

SAN FRANCISCO HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION

MINUTES

October 26, 2023 Regular Meeting

The regular meeting of the Human Services Commission was held on Thursday, October 26, 2023 in person at the Born auditorium at 170 Otis Street, virtually via Webex and telephonically.

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

MEMBERS PRESENT REMOTELY (VIA WEBEX) DARSHAN SINGH

MEMBERS ABSENT SALLY COGHLAN MCDONALD
RITA SEMEL

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

ROLL CALL President Kahn called the meeting to order at 9:39am.

Commission Secretary Elizabeth LaBarre took roll, noting the presence of Commissioners Kahn and McCray in person in the Born auditorium and Commissioner Singh remotely at his residence in San Francisco with his wife, Olivia Singh, in the same room assisting him with the meeting technology (the Webex interface and computer controls (i.e., volume and camera)). Commissioners Coghlan McDonald and Semel had excused absences.

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

SEPTEMBER 28, 2023 REGULAR MEETING MINUTES On motion of Commissioner Singh, seconded and unanimously carried, the Commission adopted the minutes of the September 28, 2023 Regular Meeting as circulated.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT Executive Director Trent Rhorer presented the executive director’s report and 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.

FEDERAL

Congress passed a resolution that continues to fund the government through November 17. In that continuing resolution was an approval to continue federal funding for SNAP, which is the federal program over CalFresh, through the end of the calendar year. SNAP/CalFresh is the only

Agency program that potentially had a risk of not being funded, so the fact that it was included in the continuing resolution is a relief—we do not have to worry about whether CalFresh benefits will be funded if the federal government shuts down. Other programs—Medicaid (Medi-Cal), foster care payments—would continue to be funded. The funding authorization for TANF, the federal program that authorizes CalWORKs, actually ended at the end of September. The state front loaded the money, with federal funds coming on later in the fiscal year. To summarize, should the federal government shut down November 18, the Agency’s programs would remain funded and clients would continue to receive benefits that they are entitled to receive.

STATE

CWDA (County Welfare Directors Association) is gearing up for the next legislative season and plans to sponsor several bills including a bill for high-needs youth who have experienced complex trauma and have significant placement and mental health service needs. The City and County of San Francisco is co-sponsoring a bill that would allow undocumented residents of San Francisco to be IHSS providers for undocumented family members. This bill was sponsored last year and got held up not necessarily due to opposition but more so related to legal questions about how to allow undocumented residents to get paid. That seems to have been resolved.

LOCAL

Ballot Measure

The Mayor submitted an initiative to be on the March ballot that SFHSA helped craft. The Mayor can put anything she wishes on the ballot. The initiative, which has already been drafted, would require recipients of CAAP who have substance use disorders to engage in substance abuse treatment to continue to receive cash aid, which is a big shift in what CAAP currently offers clients with substance use disorders. The Mayor is incredibly concerned about the record number of overdoses in San Francisco. According to the San Francisco Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, there have been 619 accidental overdose deaths in San Francisco this year. In 2022, that number was 647. About three San Franciscans die each day from an overdose. There are 25 overdose reversals through SFPD & EMS daily. Additionally, SFHSA found out that from September 2022 to August 2023, 22% of the overdoses were CAAP recipients or had received CAAP at some point during that year. To summarize, almost a quarter of overdose deaths in SF occurred thanks to assistance from CAAP, as it stands to reason that they used CAAP cash assistance to buy fentanyl. The Mayor and Executive Director Rhorer both feel very strongly that they cannot continue the status quo. They cannot continue to provide public taxpayer dollars to people who use it to kill themselves. This reality is the premise for the ballot proposal.

The proposal is allowed in state law and there are several counties who have implemented similar programs. In Los Angeles, if there is a client

receiving general assistance (i.e., CAAP) and there is a reasonable suspicion they have a substance order, the client is screened. “Screened” does not mean drug tested. It means screening through an interview process and then treatment could be required as a condition of getting cash assistance. That is the provision of state law that the San Francisco initiative will invoke.

Media reports and sensationalist headlines misrepresent the ballot initiative, claiming that CAAP recipients will be drug tested. That is simply not true. There is no language around testing in the ordinance. In fact, drug testing as a condition of getting public benefits through CAAP is illegal. Eligibility for CAAP is based on income assets and residency only. What the ordinance does is make substance use treatment a required activity for certain clients, very similar to activities that other recipients are required to engage in, such as workfare, applying for federal SSI, job training, etc. It adds an activity to the list of required activities.

