
Health Needs and Human Services Commission Minutes
Wednesday, August 21, 2024 12:00 p.m.
Harrigan Centennial Hall

Commission Members:
Crystal Duncan, Annette Evans, Amanda Roberts
Lawrence “Woody” Widmark, Paul Bahna, Michelle Kavouras
JJ Carlson (Assembly Liaison)

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Duncan called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present: Crystal Duncan, Amanda Roberts, Woody Widmark, Michelle Kavouras, Paul Bahna, Annette Evans (arrived at 12:05 pm)
Commissioners Absent: None.
Assembly Liaison: JJ Carlson
Staff Present: Jess Earnshaw, Deputy Clerk

III. CORRESPONDENCE /AGENDA CHANGES

IV. PERSONS TO BE HEARD *(not to exceed 3 minutes)*

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. July 17, 2024 minutes

Widmark move to approve the minutes of July 17, 2024. Motion passed 6-0 by a voice vote.

VI. REPORTS

Chair -Duncan reminded the Commission to recruit for the vacant seat.
Commissioners - None.
City Staff - None.
Assembly Liaison - Carlson thanked the Commission for their work on the HNHS 2024 goals.
Other(s) - None.

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

B. Working Group Updates

Childcare Services

Evans updated on childcare issues and solutions, noting that Chris Brown from Senator Dan Sullivan's office visited Sitka to understand community needs and explore government support. She suggested a town hall to gather more input. Clarification was needed on who manages Alaska's childcare funds. The Sitka School

District's proposal for paid public preschool tuition was discussed but not yet voted on.

Community Transportation

Bahna gave an update on community transportation challenges and potential solutions, clarifying that advertisements should target groups of three or more. He mentioned extending public transit to the airport and underserved areas with Mr. Hope and Mr. Hansen, considering early morning and late-night service difficulties. He noted a need for more funding and have requested cost details, with a proposal expected next month. Current funding includes about \$25,000 from the city and \$300,000 from the Sitka tribe and Center for Community. The committee hopes for increased city contributions from tax revenue. Concerns about expanding services included the need for more drivers and training costs. The committee considered a public survey for feedback and discussed options like shuttle services for the airport and improving taxi services, including contacting Uber and Lyft.

Elder Services

Bahna provided an update on elder services, noting a meeting schedule to coordinate different care approaches. One method involved contacting local agencies to identify gaps and support needs, such as waitlists for mental health services at Pioneer Home. The other involved learning from elder services in other cities, with ongoing communication with places like Kodiak. The committee emphasized research and collaboration with existing organizations to improve elderly care. They identified a need for a comprehensive guide integrating non-profit and city perspectives. Key challenges include staffing issues, and long mental health service waitlists.

Timeline

The Committee had discussions on holding a work session in January to present new goals, which would be incorporated into the budget process. The Commission also addressed the process for approving and presenting their recommendations to the Commission, suggesting the compilation of all recommendations into one document for Commission approval. The importance of finalizing the timeline for their work and the continuity of goals were emphasized, with the decision to revisit the plan in the next meeting.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

None.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Duncan moved to adjourn the meeting. Seeing no objections, the meeting adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

Attest:
Jess Earnshaw, Deputy Clerk