

SAN FRANCISCO HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION

MINUTES

March 25, 2021 Regular Meeting

The regular meeting of the Human Services Commission was held on Thursday, March 25, 2021 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
ZOOM)

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 9:35 a.m., noting all commissioners present.

AGENDA

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

MINUTES

On motion of Commissioner Semel, seconded and unanimously carried, the Commission adopted the minutes of the February 11, 2021 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

The President and Congress signed the American Rescue Act, a \$1.9 trillion stimulus plan. Executive Director Rhorer then walked us through a high level overview of the various benefits to not only states but locally and to SF families. The plan includes \$26 billion in fiscal recovery funds to the State of California. The legislature can only use the funds for specific COVID purposes, such as to cover COVID-19 costs including testing and vaccines, and to counteract the negative economic impacts of COVID on the community such as rental assistance. \$16 billion in fiscal recovery funds will go to local governments which translates to over \$600 million for SF as we get an allotment as a county and as a city. The dollars are distributed over two years. This is a huge windfall for us. The money can be used for a wide range of needs. There are dollars that will directly help our clients including \$2.2 billion for rental assistance of which SF will get \$56 million to help renters pay back rent and bills—basically a massive eviction prevention plan. MOHCD is the lead and we will work closely with them to refer HSA clients. \$40 billion goes to Unemployment Insurance (UI) Benefits to extend the number of weeks workers can receive benefits. San Francisco has 360,000 unemployment claims so this will help a significant number of our residents. \$35 billion will go directly to individuals as cash payments. If you paid taxes and are in our programs then you qualify for this \$1400 cash payment as our clients are below the threshold. \$15 billion in tax credits increases the Earned Income Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit, and Child Care Tax Credits. It also makes the Child Tax Credit fully refundable. As an example, Executive Director Rhorer referenced a table developed by the

planning team that demonstrates the personal impact of stimulus money through federal, state and local avenues for a family of four filing jointly with two kids under 5:

Stimulus (\$1400 per person)	\$5600
Child Tax Credit (\$3600 per kid under 5)	\$7200
EITC (max refundable with 2 kids)	\$5920
Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit (max refundable)	\$1400
Working Family Credit (WFC) (someone who filed last year and this year)	\$500
Golden State Stimulus	\$600
TOTAL	\$21,220

A \$21,220 cash transfer is no small investment. The government is really trying to help families get through the pandemic. They call it a stimulus act because the money will ultimately stimulate the economy; it will end up back in the economy. Studies show that lower income families spend the money they receive from stimulus checks; they aren't putting the money in a savings account generally. They need it so they spend it. More importantly for our mission, the stimulus dollars will go a long way to help our families.

The American Rescue Act also includes additional food support. It extends the 15% increase in SNAP, which translates to an increase of \$27 per person per month (\$300 million to CalFresh) through September instead of having it expire in June.

EDD informed us that they intend to initiate mandated re-employment workshops for all claimants as a condition of receiving benefits beginning April 5. We intend to participate in these workshops to offer eligible claimants JobsNOW! services. This is a good way for us to onboard a significant amount of JobsNOW! participants.

LOCAL

COVID-19

As of March 23, San Francisco has met the State's criteria to advance to the less restrictive orange tier, meaning San Francisco will open non-essential offices up to 25% capacity, bars and breweries for outdoor service, and some indoor family recreation up to 25% capacity. How does this impact HSA and our return to the office? For now, we continue to work remotely through June per the Mayor's mandate.

San Francisco's new COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations continue to decline. The eight metrics look great. We are back to where we were in November pre-surge. Although San Francisco's new cases and hospitalizations have been trending in a positive direction, the concern is the variants. The growing prevalence of the U.K., West Coast and the South African variants in the Bay Area as well as the Brazilian variant which was recently detected in California, represent a potential increased risk of contagiousness and greater community spread.

Other local happenings related to COVID include what disaster response looks like for HSA. We had the lead role in emergency housing (which led to the shelter-in-place (SIP) hotels for the homeless population) and food support. We are moving food from the COVID Command structure to the Agency, specifically DAS. HSA will oversee and manage contracts that add up to over \$30 million. The SIP hotels are winding down. We are working with partners including HSH and the newly formed SIP rehousing branch at the CCC (COVID Command Center) to move 2,000 hotel residents to various housing options such as short-term rental subsidies and homeward bound. We temporarily ended their homelessness during the pandemic and we don't want to return them to homelessness. It is a great opportunity and a lot of work. The goal is

for everyone to be out of the hotels by the end of September, when the FEMA money ends, though it is an ambitious goal so we may have to extend through December by keeping a few hotels open.

