
Health Needs and Human Services Commission Agenda

Wednesday, October 16, 2024 12:00 p.m.

Harrigan Centennial Hall

Commission Members:

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

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. ROLL CALL

III. CORRESPONDENCE /AGENDA CHANGES

IV. PERSONS TO BE HEARD (*For items OFF the agenda - not to exceed 3 minutes*)

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. September 18, 2024

VI. REPORTS

Chair-

Commissioners-

City Staff-

Assembly Liaison-

Other(s)

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

B. Working Group Updates

1. Goals

- Childcare Services
- Community Transportation
- Elder Services

IX. PERSONS TO BE HEARD (*For items ON or Off the agenda – not to exceed 3 minutes*)

X. ADJOURNMENT

The next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, November 20, 2024, at noon in Harrigan Centennial Hall.

Health Needs and Human Services Commission Minutes
Wednesday, September 18, 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 12:16 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present: Crystal Duncan, Annette Evans (via zoom) , Michelle Kavouras (via zoom), and Paul Bahna (via zoom)
Commissioners Absent: Woody Widmark, and Amanda Roberts
Assembly Liaison: JJ Carlson
Staff Present: Jess Earnshaw, Deputy Clerk

III. CORRESPONDENCE /AGENDA CHANGES

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

None.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. August 21, 2024 minutes

Kavouras move to approve the minutes of August 21 , 2024. Motion passed 4-0 by a roll call vote.

Yes – Duncan, Evans, Kavouras, and Bahna

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 noted that, despite internet connectivity issues, the meeting was productive, resulting in an outline for future actions. She mentioned that Chair Duncan planned to meet with Lou Shibler, the director of the Association for Education of the Young Child, to gather more insights into the process the City of Juneau undertook. Annette also highlighted the establishment of a therapeutic preschool program by Sitka Counseling, designed for children who struggle in traditional classroom settings.

Community Transportation

Bahna reported that he and Woody recently met with Gerry Hope, the manager of the Ride Program, to discuss improvements and the potential for extending services to weekends and later hours. However, they are currently waiting for Gerry's proposal due to internet connectivity issues.

Additionally, Bahna mentioned the need for public transportation to the airport, suggesting the introduction of a shuttle service. He also proposed conducting a survey to collect community feedback on transportation needs, with a deadline set for the end of October.

Elder Services

Paul and his team, including Kavouras and Duncan, are leading the initiative to reach out to other cities for insights on services for seniors and older people. They have contacted Tamara from the Center for Community and Dana from the Pioneer Home, identifying a shortage of personnel and a need for mental health support. The team plans to spread the word to the community to invite more people to join these services.

Kavouras, Bahna, and Evans discussed their efforts to reach out to different cities to understand how they support elders. Kavouras also discovered the 2024 SREC Summit, a southeast regional elder care committee, which she suggested could be beneficial to attend. Bahna suggested the idea of forming a commission on aging in Sitka to handle services for seniors, Juneau. They also discussed the potential for the City to provide a space for nonprofits to offer services to elders.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

None.

XI. PERSONS TO BE HEARD *(For items on or off the agenda, not to exceed 3 minutes)*

None.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

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

Attest:
Jess Earnshaw, Deputy Clerk

Health Needs & Human Services Commission

Working Group Summary Updates

(September 12 - October 9)

City & Borough of Sitka

Topic: Child Care Services

Lead Member: Annette Evans

Work Group Members: Crystal Duncan

Summary and Updates:

The vice presidential candidates appeared to find some agreement during their Tuesday night debate over child care and paid family leave, in the longest and most in-depth campaign exchange about these issues to date.

In California and throughout the nation, these issues are key to improving quality of life for families that struggle to take time off to care for a newborn or ailing loved one, or to find affordable child care. Despite California's significant investments in these areas, solutions still fall short of meeting the needs of many parents.

Republicans in Congress opposed President Biden's ambitious 2021 plan to create an affordable child-care system and a universal paid family leave benefit. Yet Sen. JD Vance (R-Ohio) — former President Trump's running mate — appeared to offer some support for both issues during the debate, voicing more moderate stances than he has in recent appearances.

