

SAN FRANCISCO HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION

MINUTES

June 25, 2024 Regular Meeting

The regular meeting of the Human Services Commission was held on Tuesday, June 25, 2024 at 1pm in person at the Born auditorium at 170 Otis Street. Meeting attendees also joined virtually via Webex and telephonically as a disability accommodation.

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

MEMBERS ABSENT DARSHAN SINGH

OTHERS PRESENT IN PERSON Trent Rhorer, Executive Director  
Elizabeth LaBarre, Commission Secretary  
Joan Miller, Deputy Director – Family & Children’s Services  
Susie Smith, Deputy Director – Policy, Planning & Public Affairs

CALL MEETING TO ORDER President Kahn called the meeting to order at 1:05pm.

ROLL CALL Commission Secretary Elizabeth LaBarre took roll and noted the presence of Commissioners Kahn, Semel and Coghlan McDonald in person in the Born auditorium. Commissioner Singh had an excused absence. Vice President McCray had an excused tardy; he ultimately arrived at 1:30pm.

AGENDA The Commission Secretary noted one change to the posted agenda: Esperanza Zapien is presenting item VIII, the Cost of Doing Business (CODB) Adjustments presentation in Dan Kaplan’s stead.

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

On motion of Commissioner Coghlan McDonald, seconded and unanimously carried, the Commission adopted the agenda as posted with the acknowledgement of the presenter substitution for item VIII.

MAY 23, 2024 REGULAR MEETING MINUTES President Kahn’s call for public comment yielded no responses.

On motion of Commissioner Semel, seconded and unanimously carried, the Commission approved the adoption of the May 23, 2024 Regular Meeting minutes.

HONORING COMMISSIONER SEMEL The June 25 Human Services Commission meeting is Rita Semel’s final meeting as a Human Services Commissioner. President Kahn presented Commissioner Semel with a plaque for Outstanding Service for 11 years of dedication and service to the Human Services Commission: August 5, 2013 – June 25, 2024, ensuring the protection of San Francisco’s most vulnerable. Upon receipt of the plaque, Commissioner Semel exclaimed, “the award weighs more than me!” President Kahn noted that it has been a real pleasure to serve [on the Commission] with Rita. He added that he has

the additional enjoyment of driving her to and from the meetings. The conversations were quite interesting and he values that time with Rita.

Executive Director Rhorer presented Commissioner Semel with a commendation from Mayor Breed, which read, “WHEREAS, on behalf of the City and County of San Francisco, I am pleased to recognize and honor you, Rita Semel, on the occasion of your retirement from the San Francisco Human Services Commission. For over ten years, you have been a sage, dependable Commissioner who consistently showed up to do important work, including during the COVID-19 pandemic. Your diligent review & approval of grants and contracts for essential City social services impacted over 200,000 San Franciscans each year, and your push to share the Agency’s work resulted in the creation of a department communications team. Often asking “what more can I do?”, you posed probing questions while remaining supportive of, and encouraging to, Human Services Agency staff. The Human Services Commission will truly miss you and your remarkable wisdom and leadership. Best wishes on a well-deserved retirement!”

Executive Director Rhorer highlighted Commissioner Semel’s longstanding partnership with SFHSA well before she was a Commissioner—under Rita’s leadership, the Interfaith Winter Shelter was formed three decades ago. San Francisco churches and congregations stepped up to provide shelter to homeless residents during the winter months. For the first 15 years, the Interfaith Winter Shelter did not take any money from the City. Then, under Mayor Willie Brown, it was decided that they should get compensated for the work that they do, and they did. This is just one example of Rita’s place in the world of the City’s provision of social services; she is truly a steward of public social services in San Francisco. Executive Director Rhorer shared that he has enjoyed working with Commissioner Semel over the last two and a half decades and has learned so much from her. He recalled the many times Rita would tell him, “Trent, I’m just not doing enough.” He would smile to himself and reflect on this small but mighty 90-something-year old who, in addition to being a commissioner, was the Commission’s representative on the IHSS Public Authority Board, and after all she has accomplished in her life to say that she is not doing enough... so Trent looked at Rita during her last commission meeting and said, “Rita, you are doing more than enough.” Executive Director Rhorer then reflected on Commissioner Semel’s influence on the Agency’s communications program. When Commissioner Semel first joined the Commission, she would listen to the executive director’s report each month where Trent would share his usual updates, including events, initiatives and partnerships with community-based organizations. She would then comment that no one knows what SFHSA does, but they should, “People need to know about the good this agency does.” Her constant prodding led to the development of a communications office, which is now ~6 staff strong.

