

SPECIAL ASSEMBLY HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE THE CITY AND BOROUGH OF JUNEAU, ALASKA

January 15, 2015 5:00 PM

Assembly Chambers

Special Joint Human Resources Committee Worksession with the Social Services
Advisory Board

I. ROLL CALL

Chairman Loren Jones called the meeting to order at 5:00p.m.

Members of the Human Resources Committee present were Loren Jones, Karen Crane, Debbie White. Maria Gladziszewski joined the meeting at 5:30pm.

Members of the Social Services Advisory Board (SSAB) present were SSAB Chair Suzanne Dutson, Liz Lange, and Jenny Fremlin.

Others present included Deputy Clerk Beth McEwen, Deputy City Manager Rob Steedle, SSAB Staff liaison Sam Muse, Red Cross Coordinator Roger Rettig and audience members.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

III. AGENDA TOPICS

A. Board Matters

1. Worksession with Social Services Advisory Board

Mr. Jones said his hope was to have a dialogue about what the current process was for the work of SSAB and how the current governing resolution and procedures might be revised to improve the process over the next few months.

The Human Resources Committee and the Social Services Advisory Board members reviewed and discussed the following key issues/concerns as relates to the work of the SSAB.

The Purpose of the SSAB as outlined by its governing resolution (Res. 2206) is as follows:

Section (a):

1) Establishing criteria for allocation of available funding among applicants based on an assessment of need in the community,

2) Advising the Manager on the content of the "Request for Applications for Block Grants",

3) Reviewing and evaluating grant applications,

4) Recommending approval of applications and awarding of funds to the Assembly Finance Committee annually during consideration of the CBJ budget,

- 5) Reviewing grantees' quarterly narratives and financial reports, and monitoring progress toward goals and objectives stated in grantee's applications for funds, and**
6) Advising the Assembly as needed on the level of block grant funding necessary to meet the need for supplemental local government support to nonprofit social service providers.

Section (b) Social Service Advocacy. The Board shall serve as a forum for social services issues in the community, shall advise the Assembly on any course of action that would help to resolve the issue, and shall advocate to the Assembly on behalf of Juneau social service nonprofit agencies.

The members discussed how that purpose is currently being addressed and what could be improved.

SSAB members shared some of their main concerns as follows:

- 1) Quarterly report review process and how time consuming that can be for board members and the hope for additional staff resources for this task and/or changing the requirements to not require quarterly reports.
- 2) Some agencies are consistently reporting well while others are not. The SSAB doesn't feel there is much recourse, if any, for agencies who are not complying with quarterly reports.
- 3) The limitation of who can serve on the board and the board membership turnover due to the conflict of interest code that prohibits persons who have been working for social service agencies within the last three years from serving on the board.
- 4) Only having time to address the items in the resolution under section (a) and never having time to spend on section (b) Social Services Advocacy.

[Clerk's Note, per Mr. Jones' request the conflict of interest code section related to item #3 above is hereby included in the minutes:

01.45.360 Definitions.

The following words, terms and phrases when used in this chapter, shall have the meanings ascribed to them in this section, except where the context clearly indicates a different meaning: ...

...Financial interest means any interest, other than securities traded on a national exchange, held by a municipal officer or an immediate family member, including involvement or ownership of an interest in a business, property, or a professional or private relationship, from which the person has received within three years, or expects to receive compensation.]

Mr. Jones asked Mr. Muse what his role and duties as the staff liaison to the board entailed. Mr. Muse explained that he just began his position in the Finance Controller's office during the past year and his staff liaison duties include attending and taking minutes at SSAB meetings, corresponding with the grantees, sending payment checks to the grantees and compiling documents such as the applications and quarterly reports for review by the SSAB members.

Ms. Crane expressed her concerns and would like to see the following items addressed:

- Since these are only \$25,000 and \$50,000 grants, they need to be simplified/streamline the process as much as possible.
- Possibly eliminate the requirement for quarterly reports and have them either every six months or once a year. At the end of the first year of a grant cycle, the grantees reports could be reviewed and the board could decide at that point whether or not the grantees would receive the grant for the second year of the cycle.
- SSAB members are not asked to be accountants and she would like to see staff assigned to review the reports (quarterly or otherwise) for compliance.
- Current board procedures needed to be strengthened.
- She did not feel that the Social Advocacy portion of the board's Purpose should remain and that the Assembly should look for another avenue to identify what the community needs are and how best to address those needs. She said the object is not to fund everyone who submits an application but rather to fund those applicants meeting the needs that the Assembly identifies as the major priorities/needs in the community.
- She said she'd also like to hear from the grantees on what improvements they would like to see with the program.

Mr. Jones said he basically agreed with Ms. Crane but differed from her point on the Social Advocacy purpose. He thinks the SSAB should be doing more of the advocacy portion under section (b) and by doing that, they can advise the Manager/Assembly on the most pressing needs in the community. The resolution requires the board to meet at least quarterly and he would like to see staff tasked with doing report reviews.

Ms. White agreed that she felt it was too much to ask the SSAB members to be grant auditors and if this task was assigned elsewhere, it might remove some of the barriers from individuals who might otherwise be willing to serve on the board.

Ms. Gladziszewski apologized for arriving late as she had the time and location of this meeting mixed up with that of the 5:30pm Tax Exemption Review Committee meeting taking place in Room #224. She thanked the members of the SSAB for their service and going through this process to hopefully improve the overall grant process. She asked where the \$25,000 and \$50,000 set amounts and the reason behind all the rules associated with the grant program came from. She suggested they may want to look at award amounts based on the needs of the grantee applicants as identified within in their grant application documents rather than on set levels of funding.

Ms. Dutson said she would like to see the SSAB tasked with less document review and more communication with the agencies, and the Assembly to identify the top social service needs in the community. She'd like to work with the Assembly and HRC on improving the process and working smarter and not harder to accomplish the goals of meeting the social service needs in the community. She said they meet with the grantees every year and those are some of the best meetings the board has.

Ms. Crane shared that when she reviewed the past minutes of the board, she didn't see mention of those meetings with the grantee agencies and was not aware they

were held.

Discussion took place regarding some of the past history of the board and the role and duties of the staff liaison vs. those of the board members. Ms. Lange suggested that if they could get more members on the board filling the vacant seats and the staff duties were more on the report reviews, the board members would have more time for other duties such as keeping the minutes of the meetings. Ms. Dutson said she appreciates that the HRC is doing this review and as a new Chairperson of the SSAB, she'd like to begin this process from a clean slate improving the process from here forward, keeping what worked and changing what didn't work in the past.

Ms. Crane said before they appoint any other members to the board, she'd like to see all the issues resolved on the process including what level of staff support the Manager might assign to assist the work of the board.

Mr. Jones said in moving forward, he'd like to have a conversation with the social service providers. He suggested that each person send one or two questions to Ms. McEwen relating to the grant process and the work of the board and ways to improve the work or process. He asked that questions be submitted by January 22 and he will pick and choose which questions they will send to the agencies. He said and invite will be sent out encouraging them to answer the questions either in writing or at a future work session to be held sometime in mid-February. Following that meeting, the HRC and SSAB would then get back together to compare those responses with what the HRC and SSAB would like to see changed in terms of goals and responsibilities and move forward from there.

B. Other Business

III. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Jones adjourned the meeting at 6:04p.m.