The topic of childcare has made it onto the National debate stage. We have included an article in case you didn't catch the Vice Presidential candidates address, here is an article talking specifically about their positions when it comes to the rising cost of childcare:

<https://www.latimes.com/politics/story/2024-10-03/vp-debate-vance-walz-child-care-paid-family-leave>

During this reporting period we met and shared resources with Blue Shibler, the Association for Education of Young Child Coordinator, to discuss how funding supports child care in Juneau, Alaska.

It was announced that the Sitka Chamber of Commerce wanted to focus on childcare as part of its speaker series. They have since announced dates (see attached flyer):

**6-Week Fall Speaker Series:
Sitka's Childcare**

**Week 1: Evolution of
Childcare in Sitka**

When:

Wednesday, October 9th
Presentation: 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm

Where:

Westmark Sitka Banquet Room or Zoom
Register at bit.ly/sitkachildcare1

- \$25 admission (lunch included)
- \$5 listening fee (lunch not included)
- Virtual option free

SERIES DATES

Select Wednesdays

- October 9th
- October 30th
- November 6th
- November 20th
- December 4th
- December 11th



THE GREATER SITKA
chamber
OF COMMERCE

The workgroup needs to meet to start drafting sections of the report in order to have it ready for review at the November meeting.

Topic: Community Transportation

Lead Member: Lawrence Widmark

Work Group Members: Paul Bahna, Amanda Roberts

Summary and Updates:

Topic: Elder Services

Lead Member: Paul Bahna

Work Group Members: Crystal Duncan, Michelle Kavouras

Summary and Updates:

Our workgroup met on September 20th to discuss our next steps as it relates to producing a report for review with the larger Commission at the November meeting. Paul volunteered to complete the background section; Michelle will complete the problem identification section; and Crystal will complete the current service level and partnering opportunities section. Collectively each commissioner will complete their summary in the introduction and input their community

information gathered via interviews in the relevant city and borough action. From there, this work group will have to formulate and complete the recommendations section.

Each section entails some additional research which we plan to work on throughout the remainder of this period.

Community Solutions, Breakdown by Community

Childcare Definition (CBJ Assembly Childcare Committee)

“Childcare: the care of children age 0-5 outside of their home in a setting that strongly supports the child’s learning and enables parents to go to work with peace of mind.”

Sitka

- April 26, 2022, City Assembly charged the Health Needs and Human Services Commission to work on solutions for Sitka.
- Health Needs and Human Services plans to present Childcare Recommendations to CBS Assembly, January, 2025.

Valdez

- February 2023: City of Valdez established Child Care Crisis Task Force.
- City of Valdez secured funds from thread’s Community INNOVATION Grant: \$880,000.
- With the Innovation Grant: CCCTF created a plan focused primarily on the logistics of creating an initial licensed child care facility in the community, suggesting that the City of Valdez take on a role as the facilitator of facility rather than directly owning and operating the child care facility.
- January 23, 2024, CCCTF reported recommendations for addressing Valdez’s chronic child care shortage to the city.

Valdez Vision of a Community-supported child care center is one that:

- *Provides high-quality care and early learning opportunities for children, contributing to increasing school readiness*
- *Ensures employers in Valdez can attract and retain the workforce they need*
- *Creates jobs and contributes to the community’s economic vitality*
- *Preserves the City’s family-friendly status with the Coast Guard.*

Plan’s five priorities:

- **Sustainable Child Care Workforce Pipeline**
 - Recruit and provide monetary support to train an initial cohort of early educators and work toward making Prince William Sound College into a training hub for the profession

- Assess the minimum pay and benefits needed to retain a professional workforce
- **Site Selection**
 - Select possible locations
 - Contract with an architect to assess timeline for financing and renovation of space
- **Management Structure and Licensing**
 - Potentially a public-private partnership
 - Create a community support system to help navigate licensing process and gain access to other existing financial and professional development supports
- **Sustainable Funding**
 - Create a Child Care Endowment to fund grant programs aimed at supporting the childcare and early childhood education sector and build community partnerships with local stakeholders to maintain funding
 - Establish a discretionary sales tax on alcohol, tobacco and/or marijuana to directly provide revenue to the fund in perpetuity.
- **Communications and Advocacy**
 - Communication tools to connect families to quality care
 - advocate at the State and Federal levels for support of local child care efforts.

