person training for all workers. This is a huge organizational effort to accomplish by October. Deputy Director Kaplan is on an internal steering committee with fellow deputy director Anna Pineda. There are committees with involvement from all of the program directors along with detailed operational committees that are assessing the details of working with the system.

EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH AWARD

President Kahn announced DE NGUYEN, Program Specialist/Investigator with Investigations as the March 2023 employee of the month. He was awarded an engraved desk clock, which he graciously accepted with thanks to all.

CONSENT
CALENDAR

On motion of Commissioner Coghlan McDonald, seconded and unanimously carried, the Commission approved and ratified actions taken by the Executive Director since the February 15, 2023 Special Meeting in accordance with Commission authorization of March 23, 2023:

1. Submission of request to encumber funds in the total amount of \$2,447,705 for purchase of services or supplies and contingency amounts.
2. Submission of 4 temporary positions for possible use in order to fill positions on a temporary basis made during the period 2/9/23 to 3/17/23.
3. Submission of 37 temporary appointments for possible use in order to fill positions on a temporary basis made during the period 2/9/23 to 3/17/23.

CHILD ABUSE
PREVENTION
MONTH

Joan Miller, Deputy Director of Family & Children’s Services, and Katie Albright, Senior Advisor/ Immediate Past Chief Executive Officer, Safe & Sound, presented the request for adoption of a resolution proclaiming April 2023 as CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH.

WHEREAS, child maltreatment impacts not just the child, but the family, the community, and society at large. The physical, mental, and emotional effects of maltreatment persist long after child maltreatment occurs and result in ongoing costs to society; and

WHEREAS, child abuse continues to be a persistent and pervasive problem in San Francisco with 4474 allegations of child abuse, and 346 substantiations in 2022. The cumulative financial impact to the San Francisco community for 441 verified child victims in 2021 was \$273,000,000. Abused children are more likely to experience negative educational, health, and behavioral outcomes, which contribute to many of San Francisco’s challenges, such as homelessness, chronic health issues, and high school dropout rates; and

WHEREAS, rates of both allegations and substantiation of child abuse disproportionately impact BIPOC families, requiring us to address long-standing issues of structural and systemic racism. Society has a moral and ethical obligation to protect families from unnecessary intervention of child welfare and ensure the availability of services and supports that strengthen all families; and

WHEREAS, direct investment in social programs for children and families and community protective factors--such as economic supports, community institutions and services, high quality childcare, and policies and educational campaigns that promote equity and inclusion and change social norms--prevent child abuse and provide short- and long-term benefits, far outweighing the overall cost of downstream interventions to address the costly results of child maltreatment and trauma; and

WHEREAS, effective prevention efforts succeed because of collaboration between community and public organizations, recognition of the strengths, experiences, and wisdom of families, and accessible, non-stigmatizing services. San Francisco has invested in several key prevention strategies, including the Family Resource Center Initiative, jointly funded by the Human Services Agency, First 5, and the Department of Child Youth and Families, and developing a Family First Prevention Services Act comprehensive prevention plan, in partnership with several other City and County agencies, multiple community-based organizations, Tribes, and caregivers and youth with lived expertise; and

WHEREAS, it is essential to continue to invest in child abuse prevention and raise awareness about child abuse and the need to support all vulnerable children and

their families. Healthy children and families create the foundation for communities to thrive; and

NOW, THEREFORE, We, the Human Services Commission, join with others, including the Human Services Agency and Safe & Sound, to recognize April 2023 as Child Abuse Prevention Month. We urge all San Franciscans to take shared responsibility for child and family well-being and for ensuring that every family has what they need to be safe, healthy, and strong.

On motion of Commissioner Semel, seconded and unanimously carried, the Commission adopted the resolution proclaiming APRIL 2023 as CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH.

HOMELESS
PRENATAL
PROGRAM

Geoffrey Nagaye, Program Analyst, requested authorization to enter into a new grant agreement with HOMELESS PRENATAL PROGRAM.

On motion of Commissioner Coghlan McDonald, seconded and unanimously carried, the Commission approved the request to enter into a new grant agreement with the HOMELESS PRENATAL PROGRAM for the provision of the Bringing Families Home Rapid Re-Housing Program; during the period of July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2025; in the amount of \$5,878,875, plus a 10% contingency, for a total grant amount not to exceed \$6,466,762.

A. PHILIP
RANDOLPH
INSTITUTE SF

Cindy Lin, Citywide Food Access Manager, requested authorization to modify the existing grant agreement with A. PHILIP RANDOLPH INSTITUTE SF.

On motion of Commissioner Semel, seconded and unanimously carried, the Commission approved the request to modify the existing grant agreement with A. PHILIP RANDOLPH INSTITUTE SF to continue operation of the Holiday Food Distribution; for the period of July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2026; in the additional amount of \$750,000, plus a 10% contingency, for a total grant amount not to exceed \$1,127,500.

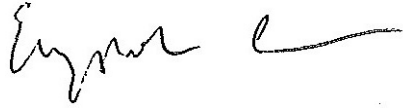
GENERAL PUBLIC
COMMENT

President Kahn's call for public comment yielded one response.

Public comment #1: Katie Albright, former President and CEO of Safe & Sound. "I want to thank you [the Commissioners] for your service. I recently stepped away from this position after serving for 16 years. I am currently acting as a senior advisor to focus on statewide child welfare reform as well as helping to transition the leadership. Dr. Pegah Faed will be joining as the CEO of Safe & Sound beginning April 17. Over my 16 years, I have been incredibly grateful to you and the entire department for your steadfast focus on children and families, and ensuring that our community is safe, and we think about how to serve all families and dismantle inequitable and racist systems. It's because of the fine work that you do, and that the department does, with Trent Rhorer and Joan Miller, every day as well as the incredible team in contracts and in investigations and throughout the organization that makes San Francisco safe. I wanted to express my deep gratitude to you and I look forward to introducing you to Dr. Faed.

ADJOURNMENT

President Kahn adjourned the meeting at 10:21 am.

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: 4/6/23