Jennifer Grant came to the podium to thank Commissioner Semel for her service, “Rita and I first became acquainted when we were on the inaugural

local homeless coordinating board back in the mid-1990s.” She noted that Trent was also on the board. Jennifer and Rita worked really well together, “I looked at this small woman with a lot of power... I could never go to sleep because I would feel so guilty about not having done whatever she asked me to do.” She shared her favorite story of Rita, which took place when she was the director of Rosalie House, a battered women’s shelter. Rosalie House had to move unexpectedly and Jennifer was trying to secure space in a building that was owned by the Archdiocese of San Francisco. She told Rita about it and next thing she knows, Rita is at an event sitting next to the Archbishop so she turns to him and says, “It shouldn't take a Jewish woman to tell you the right thing to do. Let them have the building.” And sure enough, we were able to move in the next month. “Thank you for almost 30 years of friendship and incredible work. Thank you, Rita.”

The Commission Secretary shared a comment on behalf of Commissioner Singh, who was disappointed to be missing Rita’s last meeting. Commissioner Singh has the utmost admiration for Rita. He has worked with her over the years and greatly respects her work with the Interfaith Council.

The Commission Secretary shared a comment on behalf of Vice President McCray. Upon hearing the news that Commissioner Semel was retiring, Vice President McCray emailed his Commission colleagues the following, “Ms. Semel, I pray continued blessings on you my Sister; and know you will enjoy the very best of all that is ahead. We will miss your anchoring presence and strive to imitate your way as we fulfill our obligation. May you go forth in the Spirit— grace to grace, strength to strength, love to love!”

Commissioner Coghlan McDonald expressed what an honor it has been to sit and serve beside Commissioner Semel. She highlighted Commissioner Semel’s dedication to the Agency as unparalleled; Rita is an inspiration to all of us. She wished Rita enjoyment in her much-deserved retirement and that she will be missed.

Commissioner Semel thanked everyone for the comments. She shared that she was the daughter of a man who was in Vaudeville; she remembered her father saying, “Always leave them laughing. So, I'm just going to say that, for me, it's been an extraordinary experience and I hope I've contributed and I certainly have learned a great deal. And I wish so much for all of you to go on to do great things. Thank you so very much.”

**EXECUTIVE  
DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

Executive Director Trent Rhorer 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.

**STATE**

The legislature and the governor reached a deal over the weekend that mostly restores the proposed cuts to human services that were in the January budget proposal as well as the May Revise. The legislature did a

great job and demonstrated their commitment to health and human services and education. Significant cuts to the CalWORKs program were almost completely restored, including the single allocation (i.e., funds eligibility), the subsidized employment program (i.e., JobsNOW!), family stabilization program, mental health and SUD (substance use disorder) funding. There were some reductions that brought the state appropriation in line with what spending has been over the last 1-2 years statewide; the Agency won't see an impact to its funding. In child welfare, the proposed reduction to resource family approval services and processes (~\$50 million) was restored. Some of the money for housing programs was restored. Given the magnitude of the deficit (i.e., ~\$40-\$60 billion), to escape the state budget process this fiscal year with a status quo budget is certainly a win.

## **LOCAL**

Budget update: Executive Rhorer provided a refresher of the local budget process. The Mayor submits the budget to the Board of Supervisors ("Board") on June 1 of each year. The Board of Supervisors' Budget and Legislative Analyst (BLA) provides recommendations for adjustments to the Mayor's proposed budget. The Budget and Appropriations Committee then considers changes to the Mayor's Proposed budget, including the BLA budget recommendations. The public can attend hearings to give feedback during this stage. Ultimately, the Board of Supervisors finalizes the budget, and the Mayor signs it. Currently, all City departments have had both budget hearings in front of the Board. SFHSA's second hearing was last week. Similar to the state, the budget locally is tight. Over two years, the City of SF is facing a \$700 million deficit. The Chair of the Budget Committee, Supervisor Chan, and the BLA are concerned about steady revenue shortfalls, even beyond what has been projected. To that end, they have been fairly aggressive in proposing reductions to City department budgets. For a 2-year budget, the proposed reductions for the Agency were about \$20 million. The reduction that was most concerning for the SFHSA budget team was related to the move out of 170 Otis Street. The building is a 4 rating, which is the lowest rating possible and the highest risk in terms of a major earthquake. In partnership with the City's Real Estate department (RE), Agency leadership has been working on a move solution for many years. In this year's budget, \$7 million was allocated for move costs instead of costs at a new building, as well as \$6 million for debt service. Regarding the latter, the Agency hopes to purchase a building in the Bayview/Southeast sector of the City. The BLA recommended eliminating all \$13 million; their argument was that SFHSA will not need those dollars in the budget year, or even in the next fiscal year, because the move won't happen that soon. Agency leadership disagrees and the Mayor's Office disagrees. Due to the work of SFHSA's budget team and the testimony provided last week, the BLA agreed to \$3.5 million for the move and set up costs, which should suffice. The BLA also agreed to restore some of the debt service money. These two items were approved by the Committee to be returned to the budget. The other proposed reductions were smaller amounts across several domains that the budget team ended up accepting as manageable given our \$1.3 billion budget.