Executive Director Rhorer hopes that this change to CAAP policy decreases the number of clients buying deadly drugs with CAAP cash. Additionally, he hopes it will provide CAAP staff an opportunity to engage people with substance use disorder and try to help them get into treatment. He understands not everyone is suddenly going to enter treatment. The current substance use phenomenon is like nothing Executive Director Rhorer has ever seen in his three decades at SFHSA. Fentanyl is cheap, accessible, deadly and hard to kick. CAAP clients with substance use disorder do not have to be sober to receive cash assistance, but they must be engaged in a program and their participation would be verified with the program provider.

If the ordinance passes, it would become effective January 1, 2025, which gives the Agency plenty of time to plan. Key program details: (1) how to do front-end medical assessments by professionals who really know the business of substance abuse, which is not SFHSA’s area of expertise, so we will partner with the Department of Public Health (DPH); (2) there is language in the ordinance that states if there is no treatment available, then the client receives their full cash grant, so it is important that an array of treatment offerings are readily available.

Vice President McCray noted that before the commission meeting, San Jose officials were talking about a program they are trying to put in place. [You] discussed the wrap around services as we call them in the housing world. Housing. How does that fit? And what is the role of homelessness? Are we taking down housing, bringing it back... where are we planning to go with that? Executive Director Rhorer replied with an overview of the history of CAAP as it pertains to housing and its population: when [Mayor Newsom and Executive Director Rhorer] started Care not Cash in 2004, one of the problems they were trying to solve was substance abuse. They knew that in 2002, ER visits and EMT calls would spike on the 1st and 15th of the month, which coincided with the dates checks were cut to CAAP clients. Clients would purchase drugs with their CAAP cash because they

are addicted and have a disease. Care not Cash shifted the cash toward housing, with the idea that housing first would help with, among other things, addiction. Fast forward to today, several thousand CAAP clients have been housed. It turns out that a significant number of the CAAP clients who have overdosed did so in supportive housing they received through the CAAP program. The supportive housing providers are sharing that they cannot handle the fentanyl crisis; they do not have the staff and are not equipped to handle the drug use. There are literally hundreds of CAAP clients dying in supportive housing provided by the City. The hope is that by taking the cash away from CAAP clients who live in this housing, at a minimum, they will not be using taxpayer/CAAP cash to kill themselves and that they will ultimately get into treatment. Executive Director Rhorer acknowledged he does not know how to solve this problem. Cities throughout the country don't know how to solve this problem. Across the country in the urban cores, cities are grappling with what SF has been dealing with—Philadelphia, Seattle, Portland, Los Angeles. As a community of human services providers, we don't know how to handle fentanyl. Previously, human services experienced the crack epidemic and methamphetamines, but those substances do not tend to cause immediate death like fentanyl does. Over time, of course, but not the immediate overdose that fentanyl causes. Based on the dire situation of three people dying a day in San Francisco, the Mayor is willing to try anything and this CAAP ordinance is one effort.

City Budget

The City continues to face a challenging economic climate: delays in FEMA reimbursements for COVID costs, which are significant (in the hundreds of millions of dollars); higher health care costs for employees; low growth; decline in business tax revenue; etc. In October, the Mayor directed departments to propose mid-year budget reductions of 3% from general fund to get out in front of the deficit, which is anticipated to be about \$500 million next year. For the Agency, that comes to \$1.6 million after analyzing mandatory general spending and discretionary spending. Out of the Agency's \$1.1 billion budget, \$1.6 million is not a large sum. The budget team has a lot of experience with these reductions requests and they make every effort to minimize impacts on clients and community-based providers.

AGENCY ADMIN

The City's Real Estate division introduced to the Board of Supervisors ("BoS") a lease for SFHSA to take over 42 Gough, which is across the street from our 170 Otis and 1650 Mission buildings, and next door to 2 Gough. It will be a foster parent resource center in partnership with SFHSA's Family & Children's Services and the Foster Parent Association. It will be a distribution center for donated items, a foster parent training and meeting space, and a space for foster youth. The idea came from a couple of foster parents who for many years wanted a place where they could convene and have a clothes closet. This new space we will be much more

than that initial vision. The proposal is before the BoS and will then go to the Finance Committee.

OFFICE OF DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION & BELONGING (DEIB)

The Office of DEIB hosted a table talk luncheon 10 days ago to offer staff a forum to talk to each other about the Israel/Palestine conflict. There were 65 attendees. The forum was very instructive and informative. A lot of staff attended because they wanted to be better informed about the conflict. The forum was very respectful. Staff felt safe to share feelings and perspectives; they listened to one another; the moderators focused on providing a sense of safety and a safe place to be expressive without hostility. It was a really good opportunity for staff to better understand the conflict and the complexities around the conflict and the history. It is important for large City departments like SFHSA to offer safe spaces for staff to discuss a variety of issues. Executive Director Rhorer thanked the Office of DEIB for having the foresight to offer the forum.