Mayor Breed and Budget Chair of the Board of Supervisors Matt Haney announced an agreement on a spending plan for a one-time current year surplus in the budget of \$125 million. The spending plan focuses on immediate relief and recovery support for those most impacted by the pandemic, including protecting small businesses, preserving arts and culture organizations, supporting youth and families, providing more housing security, and preventing overdoses. Overdoses have increased during COVID. Whether this is causal or not we don't know but the data is there showing overdoses have increased.

Some staffing updates in other City departments worth mentioning because of our frequent partnerships: Joaquin Torres is now San Francisco's Assessor-Recorder. Carmen Chu was appointed City Administrator. Kate Sofis replaces Mr. Torres and is now Office of Economic and Workforce Development (OEWD) Director. Kate was co-founder and CEO of SFMade, a public-private initiative that has helped catalyze a resurgence in local manufacturing and diverse employment in San Francisco. She recently served as a member of San Francisco's COVID-19 Economic Recovery Task Force. As you probably read in the paper or heard elsewhere, Abigail Stewart-Kahn resigned from her role as Interim Director of the Department of Homelessness & Supportive Housing (HSH). There is a search for her replacement. In the interim, Sam Dodge is stepping in as director. Lastly, Mayor Breed appointed Carol Isen to serve as the new Human Resources Director. Carol has been the interim director since Micki Callahan retired. The appointment was approved by the Board this week. We have a long history working with Carol on labor relations. We are pleased with her appointment. It will be nice for continuity.

STATE

There are several legislative priorities worth mentioning that look promising. The first is to provide a statewide service for counties to use a Telephonic Signature function for all programs as another method for securing applicant and recipient signatures so that a wet signature isn't needed to get benefits. There are three CWDA budget priorities related to child welfare: 1) Cash assistance for CalWORKs families whose children are in foster care. So even though the child/children may not be in the house, continuing to provide cash assistance to CalWORKs families for up to 180 consecutive days assists with reunification efforts. 2) \$50 million for the Families First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA). This is a response to the expired IV-E waiver. The money helps counties invest in front-end services and supports to prevent entries into foster care and improve family well-being for families who come to the attention of the child welfare system. 3) Lastly is AB 12 which requests additional State General Funding in the amount of \$200 million to sustain the current level of services to all eligible Non-Minor Dependents (NMDs). We are not emancipating anyone during COVID so the numbers of NMDs are increasing.

COMMUNICATIONS

Chandra Johnson, the Agency's Communications Director for over four years, has left the Agency for an opportunity in the private sector. We are really grateful for her numerous contributions, including building the Agency's communication infrastructure that was nonexistent prior to her arrival. She built the department from the ground up, developing client-focused communication channels including our website and social media platforms, and developing and launching an agency brand identity with a no wrong door approach to help connect San Franciscans with our services. She was an innovative and visionary director. Joe Molica from the Communications team is acting director.

ADMIN/FINANCE

The Office of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) is proceeding with implementation of the Agency's Racial Equity Action Plan. The Agency will host a Racial Equity Town Hall on March 30 to further socialize the Action Plan with staff and engage the Agency with racial equity concepts in a virtual environment because of the ongoing pandemic. In early April, the Office of DEIB will be launching the Champions of Racial Equity Program, which will provide 21 days of micro-learning about racial equity. This Program will also be buttressed by agency-wide racial equity training and targeted training for management on leading with equity. Additionally, the Agency will launch a racial equity newsletter keep staff abreast of the progress on the Agency's racial equity work and to acknowledge diversity and cultural events such as Black History Month and Latino Heritage Month. An informal bid is currently under evaluation to select a vendor to provide racial equity training and coaching to the Human Services Agency's executive team, program directors, and Commissioners as part of City ordinance. Once a vendor is selected, it will go to Commission for approval. The Human Resources Unit is in the process of standardizing the tracking of diversity and equity metrics, collaborating with hiring managers and soliciting feedback from job applicants to assess barriers to employment at the Agency and identify procedural changes in hiring to promote equity and track the impact of our racial equity work. The HR Unit is planning to launch a mentorship program to support staff professional development and will produce a toolkit to promote more supportive supervision practices. Executive team members will mentor lower level staff.

As previously mentioned, \$636 million of federal dollars are coming to San Francisco County/City government. We are in ongoing discussions with the Mayor's Office about the budget we submitted last month. As discussed at our February meeting, our revenue situation appears to be strong enough that we are able to meet general fund reduction targets without cutting services to clients. The State's revenue is stronger than projected. We will see higher revenue in the May revise. In spite of COVID, we are in a strong position as an Agency and a City.