### Citywide Food Access Team updates:

- In partnership with Bayview Senior Services and funded by the Agency, the District 10 Community Market pilot opened last month to quite a bit of media attention. This is a 4,000 sqft food market for residents of District 10 (94124, 94107, 94134) where they can “buy” free food. It looks like a supermarket; it does not look like a food pantry. Additionally, it links families to social services and serves as a community hub on 3rd Street. Executive Rhorer attended the opening and spoke alongside the Mayor and Supervisor Walton. The market will ultimately serve around 1,500 households. At the moment, 400 households have been approved.
- The annual Chinatown food distribution event funded by SFHSA was on June 7. 5,000 bags of culturally specific groceries were given to Chinatown residents. The Mayor attended the event.

### *ESSS*

### *SFBN*

### CalFresh

The conversion of EBT cards to chip and tap technology to prevent fraud has been delayed by the state due to software vendor issues, particularly around getting large grocery chains to accept the new chip technology.

A new federal program that launched over the summer, called SUN Bucks, offers families of children who received free and reduced lunch at school \$120 in purchasing power at grocery stores.

### *CAAP*

Last week, as part of Prop F implementation efforts, SFHSA issued a request for proposals (RFP) from nonprofits to provide substance use disorder (SUD) assessments, case management for connecting clients with treatment, and peer support. The plan is to select a nonprofit agency for these services in July. The services would commence in January 2025.

### *WDD*

The CalWORKs career resource fair on June 14 offered 121 CalWORKs families a chance to learn about career paths from different employers and educational training programs and opportunities from community-based partners. One of the goals of the event was to provide a range of supports and options for CalWORKs recipients as they move from public assistance into the workforce and into a career path.

### *FCS*

Thank you, Commissioners Kahn and McCray for attending the 31st annual May Louise Mays softball tournament at Moscone Fields on Saturday (June 22). The tournament raised money for City Youth Now!, a nonprofit that for 74 years has partnered with the San Francisco Juvenile Court System to address the needs of the youth under its jurisdiction, in particular, those with experience in the foster care and juvenile justice systems. Trent added

that the highlight of the tournament was beating the Board of Supervisors by a score of 23 to 7 (just a little fun after the budget committee hearings).

Last Thursday, the Born auditorium hosted a meet & greet under Program Director Ronda Johnson's leadership with the differential response CBO (community-based organization) partners. Differential response is a referral that FCS provides to families when a child abuse hotline call does not rise to the level of child removal from the family though there is an indication of family stabilizing and support needed. When a differential response is triggered, a CBO is engaged to provide support to the family. The purpose of the meet & greet was threefold: (1) rebuild relationships that had suffered due to remote policy during the pandemic, (2) re-emphasize that good social work comprises personal relationships with the providers, including getting to know the people behind the email addresses who are making the referrals, and (3) introduce the many new employees in the emergency response component of the child welfare system to our CBOs. The meet & greet was well received and well attended. Executive Director Rhorer provided kick-off remarks. He thanked Ronda for putting together the event.

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

#### EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH

President Kahn presented MEGAN POLNEY, Supervisor, SSI Case Management Unit, CAAP, with the June 2024 Employee of the Month award—an engraved desk clock, which she graciously accepted with thanks to all. The Born auditorium was filled with supporters.

