

**HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION**  
**Minutes Commission Regular Meeting**  
**January 27, 2026**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Sriram Rajagopalan called the meeting to order at 6:31pm.

**2. ROLL CALL**

Members Present: Chair Sriram Rajagopalan, Commissioner Gabriela Lopez Vazquez, Vice Chair Cristian Liu, Commissioners Shannon Quinn, Tasnim Rehamani, Youth Commissioner Eric Dodd, Commissioner Kobey Sage Chew.

Youth Commissioner Eric Dodd arrived at 6:37pm.

Commissioner Jory Hamilton joined virtually at 8:11pm.

Staff Present: Parks & Community Services Director Lynn Zwaagstra, Interim Human Services Manager Becky Gilley, Human Services Coordinator Anny Smith, and Human Services Office Specialist Kerry Lam.

Meeting Recorder: Human Services Office Specialist Kerry Lam.

**3. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

Commissioner Shannon Quinn read the land acknowledgment. Commissioner Gaby Lopez Vazquez will read the land acknowledgement for the February meeting.

**4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Chair Sriram Rajagopalan requested a motion to approve the November 20, 2025 minutes, Commissioner Tasnim Rehamani motioned for approval, Commissioner Shannon Quinn seconded. Motion carried (Yes: 6; No: 0; Abstention: 0).

**5. ITEMS FROM THE AUDIENCE**

None.

**6. SPECIAL PRESENTATION**

a. Hopelink Presentation: Community Needs Assessment

The Commission received a presentation from Hopelink on its 2025 Community Needs Assessment, which examines demographics, emerging trends, and barriers impacting basic needs in North and East King County. The report highlights five key themes, including housing affordability, rising costs, uneven transit access, food insecurity, and barriers related to language and disability. The data will help inform future funding priorities and strategies for addressing regional needs.

## b. Federal Policy and Funding Impacts Report

The Commission received a staff report on recent federal policy and funding changes impacting local nonprofits and human services in Kirkland. These changes have affected areas such as food access, healthcare, housing, and mental health services, with additional cuts expected in 2026. This information will help guide funding priorities and inform the 2027-2028 grant review process.

## 7. BUSINESS

### a. 2027-2028 HS Grant Funding Priorities Discussion

The Commission discussed developing funding priorities for the 2027-2028 Human Services Grant cycle. Staff provided context on community needs, City goals, and data from Hopelink's 2025 Community Needs Assessment, highlighting challenges such as housing affordability, food insecurity, and barriers to accessing services. Commissioners began drafting a preliminary list of priorities, which will be finalized at the February 24, 2026, meeting. See below. They also requested updating the last paragraph beginning "Prioritizing programs and services..." to include prioritizing services focused on immigration services (i.e. legal supports) and services specifically focused on those who identify as immigrants, refugees, and asylum-seekers residing in the Kirkland.

- **Access to Basic Needs**
  - Food assistance
  - Healthcare access
- **Homelessness and Affordable Housing**
  - Includes emergency shelter and associated wrap-around services
  - Affordable housing support services
  - Emergency financial assistance
- **Access to Critical Services**
  - Domestic Violence/Sexual assault survivors support and services
  - Legal assistance-housing and immigration
  - Services for Older Adults and Seniors
- **Behavioral Health/Mental Health Services**
  - Adults
  - Youth & Children
  - Including Substance Use Disorder supports and treatment services

**Prioritizing programs and services** offered by organizations and agencies that are new, small, and/or Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC)-led and serving. There will be emphasis on funding programs focused on services and support to BIPOC community members, and/or those who identify as part of groups who have been historically marginalized

## **8. COMMUNICATIONS**

### **a. Commissioner Reports**

Youth Commissioner Eric Dodd shared his participation with Faith Action Network, a coalition of interfaith organizations that work together on an advocacy day, addressing environmental justice, immigrant rights, criminal justice, and policy reform. He is also working with a group called Nexus for Schools, and in March they will be hosting the state's first youth led mental health summit.

Commissioner Shannon Quinn reported that she participated in a rally on 85<sup>th</sup> Street, talking about keeping community safe. Commissioner Quinn also reported that she signed up to participate in the 2026 Point-in-Time Count, a survey of people living without shelter in our community. She is also following a pilot program for housing for young people who are still in extended foster care. Commissioner Quinn also recommended reading "Homelessness Is a Housing Problem".

Commissioner Tasnim Rehamani reported that she has been with WA State Community Connectors and encourages following their weekly legislative updates.

Commissioner Kobey Sage Chew reported that he watched a forum from NAMI Eastside regarding pursuing a mental health diagnosis as an adult. He is also watching a bill regarding the establishment of a Washington State Boys & Men Commission which may potentially provide human services related data.

Commissioner Gabriela Lopez Vazquez reported that she attended Happy Hour at Wood Block in Redmond, hosted by East King RISE, a Safe Haven and Indivisible Eastside group focused on preparedness, rapid response, and protecting our neighbors in moments of need.

Chair Sriram Rajagopalan attended rallies related to immigration, reported that he signed up for rapid response training, and has been tracking behavioral health legislation and NAMI's priorities.

Commissioner Jory Hamilton reported that he is serving on Board of Trustees for Youth Eastside Services.

### **b. Staff Reports & Announcements**

Human Services Coordinator Anny Smith reported preparing and finalizing the list of priorities for 2027-2028, reminding Commissioners to check emails regularly, as communications will come through by that means.

## **9. ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Sriram Rajagopalan asked for a motion to adjourn meeting. Commissioner Kobey Sage Chew motioned to adjourn and was seconded by Commissioner Tasnim Rehamani. Meeting was adjourned at 8:42 pm.