On the personnel side, we appointed Esperanza Zapien last week as Contract Director. Luenna Kim, HSA's HR Director of over seven years, has moved on to take the HR Director position at DPH. Katrina Williams, HSA's Learning, Organization and Development Manager, has agreed to take on the position of Acting HR Director.

ESSS

SFBN

The public charge rule that was expanded by the Trump Administration will no longer be enforced according to the Biden Administration. We are back to where we were before meaning U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) will not consider a person's receipt of Medi-Cal (except for long term care), public housing or CalFresh as part of the public charge inadmissibility determination.

JobsNOW!

The World Bank learned about our JobsNOW! program and has invited HSA to present as part of a knowledge exchange in a global event held by the organization's Social Protection and Jobs Global Practice. Yunny Tai will be presenting along with representatives of Brazil, Nigeria and Ethiopia. It is a nice recognition by an international institution.

We have local stimulus initiatives in addition to what is going on at the federal level. Last June, a significant increase in dollars was approved for the JobsNOW! program in anticipation of the effects of the pandemic on the job market. Just as we were launching the expansion, the holiday surge hit which put the brakes on the program because the economy shut down. The Mayor's Office green lighted using this additional JobsNOW! money to be used toward local investment in three programs: 1) \$1.75M one-time payment to families in the Working Families Credit (WFC) program

which is about 4,000 families. So instead of \$500 in current year they will get \$1000. 25% of WFC families are from the Bayview and Vistacion Valley. 2) Redirecting \$3 million to immigrant families who are not eligible for federal stimulus relief. There are about 5,000 families who qualify and each will receive \$600. These same families (undocumented tax-paying families) will also receive \$1200 from the state. 3) \$3.5 million to create 30 Career Pathways slots. The Career Pathways program is a pathway to City employment. Currently there are positions available at HSA and Rec & Park. The program will soon be expanded to two other departments.

FAMILY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES (FCS)

Due to the successful efforts of FCS and the Department of Public Health, all foster youth are considered a priority population for the COVID vaccination. Out of the 1,003 foster youth ages 0-21 now eligible for vaccination in SF County, FCS is referring the 340 foster youth and non-minor dependents age 16-21. 16 and older is the current approved age for vaccination. Once vaccinations become available for children 15 and below, foster youth will automatically jump to the front of the line.

We now have three COVID-19 emergency foster homes. The resource families have been vaccinated, trained and are ready to take COVID positive minors.

Adoptions occur twice a month now (as opposed to just once per month), so we can do twice as many.

A group of students at Lowell High School created a birthday club for Foster Youth. They plan to organize fundraisers in order to purchase gifts for foster youth under the age of 18.

As previously mentioned, we are not emancipating non-minor dependents due to the pandemic. The State has instructed us to continue to serve non-minor dependents over the age of 21 thru June 30, 2021. This number will continue to increase on a monthly basis. It is likely that this temporary change will be extended thru September or December 2021.

Nikon Guffey has been promoted to Program Director over K section. Nikon has been in an acting Program Director role since last year and has been a great leader to staff and in the community. She began her career at FCS in 2000.

At the end of Executive Director Rhorer's report, Commissioner Semel asked if the Agency is doing anything around gun violence in light of the recent shootings, to which Mr. Rhorer responded that we are involved with the IPO (Interrupt, Predict and Organize) program started under Mayor Lee, in partnership with adult probation. It's not specifically shooting related but it does identify people who have experienced violence to participate in the JobsNOW! program.

Vice President McCray was curious about the breakdown of benefits under the federal stimulus that would add up to a \$21,220 savings for a family of four. Executive Director Rhorer stated that the breakdown would be included in the meeting minutes. The bulk of the money will go to individuals & families who file taxes via direct deposit or check to their addresses. We should alert our families that this money is coming. The money shows up in their account and they don't know how or why it is there. Our communications team should work on messaging to these families. Also, we should partner with our money management partners and the Mayor's Office to provide support for how to manage the money once it arrives. Another area, rental assistance, has \$56 million coming locally. This is getting set up by MOHCD. The two big benefits are tax credits and rental assistance.

EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH AWARD

President Kahn announced Kristine Dario, Eligibility Worker, CAAP Carrying Section, as the March 2021 Employee of the Month. The Commission recognized Kristine for her 24-year career with the Agency during which she has continuously offered staff her

assistance and expertise even when it is outside the scope of her regular duties. Kristine was awarded an engraved desk clock.