#### PRESENTATION: COST OF DOING BUSINESS (CODB) ADJUSTMENTS

Esperanza Zapien, Contracts Director, provided background on the cost of doing business (CODB) process. Prior to this budget cycle, City departments would go before their respective commissions and ask for approval on contracts without CODB adjustments included. The contracts team would wait until the budget was approved and then make the adjustments to those agreements after the final City budget was approved. This process was very challenging. By the time the City budget was approved, CBOs had already planned their budget for the upcoming fiscal year. It created a significant impact on the ability to plan for ongoing increasing costs in their organizations. So, in this budget cycle, in an effort to provide CBOs with some relief, the City and the Board of Supervisors passed a city ordinance which requires the Controller's Office to issue guidance to City departments to include cost of doing business adjustments. In April, the Controller's Office issued a policy regarding multi-year contracting, which included cost of doing business adjustments of 3% for fiscal year 2024-25, 3% for fiscal year 2025-26, and 2% for each fiscal year 2026-27 and 2027-28. The policy advised City departments with existing multi-year agreements to initiate any necessary adjustments to the agreements. So, SFHSA did just that. The contracts team followed the Controller's guidance and added the CODB cost inflators to the agreements that were brought to the Commission for approval in April and May, as well as some of the contracts included in today's agenda. However, these CODB rates are not guaranteed and are subject to funding

availability. Neither the Mayor, nor the Board, are required to fund these rates in the City's budget. As Trent noted earlier, the City is facing a budget deficit of over \$700 million in the next budget cycle. In an effort to balance the budget, the Mayor proposed the CODB adjustment for next year (fiscal year 2024-25) be 2.5% and 0% in FY25-26. So, Esperanza asks, what do we do? We have contracts before the Commission today that have escalators from the Controller's policy. The plan is to wait and see. Wait for the final budget and then the contracts team will adjust the contract accordingly to match and confirm with the City's approved budget.

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

## CONSENT CALENDAR

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

On motion of Commissioner Coghlan McDonald, seconded and unanimously carried, the Commission approved the consent calendar, including the Continuing Authorizations that may be taken by the Executive Director in Fiscal Year 2024-2025.

Consent calendar comprises actions taken by the Executive Director since the May 23, 2024 Regular Meeting in accordance with Commission authorization of June 25, 2024:

1. Submission of request to encumber funds in the total amount of \$284,093 for purchase of services or supplies and contingency amounts.
2. Submission of 5 temporary positions for possible use in order to fill positions on a temporary basis made during the period 5/14/24 to 6/20/24.
3. Submission of 59 temporary appointments for possible use in order to fill positions on a temporary basis made during the period 5/14/24 to 6/20/24.

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

## COMMISSION BUSINESS – ACTION ITEMS

### ZORAH BRAITHWAITE

Vladimir Rudakov, Director of Investigations, presented the request for a new contract agreement with ZORAH BRAITHWAITE.

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

On motion of Commissioner Coghlan McDonald, seconded and unanimously carried, the Commission approved the new contract agreement with for the provision of Part-Time Fair Hearing Officer services; for the period of July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2028; in the amount of \$338,000, plus a 10% contingency, for a total contract amount not to exceed \$371,800.

### SAFE & SOUND

Raena Sebay, Program Support Analyst, presented the request to modify the existing grant agreement with SAFE & SOUND.

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

On motion of Commissioner Semel, seconded and unanimously carried, the Commission approved the request to modify the existing grant agreement with SAFE & SOUND for the provision of TALK Line Services; during the period of June 1, 2024 through June 30, 2028; in the additional amount of \$1,831,062, plus a 10% contingency, for a revised total grant amount not to exceed \$6,391,674.

SAN FRANCISCO  
UNIFIED SCHOOL  
DISTRICT

Amy Freer, Program Support Analyst, presented the request for a sole source exemption and new contract agreement with SAN FRANCISCO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT.

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

On motion of Commissioner Coghlan McDonald, seconded and unanimously carried, the Commission approved the request for a sole source exemption and new contract agreement with the SAN FRANCISCO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT for the provision of Foster Youth School of Origin Transportation; during the period of July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2026; in the amount of \$50,000, plus a 10% contingency, for a total contract amount not to exceed \$55,000.

EXEMPLAR HUMAN  
SERVICES, LLC.

Ken Ho, Program Specialist, presented the request to enter into a new contract agreement with EXEMPLAR HUMAN SERVICES, LLC.

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

On motion of Commissioner Semel, seconded and unanimously carried, the Commission approved the request to enter into a new contract agreement with EXEMPLAR HUMAN SERVICES, LLC for the provision of Performance Management Reporting Services; for the period of August 1, 2024 through June 30, 2026; in the amount of \$575,000, plus a 10% contingency, for a total contract amount not to exceed \$632,500.

FIVE KEYS SCHOOL  
AND PROGRAMS

Ken Ho, Program Specialist, presented the request to enter into a new grant agreement with FIVE KEYS SCHOOL AND PROGRAMS.