The Racial Equity Survey was released. Input from the survey informs the racial equity plan for the coming year and future years in terms of tracking progress, engaging staff voices, training offerings, etc.

CalSAWS

CalSAWS is the new, efficient technology system that supports the Agency's benefits programs. SFHSA cuts over to the new system next week along with Sacramento and San Luis Obispo counties. At that point, all 58 counties will be on the same system. SFHSA will also transition to BenefitsCal from My Benefits CalWIN. BenefitsCal is the public-facing client online portal that will be used by all 58 counties. This is a huge undertaking: the San Francisco CalSAWS supports 200,000 clients and over a thousand internal new users. The Agency has been preparing for the transition to CalSAWS for over three years. Prep included extensive training, organization change management, data and task cleanup for conversion, a lot of communications internally and with external firms, etc. Friday, October 27 is the "dark day." Staff will not have access to either the new or old system, and then on Monday, October 30 we go live on the new system. In preparation, there will be command centers in each building with staff roaming the floor to provide assistance and escalate issues immediately if needed. Executive Director Rhorer was pleased to be part of the last wave of counties to join CalSAWS. SF will avoid a lot of the issues earlier counties faced with their go-live efforts. Executive Director Rhorer thanked his staff for sticking with the three-year process and for their hard work.

ESSS

WDD

The Workforce Development team hosted a resource and employment fair for individuals with limited English proficiency. It was oriented towards individuals who primarily speak Spanish or Chinese. 137 San Franciscans signed up for the fair along with 12 providers and employers. The Latino Task Force attended and assisted job seekers who did not have right-to-

work documents and provided information on employers who would give them employment opportunities. See's Candy hired 10 people on the spot for production positions, which pay \$27/hour. Gate Gourmet hired 6 people on the spot. The feedback from attendees, community-based organizations and staff was positive. Executive Director Rhorer gave kudos to the WDD staff who hosted the successful event. It was very well attended and people very seemed very excited to be there.

FCS

Guaranteed Income Pilot

FCS launched the new guaranteed income (GI) pilot program for former foster youth. On October 16, the communications team distributed a press release about the launch. The GI program is called "Foundations for the Future" and will serve 150 low-income youth who have recently aged out of San Francisco's extended foster care and juvenile probation systems. Participants will receive monthly payments of \$1,200 for 18 months with no strings attached. There are no requirements as to how each recipient spends the money. SFHSA will evaluate outcomes such as are there improvements to the participants' lives and how did they use the money (whether for school, housing, car, etc.). Funding for the program comes from the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), the City and County of San Francisco, the San Francisco Juvenile Probation Department (SFJPD) and the nonprofit Tipping Point Community.

SFHSA is one of just seven organizations across the state to be competitively awarded a grant to launch the program through California's first ever state-funded Guaranteed Income Pilot Program. The story was covered on KQED Radio on Monday, October 16. The Mayor is very excited about this program. As soon as the 150 participants are enrolled, the Mayor would like to do an event with them. There are currently 54 applicants.

November is National Adoption Month

November is National Adoption Month. Angela Ramos, a program director with FCS, will present a proclamation to the commission later in the meeting. All commissioners have been invited to the National Adoption Day observance at the courthouse (400 McAllister) on Friday, November 17 from 12:15pm-1:30pm. There will be snacks for all attendees, and then several children will be adopted after 1:30pm. Executive Director Rhorer acknowledged President Kahn's attendance in prior years and hopes the commissioners will be able to attend this year's event with SFHSA staff.

EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH AWARD

President Kahn announced that ROSANNA GARCIA, Senior Clerk, Family & Children's Services is the October 2023 employee of the month. President Kahn presented Rosanna with an engraved desk clock, which she graciously accepted with thanks to all.

CONSENT CALENDAR

On motion of Vice President McCray, seconded and unanimously carried, the Commission approved the consent calendar, which comprises actions taken by the Executive Director since the September 28, 2023 Regular Meeting in accordance with Commission authorization of October 26, 2023:

1. Submission of request to encumber funds in the total amount of \$47,404,565 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 9/23/23 to 10/20/23.
3. Submission of 46 temporary appointments for possible use in order to fill positions on a temporary basis made during the period 9/23/23 to 10/20/23.

COMMISSION BUSINESS – ACTION ITEMS

NOVEMBER AS
ADOPTION MONTH

Angela Ramos, Program Director, and Alan Botts, Adoptions Supervisor, presented the request to proclaim November as Adoption Month.

On motion of Vice President McCray, seconded and unanimously carried, the Commission approved the resolution proclaiming November as Adoption Month.