Anchorage

- 2023 Voters approved proposition dedicating all the municipality's marijuana tax revenue to boost childcare access and early education programs.
- Mayor and Assembly Created a local Task Force
- Tax is expected to bring \$5 million per year.
 - Money has been accumulating in the fund since January = a few million more for one-time spending projects in 2025
- September 2024 Task Force proposed \$8 million budget for spending the Anchorage Child Care and Early Education Fund in 2024

Recommended Spending Breakdown:

- \$2 million to Subsidize cost of childcare for childcare workers and early education
- \$2.4 million to grants to existing licensed child care and early education organizations to help with operation costs.

- Remaining set aside for board administration and tax collection.
- Additional revenue from 2024 used for “innovative pilot projects” (strategic projects)
- \$500,000 as capital funding grants to support existing facilities in small-scale minor improvements
- \$200,000 start-up grants to new in-home child care facilities.

Juneau

- 2012 AEYC started investing in the child care work force, training early childhood providers, granting \$ awards to participants as they completed steps along the training pathway.
- November, 2018, CBJ Assembly Child Care Committee was formed.
- The Mayor assigns the Assembly Childcare Committee with it’s charge:

April 2019, Committee Recommendations to Assembly:

1. That the CBJ identify what, if any, public and school facilities may be used to provide child care.
 2. That the CBJ establish a revolving loan fund for use in business start-up and on-going programs.
 3. That in FY20, the CBJ fund existing child care and early education programs.
 4. That the Best Starts model be funded with some structural changes to clearly delineate how the program would prioritize increasing capacity until child care demands are fulfilled (FY21).
 5. That with the FY21 budget proposal to the Assembly, the CBJ Administration present an implementation plan for Recommendation #4.
- 2020 Cares Grant Fund:
 - AEYC distributed funds to Sitka, Ketchikan and Juneau for childcare support.
 - When Cares fund ran out, CBJ implemented line item for childcare into their budget.
 - AEYC handles the distribution to providers. Providers fill out a form monthly, and then receive \$ / child AND \$ / staff.
 - Blue Shibler, SE AEYC Director will be here later in the Speaker Series to share more details on the progress and impact on Juneau’s childcare situation.

Budget Impacts of Grant Funding

Stars of Gold Child Care Center -Care for 40 Children
Sample Monthly Budget for a Program **Outside** of Juneau

Income: \$48,300

Expenses: 55,970



Stars of Gold Child Care Center -Care for 40 Children
Sample Monthly Budget for a Program **In** Juneau

Income: \$65,300

Expenses: 55,970



Cost Waivers for Child Care Providers



In an effort to improve the quality and availability of child care in Juneau, the CBJ contributes funds to child care providers through a grant awarded to the Association for the Education of Young Children (AEYC). The scope of the funding is divided into 3 categories:

1. Direct subsidies to licensed providers on a per-child basis, with higher subsidies for infant/toddler care;
2. Education incentives to individuals who increase their child care education, based on a tier system;
3. CBJ cost waivers for required annual Fire Marshal inspections and Conditional Use Permit fees.

If you are a child care provider, or considering opening a child care facility, and would like more information on cost waivers for permit fees, please contact the CBJ Permit Center at permits@juneau.org or 907.586.0770.

For more information on the provider subsidies or education incentives, please contact [AEYC](#) at 907.789.1235.

Outcomes in Juneau

- ▶ Starting wages have risen to \$18-\$25/hour DOE
- ▶ Reduced employee turnover rates
- ▶ Professional development is incentivized, leading to 30% of the workforce having a credential; improving the quality of care
- ▶ With grant funding, the business model is functional, programs are expanding, and new businesses are opening
- ▶ Unspent funds are held and used as expansion and start-up grants