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

On motion of Commissioner Semel, seconded and unanimously carried, the Commission approved the request to enter into a new grant agreement with FIVE KEYS SCHOOL AND PROGRAMS for the provision of Academic Assessment Services; for the period of July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2028; in the amount of \$124,600, plus a 10% contingency, for a total grant amount not to exceed \$137,060.

GENERAL PUBLIC  
COMMENT

President Kahn's call for public comment yielded two responses:



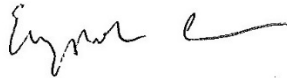
The first public comment was provided in person by Christopher Kline, “Earlier this morning, the Surgeon General issued a statement that gun violence was a public health crisis. I’m going to go a step further that public health actually causes some of the gun violence and let me explain. I have sent out a PowerPoint presentation and it should have been sent to each commissioner prior to me speaking. It is about 45% complete. I’m extremely concerned that, after multiple meetings, it has gotten to this point. Last week, I asked the Director of Public Health to present this topic and the remaining portions to the Health Commission... and a closed-door meeting prior to a regular meeting hearing for the public. Today, I’m asking the Director of the Human Services Agency to take on the same function. This should not be coming from a concerned member of the public, regardless of how much high-tech experience or investigative experience I have. Simply put, our healthcare is automated with coding and has been for decades. The reason for increases in homelessness, homelessness overdoses, suicides, etc. is because 1. noise pollution 2. people giving friends and others access. To alter the automated process with the current format, there is no way for a clinician to give a person a baseline for continued care, for example, a current healthcare clinician. Let’s say... wrestling match in high school in 1984, and puts the wrong... on his opponent 40 years later to give that person anxiety, or a person was snubbed from the other team. But it’s not just a local thing. This goes to the state level, federal government level, country versus country. We need to get a handle on this illegal access and promote peace between cities, counties and states. With this technology, it is very simple to influence a person to commit a crime, to overindulge, to be angry at his spouse or to be angry at countries... genocide or human rights abuses. With satellites, drones and millions of sensors, bots and systems, it creates excessive noise pollution and the synergy effect, which increases the person’s baseline thus often making it impossible to treat appropriately. I will complete this presentation in the next 7 to 10 days, but this needs to be presented by the director, a closed-door meeting to this commission, and then collectively, and an open hearing to the public. This should happen immediately and not later. Simply put, the director admitted that they had a softball tournament on Saturday and they used their systems to alter the outcome of softball game as we are seeing record overdoses in the city. That is not right to be using the systems to influence outcomes of a softball game.” The document referenced in Mr. Kline’s public comment is included in these minutes as an attachment.

The second public comment was provided via Webex (remote) by Veronica Shepard, “I really would like to bring to your attention the issue of inequity and disparities as it relates to food. [HSA] manages 70% of the city’s food dollars but doesn’t focus on health equity. I am a recent retiree of the City of San Francisco’s Department of Public Health and in my position, as the Director of the Office of Anti-racism and Equity, I was told by the manager of the Citywide Food Access team that health equity is not the lens they are utilizing when considering funding populations regarding hunger. Citywide Food Access team Grocery Access Program pays for 70% of the City’s grocery bags, but African Americans receive only 3% of those grocery

bags even though black African Americans have some of the biggest nutrition sensitive health disparities. Our current San Francisco biannual food security and equity report, which was released in October 2023, shows the data that black African Americans, Native Americans and Pacific Islanders have the highest nutrition disparities, so who's responsible for the decisions that address health and nutrition, specifically for black African Americans, Native Americans and Pacific Islanders? How are these health disparities going to be addressed? If not focusing on health equity, does a commission that oversees all their programs... is this the body that provides oversight for the decisions made by the Food Access team so it's more transparent on how they are making decisions? San Francisco African American coalition has been on the ground since the pandemic addressing food insecurity to the very populations that have high nutritional health inequities, not one has reached out to understand what our community needs are. And yet, we are feeding 3600 households monthly. What can you do to... this relationship with partners like ourselves to provide appropriate funding with the racial and health equity lens? My final point is how is this commission using a health equity lens with the Racial Equity Action Plan, which every City agency is required to comply with under the Office of Human Rights Commission. Thank you so very much.”

ADJOURNMENT

President Kahn passed the gavel to Commissioner Semel who adjourned the meeting at 2:07pm.



Elizabeth LaBarre  
Commission Secretary  
Human Services Commission

Posted: 7/5/24