



City of Apache Junction, Arizona

Meeting Minutes Health and Human Services Commission

Meeting location:

City Council Chambers
300 E Superstition Blvd.
Apache Junction, AZ
85119

apachejunctionaz.gov
P: (480) 982-8002

Monday, March 25, 2024

5:00 PM

City Council Chambers

A. Call to Order

Chairperson Brennen called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m.

B. Pledge of Allegiance

Chairperson Brennen led the Pledge of Allegiance.

C. Roll Call

Present 4 - Commissioner Brennan
Commissioner Moeller
Commissioner Danford
Commissioner Voisine

Excused 3 - Chairperson Mitchell
Commissioner Smithson
Commissioner Wood

Staff present:

Jennifer Pena, City Clerk

Amy Greening, Administrative Assistant

D. Consent Agenda

Vice Chair Danford moved, seconded by Commissioner Moeller to approve the Consent Agenda.

Yes: 4 - Commissioner Brennan, Commissioner Moeller, Commissioner Danford and
Commissioner Voisine

No: 0

Excused: 3 - Chairperson Mitchell, Commissioner Smithson and Commissioner Wood

1. [24-131](#) Consideration of approval of regular meeting minutes of February 26, 2024.

E. Public Hearings

F. Old Business

G. New Business

2. [24-133](#) Presentation and discussion by Parks and Recreation on provided senior services.

Parks and Recreation Director Liz Langenbach presented the history of senior services offered by the City. All services were previously managed by a non-profit, East Valley Adult Resources (EVAR), which is primarily funded by federal Area Agency on Aging (AAA) funds through Pinal Gila Council for Senior Citizens (PGCSC). The Health and Human Services Commission funded a small portion of costs, and the City provided the facility operations, office space and utilities via the Parks and Recreation department. EVAR gave notice in 2017 that they were no longer able to operate. At that time the City Council voted to continue services with Parks and Recreation.

Parks and Recreation Coordinator JJ Underwood shared the current programs offered for seniors through Parks and Recreation including: home delivered meals, congregate meals at the Multi-Generational Center (MGC), transportation to and from the MGC, for shopping or medical trips and social programs. The participation numbers for last year were 30,721 meals served, 5,070 transportation trips and 4,470 people registered for social programs. The total annual cost for senior services is \$368,250.00. The total annual funds received includes PGCSC/AAA Funds, grants/corporate partners, individual fees/donations and the City General fund totaling \$368,250.00.

Commission members inquired if the seniors have to be city residents to qualify for these services and if assistance is given regarding Medicare questions.

Mr. Underwood stated they have to be city residents in order to use transportation services but all other programs offered are open to other residents. There is a representative that comes in to assist the seniors with Medicare questions.

3. [24-132](#) Interview of applicants for Health and Human Services funding for Fiscal Year 2025: Boys and Girls Club, Superstition Food Bank, Bigger Than Us, A New Leaf, Apache Junction CDC, Begin Again Homes, Horizon Health and Wellness and Desert Chapel.

Presentations were shared by the local non-profit organizations that submitted funding applications for FY 2024-2025. Listed is the order in which the organizations presented:

Boys and Girls Club of the Valley:

Grants Director Maddie Roberti explained the requested amount of \$35,000 is to fund staff for programming at the Superstition Mountain Club. Staff is a critical support for youth and families, leading youth through activities that support all four areas of the Priority Outcomes which includes: academic success, healthy lifestyles, good character/leadership and career pathways/workforce readiness. They serve over 350 youth, ages 5-18 and offer various programs to work towards these outcomes. The organization also provides healthy snacks and meals and is the 2nd largest meal provider for children, following behind the school districts in Arizona.

Superstition Mountain Club Branch Director Angie Davis expanded on the programs offered and shared success stories from the organization.

Various inquires from the Commission included:

The percentage of children that are Apache Junction residents

Graduation rate

Do they team up with the East Valley Institute of Technology (EVIT)?

How much of the total Boys and Girls funding goes to this branch?

How much of the annual fundraiser "Yesteryear" goes to the Superstition Mountain branch?

Ms. Roberti and Ms. Davis responded that 95% of the children at this branch are Apache Junction residents. They currently do not have any seniors in their programs this year, but last year the few they had graduated from high school. The organization can refer youth to the EVIT programs if they are interested. The branch does receive a portion of funds from the parent organization of the Boys and Girls Club, but an amount was not specified. All funds from the Yesteryear annual event go to the Superstition Mountain Branch.