CAL-OAR
(OUTCOMES AND
ACCOUNTABILITY
REVIEW) SYSTEM
IMPROVEMENT
PLAN (SIP)

Jaya Varma, Senior Analyst, requested approval of the Cal-OAR (Outcomes and Accountability Review) SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT PLAN (SIP).

Commissioner Singh left the meeting. The vote was delayed and the commission moved on to the next agenda item.

MULTIPLE
PROVIDERS (ARRIBA
JUNTOS, MISSION
NEIGHBORHOOD
CENTERS)

Andy Beetley Hagler, Program Monitor, presented the request to enter into new grant agreements with MULTIPLE PROVIDERS (ARRIBA JUNTOS, MISSION NEIGHBORHOOD CENTERS) .

Vice President McCray asked about the grant’s number of families served being 130. Andy provided figures related to SFHSA’s caseload: two years ago, the RCA (Refugee Cash Assistance) caseload was 20 to 25 families, and now there are over 200. This is largely due to the influx of refugees from the Ukraine, but there are also applicants from other countries. Vice President McCray then asked if the grant has flexibility. If the grant cannot provide, for example, \$2 million to Ukrainian refugees, could funds be moved from another program. Andy noted that the program has already made direct payments to four clients and that he does not see a funding issue with future applicants. Executive Director Rhorer added that there is no ability to shift funding.

On motion of Vice President McCray, seconded and unanimously carried, the Commission approved the request to enter into a new grant agreement with ARRIBA JUNTOS for the provision of Housing Assistance and Intensive Case Management for Ukrainians; for the period of November 1, 2023 through September 30, 2024; in the amount of \$499,676, plus a 10% contingency, for a total grant amount not to exceed \$549,644.

On motion of Vice President McCray, seconded and unanimously carried, the Commission approved the request to enter into a new grant agreement with MISSION NEIGHBORHOOD CENTERS for the provision of Housing Assistance and Intensive Case Management for Ukrainians; for the period of November 1, 2023 through September 30, 2024; in the amount of \$\$1,465,000, plus a 10% contingency, for a total grant amount not to exceed \$1,611,500.

GRANTEE	SERVICES	ANNUAL AMOUNT	CONTINGENCY	NOT TO EXCEED
Arriba Juntos	Intensive Case Management	\$499,676	\$49,968	\$549,644
Mission Neighborhood Centers	Housing Assistance Administration	\$1,465,000	\$146,500	\$1,611,500
TOTAL		\$1,964,676	\$196,468	\$2,161,144

CAL-OAR
(OUTCOMES AND
ACCOUNTABILITY
REVIEW) SYSTEM
IMPROVEMENT
PLAN (SIP)

President Kahn brought item VIII.B. for a vote with the return of Commissioner Singh. On motion of Vice President McCray, seconded and unanimously carried, the Commission approved the Cal-OAR (Outcomes and Accountability Review) SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT PLAN (SIP) for the provision of Engagement and Program Reentry Data Measure Improvements through Various Strategies and Action Steps; for the period of November 1, 2023 through January 30, 2026.

ICF RESOURCES,
LLC.

Karina Zhang, Program Support Analyst, presented the request to modify the existing contract agreement with ICF RESOURCES, LLC.

On motion of Vice President McCray, seconded and unanimously carried, the Commission approved the request to modify the existing contract agreement with ICF RESOURCES, LLC. for the provision of a FFPSA Child Abuse Prevention Plan; for the period of January 1, 2024 through December 31, 2025; in the additional amount of \$1,911,532, plus a contingency, for a total revised contract amount not to exceed \$2,026,131.

GENERAL PUBLIC
COMMENT

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

PUBLIC MEETING
ADJOURNMENT

President Kahn adjourned the meeting at 10:50am.

CLOSED SESSION

President Kahn called the close session to order at 10:54am.

RECONVENE IN
OPEN SESSION

President Kahn reconvened the public meeting into open session at 11:09.

VOTE TO DISCLOSE
CLOSED SESSION
DETAILS

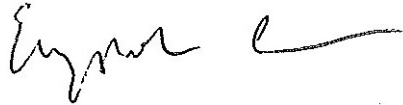
On motion of Vice President McCray, seconded and unanimously carried, the Commission elected to disclose some of the closed session discussion, to-wit:

On motion of Vice President McCray, seconded and unanimously carried, the Commission acknowledged receipt and review of the Department Head Annual Performance Planning and Appraisal document for reporting period 07/1/2022 – 06/30/2023 along with approval and acceptance of the Plan's Goals for Fiscal Year 2023-24.

GENERAL PUBLIC
COMMENT
ADJOURNMENT

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

President Kahn adjourned the meeting at 11:12am.



Elizabeth LaBarre, Commission Secretary
Human Services Commission

Posted: 11/10/23