CONSENT
CALENDAR

On motion of Commissioner Semel, seconded and unanimously carried, the Commission approved and ratified actions taken by the Executive Director since the February 11, 2021 Special Meeting in accordance with Commission authorization of March 25, 2021:

1. Submission of request to encumber funds in the total amount of \$17,178,802 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 of 2/6/21 to 3/12/21.
3. Submission of 35 temporary appointments for possible use in order to fill positions on a temporary basis made during the period of 2/6/21 to 3/12/21.

PROCLAIMING
APRIL
2021 AS CHILD
ABUSE
PREVENTION
MONTH

Deputy Director of Family and Children’s Services (FCS) Joan Miller requested that the Commission adopt the resolution proclaiming April 2021 as Child Abuse Prevention Month. Joan introduced Jenny Pearlman, Associate Director Strategic Partnerships & Policy with Safe & Sound, and then shared recitation of the proclamation.

On motion of Commissioner Semel, seconded and unanimously carried, the Commission adopted the resolution proclaiming April 2021 as Child Abuse Prevention Month as follows:

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 3840 allegations of child abuse, and 541 substantiations in 2020. The preliminary estimations of the cumulative financial impact to the San Francisco community for the 532 verified child victims in 2019 is \$318 million. 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

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 2021 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.

The resolution was signed by President Kahn.

ALTERNATIVE
FAMILY SERVICES

John Tsutakawa, Program Director, presented the request to enter into a new grant agreement with ALTERNATIVE FAMILY SERVICES.

On motion of Commissioner Semel, seconded and unanimously carried, the Commission approved the request to enter into a new grant agreement with ALTERNATIVE FAMILY SERVICES for the Emergency Placement Program for Foster Children and Youth; for the period of March 1, 2021 through June 30, 2025; in the amount of \$5,200,000, plus a 10% contingency, for a total amount not to exceed \$5,720,000.

SENECA FAMILY
OF AGENCIES

Geoffrey Nagaye, Program Support Analyst, presented the request to enter into a new grant agreement with SENECA FAMILY OF AGENCIES.

On motion of Commissioner Semel, seconded and unanimously carried, the Commission approved the request to enter into a new grant agreement with SENECA FAMILY OF AGENCIES for the provision of Permanency Assessments; for the period of January 1, 2021 through June 30, 2025; in the amount of \$675,000, plus a 10% contingency, for a total amount not to exceed \$742,500.

PUBLIC
CONSULTING
GROUP

Marlen Sanchez, Community Services Program Specialist, presented the request to enter into a new contract agreement with PUBLIC CONSULTING GROUP.

On motion of Commissioner Semel, seconded and unanimously carried, the Commission approved the request to enter into a new contract agreement with PUBLIC CONSULTING GROUP for CalWORKs Outcomes and Accountability Review, Implementation and Technical Assistance; for the period of April 1, 2021 through September 30, 2022; in the amount of \$179,399, plus a 10% contingency, for a total amount not to exceed \$197,339.

SAN FRANCISCO
MARIN FOOD
BANK

Jeimil Belamide, Program Manager, presented the request to modify the existing grant agreement with the SAN FRANCISCO MARIN FOOD BANK.

Commissioner Semel shared that the San Francisco Marin Food Bank is an exemplary organization doing valuable work and she is pleased they partner with HSA.

On motion of Commissioner Semel, seconded and unanimously carried, the Commission approved the request to modify the existing grant agreement with SAN FRANCISCO MARIN FOOD BANK for the provision of CalFresh & Medi-Cal Promotion; for the period of July 1, 2021 through September 30, 2023; in an additional amount of \$896,750, plus a 10% contingency, for a revised total grant amount not to exceed \$2,203,539.

COMMISSIONER
REAPPOINTMENT

On motion of Commissioner Yamasaki, seconded and unanimously carried, the Commission confirmed the Mayor's reappointment of Rita Semel for another term, commencing March 24, 2021.

Commissioner Semel stated, "It is an honor to serve."

PUBLIC COMMENT


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

ADJOURNMENT

President Kahn adjourned the Human Services Commission March 25, 2021 Regular Meeting at 10:42 a.m. in honor of the San Francisco Asian community. At a time when bigotry and malice are directed against some of our neighbors, we should

remember their foundational role in making and keeping this community a progressive and embracing home to all, regardless of background or national origin. Specifically, President Kahn requested that the meeting be adjourned in remembrance of Vicha Ratanapakdee, an 84-year-old retired auditor from Thailand, who was violently slammed to the ground in an act of racial hatred in San Francisco and passed away as a result. The Commission Secretary will forward a copy of today's meeting minutes to his family.

Commissioner Semel thanked President Kahn for the adjournment and added that it is such a sad day when one San Franciscan takes up arms against another.

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:
4.12.2021