Superstition Community Food Bank:

Executive Director Erik Arriola shared the requested amount of \$75,000 will be to assist with purchasing food for the Food Bank (\$50,000) and for a Student "Backpack" Food Program (\$25,000) to feed children with food insecurities over the weekends. With the rise in the cost of food, the need for the Food Bank has increased dramatically. They served 42,414 people last year compared to 2 years ago they served 12,000.

Various inquires from the Commission included:

Will the backpacks be returned and re-used?

The screening process for the backpack program

How the schools were chosen for the backpack program

How they deal with families and individuals that are hesitant to use the food bank

Clarification on the percentage of the budget needed stated on the application

Increased surrounding cities visiting the food bank

Mr. Arriola explained they are hoping to re-use the backpacks if the students remember to return them. Parents can sign their child up for the program using the enrollment form at the 2 participating schools which are Four Peaks Elementary and Cactus Canyon Junior High. If a parent is unable to sign them up, a teacher or the child can sign themselves up. The district chose the 2 schools participating based on having students with the greatest need for assistance. The funding request percentage stated on the application is based on their full budget including in kind donations and volunteers. Apache Junction residents have increased visiting the food bank as well as the surrounding cities.

Bigger Than Us:

President/Director Jeremy Wood and Director/Treasurer/Secretary Chris Sutherland stated the requested amount of \$15,000 will go towards a professional youth speaker that specializes in suicide prevention and anti-bullying in schools. They shared that their organization also provides training for First Responder Suicide Prevention. They showed a video about why they started their organization and a preview of the youth speaker they want to hire.

Various inquires from the Commission included:

What portion of the requested funds is going to the speaker?

Are the kids followed up with after the speaker notifies you that they are at risk?

The police department intervening for bullying at schools

Will they still work with first responders since funds being requested are for the youth speaker?

Do they work with elementary school age children?

Are they currently active in Apache Junction schools?

How long have they been active in the City?

Mr. Wood and Mr. Sutherland replied the speaker costs \$5,000 per presentation and they are hoping to hire him to do 3 sessions. Each child is followed up with after the speaker labels them as "at risk" and they are directed to the appropriate place to receive help. The police department is not expected to intervene at the schools for bullying unless there is a physical assault. The school resource officer (SRO) will assist with mediation and educating children at the school for non-physical bullying incidents. They will keep working with first responders and training them as the funds being requested are in addition to other fund raising. They also provide some resources out of their pockets. They work with children in 6th - 12th grades and do not have the experience to assist with younger children at this time. They are active in Apache Junction schools through the SRO programs and are hoping to be invited to work with the schools more. They have been involved in the City for 3 years.

A New Leaf:

Director of Domestic Violence and Sexual Violence Services Dana Martinez presented the requested \$7,000 will be for emergency hotel stays, services, transportation and food for victims of domestic and sexual violence. She stated they have a domestic violence shelter in Apache Junction that accomodates 16 individuals. They offer crisis intervention and advocates for the following services: legal, empowerment, domestic and sexual violence. Last year the organization helped 93 Apache Junction residents with safe shelter and services.

Various inquires from the Commission included:

Residents needing assistance are moved to another city

Confusion on statistics on the application for 2023

Where do the clients go after the shelter hotel stay?

Are men placed in the same shelters as women?

Why Apache Junction Police department has low utilization of this organization

Are they able to help people beyond the funds being requested?

Ms. Martinez explained most victims of domestic and sexual violence do not want to be in the same city that the abuse occurred so they are moved to other locations. Victims from other cities are housed in the Apache Junction shelter. It can vary where the clients will go after their shelter stay, some are able to move in with family and some are able to move back into their homes. Men are placed in the shelters if needed as the men's shelter is more for perpetrators. Apache Junction Police department would like to refer more victims to A New Leaf and they will be receiving more training on the process. The requested funds will go into a larger budget so they are able to accommodate more people if needed.

Apache Junction Community Development Corporation

Vice Chairman Gail Evans shared the requested amount of \$7,400 is for administration fees (insurance for volunteers, website and cell phones), Make a Difference Day costs, various projects and equipment. They help Apache Junction home owners that are elderly, veterans or disabled with code violations to clean up their properties.

Various inquires from the Commission included:

How many code violations did they help with last year?

What happens to properties after they help the home owners?

Are any services donated to help with clean up efforts?

How many residents did you serve in 2023?

Ms. Evans replied they helped with 9 code violations in 2023. After they have cleaned up the violations, they try to contact the resident's family for continued help or offer services for continued up keep of the homes. Some services have been donated such as a discount on dump fees and the dumpsters will be provided in certain situations. They do not track the number of residents they serve as sometimes its an entire neighborhood and it is difficult to keep a count. They also sort all supplies at a resident while doing a clean up and repurpose items if possible or sell items to a scrap guy.

