

Social Service Human Relations Board

Minutes of the Regular Meeting, Thursday, January 26, 2012

1. **CALL TO ORDER and ROLL CALL** President Wasko called the meeting to order At 7:05 p.m. Present were: Vice-President Villareal, members Biggs, Dailey, and Nielsen. Absent was: Member Holder

2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the December 1, 2011 Regular Meeting were approved as amended.
Motion / Second: Dailey / Biggs Unanimous

3. **AGENDA ITEMS**

3-A. **CITY OF ALAMEDA PARATRANSIT TAXI SERVICE MODIFICATION --
PRESENTATION BY GAILPAYNE, TRANSPORTATION COORDINATOR --
CITY OF ALAMEDA PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT**

Gail Payne explained that her department manages the City of Alameda Paratransit Program in partnership with Mastick Senior Center. The program has four components: a Scholarship Program, a Paratransit Shuttle Program, a Free Trips to Mastick Senior Center Program, and a Taxi Program. Tonight's presentation is on proposed changes to the Medical Return Trip Improvement Program (MRTIP), which currently provides free trips to eligible residents (East Bay Paratransit certified riders) when returning home from medical appointments within Alameda County. Public Works Department staff is recommending charging eligible residents \$2.50 per MRTIP travel voucher. Staff conducted a review of Paratransit taxi services offered by other cities in north Alameda County, and determined that these jurisdictions - except for Berkeley - charge a nominal fee for their services. For example, Oakland charges \$3 for taxi travel vouchers valued at \$10; Albany reimburses 70 percent of the metered fare; Emeryville reimburses 90 percent of the metered fare. This recommendation will reduce the overall costs to the program, is consistent with neighboring jurisdictions, and allows the City to apply the cost savings to the Alameda Paratransit Shuttle service. This recommendation is consistent with the service level guidelines that the Alameda CTC PAPCO have approved and with Alameda CTC's Draft Implementing Guidelines for Measure B funded City-based programs.

Ms. Payne explained the average cost of a taxi trip is \$24, and that, while the program has sufficient funds available for the program in FY 12-13, it needs to identify additional funds beginning with FY 13-14. A recent survey indicated 96% of the participants in the taxi program were satisfied with the services provide, and 75% were willing to pay \$2. The scholarship program, for those unable to pay, is currently at \$1,000.

Discussion: A brief discussion followed, which included comments from member Biggs that sufficient scholarship funds should be made available to assure that low-income riders can be accommodated. He also asked that, if the Board is to support the staff recommendation, we receive periodic reports as to the usage of the taxi and scholarship programs.

M/S Biggs / Dailey that the Board support the staff recommendations on implementing a \$2.50 charge for the Medical Return Trip Improvement Program (MRTIP) Paratransit taxi service, and that the Board also receives periodic reports as to the usage of the Taxi and scholarship programs.

3-B. JOINT DISCUSSION AND WORK SESSION WITH THE BOARD AND IT'S WORKGROUPS TO REVIEW 2011 ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND SET GOALS FOR 2012.

President Wasko explained that while this agenda item allows us to take actions to accomplish our goals, it is primarily a discussion time and an opportunity to reflect and brain-storm,.

Member Nielsen concurred, citing her appreciation of a meeting where we discussed the status of our Sister City Workgroup, and our December 2011 meeting where we explored options on how we could best be a voice regarding the allocation of CDBG funds, and also had a chance to connect with service providers.

President Wasko initiated a discussion regarding the status of our Community Needs Survey and how the Board wishes to frame their presentation to the Council on February 21st.

Extensive community outreach, including articles in the Journal, SUN, and Sing Tao, helped us achieve the 1,700+ responses, 200 more than the 1,500 / 5% of Alameda HH, we felt necessary for the survey to be statistically significant. The new alamedasurvey.com domain also made it easier to promote the survey.

Responses to the Spanish and Chinese language sites have been slow, but we continue to outreach to these populations. We have also received nearly 200 hard copies of the survey which were completed at the libraries, Food Bank, Mastick, faith communities and other community partners

While email was our primary method of communication with partners, we have found that person to person follow-up was critical, since many partners receive scores of emails each day.

It was agreed that we will be able to draw some "basic" information from the survey to present to the Council at the meeting on February 21st.

However, the Board has always felt that outside, professional help should be available to help evaluate the data and help us reach meaningful conclusions. It was agreed that, the data could be interpreted in a number of ways. Options discussed to accomplish this included: help from Doug's contacts at St. Mary's, speaking with Deputy City Manager Alex Nguyen regarding contacts he used for the city's website survey, contacting Supervisor Chan for help, asking CDBG staff if there might be in-house assistance or funds with which to hire someone like David Pontecorvo, or asking the council if funding was available. When we completed our 2005-2006 survey and met with them, they asked "Why didn't you come to us for help analyzing the data?"

President Wasko noted how attentive the Mayor and Council have been during our previous presentations and that we are touching their hearts.

She added that Service Providers should be encouraged to bring their clients to speak. Those who attended our December Public Needs Hearing have already been extended an invitation to attend and bring clients to that meeting. Having a variety of service providers who represent the breadth and complexity of our safety net of services would also help the Mayor and Council understand why we feel this is such a critical issue. The Board reviewed the Needs Letter we will present at the meeting, agreed that it was a powerful statement, and made some minor formatting changes. Members Nielsen and Biggs, and President Wasko have met as the Assessment and Awareness Workgroup working to develop the survey format. They will meet again to finalize the presentation to the Council. Member Biggs has agreed to lead the discussion.

Member Nielsen spoke to George Phillips comments regarding how the community's involvement through cash and in-kind donations and volunteering made a significant impact on the success of the Club, and her concern was that other agencies might not have these resources. She also mentioned the support to the Boys and Girls Club from Abbott, including their volunteer support.

She added that she was also moved by Liz Varela's comments on how funding cuts are pushing their agency to a breaking point, where they might need to eliminate some services.

She hoped we could continue a conversation that included support for our safety-net services that went beyond the funds available through the CDBG grants.

Member Biggs suggested we might consider holding forums on specific areas of need identified in our survey such as Neglected and Abused Children, and Housing Discrimination.

Staff commented that we are already using this model with the reconvening of the Domestic Violence Task Force.

Vice-President Villareal asked that, the Board/ ATAH agree to co-sponsor a Not In Our Town Film (NIOT) series and Harvey Milk Day Event. The series would consist of a NIOT screenings of films at the College of Alameda on Racism / March 19th, and Immigrants and Hate Crimes against them / 4/16, and at Wood Middle School on May 21st /LGBT issues. The May screening would be part of a Harvey Milk Day celebration.

The Board has presented NIOT films in the past. Co-Sponsors for these screenings and activities would include the AMCCC, COA, CARE, and for the 5/12 event, AUSD.

M/S Wasko / Nielsen for The Board and ATAH to Co-sponsor (with AMCC, AUSD, COA, CARE) a Not In Our Town Film series and related events to be held on March 19 (Racism), 4/16 (Immigration) and 5/21 (LGBTQ / Harvey Milk Day) Unanimous

4. **BOARD/STAFF COMMUNICATIONS, NON-AGENDA**

Staff announced that the Sunshine Ordinance will go into effect on February 1st, 2012, and reviewed changes that impact our Board.

Staff reported that Season For Nonviolence activities will begin Monday with daily readings in Elementary and Middle Schools, 23 Bullying Prevention assemblies in 13 Elementary and Middle Schools, and a Speech Contest.

5. **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS**

6. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn M/S Dailey / Villareal Unanimous

Meeting adjourned at 9:05

Respectfully Submitted: Jim Franz - Secretary