Begin Again Homes:

Vice President Terralle Moore and Executive Director Sheryl Bigelow explained the requested amount of \$12,550 is for various items as they are a newer non-profit. The fees include salaries, programs, marketing, operations, licensing and administration. The organization will provide emergency shelter and transitional housing for the general population which includes family's, senior citizens and veterans in Apache Junction.

Various inquires from the Commission included:

How long the hotel stays were

What happens to the people they cannot help?

The non-profits aspirational goals

Do they help people with mental health issues?

Does Pinal County provide any funding?

What is the pre-screen for if they already have a housing voucher and who is doing pre-screening

Do they help people financially with serious medical conditions?

Mr. Moore and Ms. Bigelow responded the hotel stays vary between 2-4 weeks and they have an agreement with Motel 6 for \$680/week. People they cannot help are referred to Pinal County Housing Department or Horizon Health. The organization has a goal to help as many people in need as they can, which requires landlord and property managers to have more education on accepting the vouchers. They do not offer services to people with mental health issues or sex offenders, as they want to help the general population that does not have these services offered as often. They do not receive any funding from Pinal County. The pre-screening is for emergency cases only, for people that do not have vouchers yet and Sheryl Bigelow does the pre-screening. They do offer financial help to people with serious medical conditions as Access covers most things.

Horizon Health and Wellness:

A representative was unable to come to the meeting.

Desert Chapel:

Lay leader David Tom and Paster Philip Tarasek presented the background of Desert Chapel United Methodist Church. The organization has been in Apache Junction since 1950 and has been feeding the hungry for over 20 years. They also provide clothing from their clothing closet which is donated items from the church members. Their facility for community meals and the clothing closet building are in need of several repairs and updates. They are requesting \$101,808 to refurbish both buildings which includes: replacing 2 air conditioning units, repairing ceiling, painting the interior and exterior, and replacing items for the kitchen and dining area.

Various inquires from the Commission included:

Is there a screening process or paperwork to fill out in order to join the community meals?

A penalty for how often they use the services

Have they utilized the big box stores to see if they would donate any items?

Do they have church members that are willing to volunteer to do some of the work?

What is the biggest priority needed right away?

Mr. Tom and Mr. Tarasek replied there is no screening process or paperwork to fill out for the public to use their services. The public can come as often as they want regardless of faith and there is no penalty. The church has received many discounted items and donated items from various companies over the years. The median age of volunteers at their organization is 70 so many are not able to do the work needed. A lot of repairs needed would have to be done by a professional due to the nature of them. The biggest priority right now would be to replace the air conditioning units.

City Clerk Jennifer Pena explained the scoring rubric for determining the funding amounts and advised the Commission if they have any additional questions for the non-profits to send them to her and she will pass them along.

Vice Chairman Danford asked if Horizon Health and Wellness is still requesting funding even though they were not at the meeting. Ms. Pena stated they are still requesting funds for a new refrigerator and shelving for their kitchen.

H. Information and Reports

Chairman Brennan announced the following community events taking place Saturday, April 6, 2024:

Livin' on Mars is a free outdoor concert event from 5:30 PM - 7:00 PM at Flatiron Park - 100 N Apache Trail.

19th Annual East Valley Firefighters Charity Ride from 8:00 AM - 10:30 AM beginning at Superstition Harley Davidson - 2910 Apache Trail.

Earth Day Celebration and Ladybug Release from 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM at Earth Heart Park - 625 N Plaza Dr

Commissioner Moeller shared the SlamU Professional Wrestling event on April 20, 2024 from 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM at Imagine Prep Superstition - 1843 W 16th Ave

I. Staff Liaison's Report

Staff Liason Jennifer Pena had no report.

J. Selection of Meeting Dates, Times, Location and Purpose

City Clerk Jennifer Pena announced the next scheduled meeting for Health and Human Services Commission will be April 22, 2024, at 5:00 p.m. in the city council chambers, located at 300 E. Superstition Boulevard. At this meeting, the Commission will be discussing and considering the funding recommendations for the non-profits for FY 2024-2025.

K. Adjournment

Commissioner Moeller moved, seconded by Vice Chairperson Danford to adjourn the meeting.

Chairperson Brennan adjourned the meeting at 8:15 p.m.

Yes: 4 - Commissioner Brennan, Commissioner Moeller, Commissioner Danford and
Commissioner Voisine

No: 0

Excused: 3 - Chairperson Mitchell, Commissioner Smithson and Commissioner Wood

Michael Brennan
Chair

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION MINUTES
CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Health and Human Services Commission Meeting of the City of Apache Junction, Arizona, held on the _____ day of _____, 2024. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

Dated this _____ day of _____, 2024.

Jennifer Pena