

Social Service Human Relations Board
Minutes of the Regular Meeting, January 23, 2014

1. **CALL TO ORDER and ROLL CALL**

President Biggs called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. Present were Vice President Villareal, and members Radding, Williams, and Blake. Absent were members Watkinson and Robles-Wong

2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Special Meeting, December 4, 2013, were approved as presented.
M/S Radding\Williams Unanimous

3. **AGENDA ITEMS**

3-A. **OVERVIEW OF THE “NEW WAR ON POVERTY “ CAMPAIGN AND CONSIDERATION OF A POSSIBLE ROLE THAT THE BOARD MIGHT PLAY - ALEXANDRA BOSKOVICH, MSW SENIOR LEGISLATIVE AIDE TO WILMA CHAN, ALAMEDA COUNTY SUPERVISOR, DISTRICT 3.**

Ms. Boskovich thanked the board, on behalf of Supervisor Chan, for inviting her to make this evening's presentation. She shared that supervisor Chan has a 30-year background in social services, and appreciates the work that the Social Service Human Relations Board does in the community.

Last week marked the 50th anniversary of President Lyndon Johnson's announcement of a War on Poverty. Alameda County supervisor Wilma Chan is launching a “NEW WAR ON POVERTY”, and today's presentation will provide the scope of the campaign and areas on which it will focus. Given that the Board's charge is to identify social service needs in Alameda, a partnership in this campaign would be consistent with the SSHRB's charter. Ms. Boskovich distributed materials to accompany her presentation (SEE ATTACHMENT A). Materials included: 2010 census data with poverty and employment comparisons for Alameda County and the City of Alameda, an “Introduction to the Human Impact Budget Project”, *Quick Facts* about Poverty in the City of Alameda, an Alameda County “A New War on Poverty” resolution, and Oakland Tribune My Word article written by Supervisor Chan.

President Johnson launched his campaign 50 years ago in response to a poverty rate of 16% (one in six) in the United States at that time. His goal was to make Americans “Free from Want”. Today, the nation's poverty rate continues to stand at 16%, with the likelihood of that number increasing. In Alameda County alone, 200,000 people live below the poverty line, and one in five are living in areas of dense poverty.

Ms. Boskovich logged in to the Alameda County website, and showed the Board other information that is available, in addition to that which was distributed. The Human Impact Budget page included videos; one made by Marva Lyons, a city of Alameda childcare provider.

She shared that Supervisor Chan's “New War on Poverty” campaign would focus on three areas:

- 1) Food Security---Including programs such as Food Stamps.
- 2) Early Education---Including programs such as Head Start.

3) Employment

As part of an effort to increase food security in Alameda, last Saturday, more than 300 community members, including students and families, gathered to help create Jean Sweeney Community Garden adjacent to the City of Alameda Food Bank. Another effort in helping our community attain food security is the Alameda Backyard Growers, an organization available to pick fruit from Alameda homeowners' trees, making the food available to the Alameda Food Bank for distribution to its low-income clients.

The Board was invited to join the "New War on Poverty" as a co-sponsor. Board members were also invited to attend a Children's Poverty Forum in early March.

President Biggs noted that there is a direct correlation between poverty and health, and added that Alameda Point was identified as one of the five poorest neighborhoods in the Bay Area. He said that the War on Poverty seems to have turned into a "War on the Impoverished", and that hopefully this new campaign can change the dialogue.

It was moved and seconded that the Social Service Human Relations Board sign on as a co-sponsor of Supervisor Chan's "New War on Poverty Campaign".

M/S Williams/Villareal Unanimous

3-B. CITY OF ALAMEDA PARATRANSIT SHUTTLE SERVICE MODIFICATION -- PRESENTATION BY GAIL PAYNE, TRANSPORTATION COORDINATOR -- CITY OF ALAMEDA PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

Ms. Payne explained that each year Public Works staff conducts a review of the City of Alameda's Paratransit Shuttle and Taxi Service. This review includes ridership details for the services provided, marketing efforts, outreach results, and a financial update on the program.

She then shared the report, which included the following recommended changes to the Alameda Paratransit Shuttle program:

1. **Revise Tuesday – West Loop Route:** To help provide a more reliable and timely service, and to serve the new Kate Crendon Center for Advanced Wound Care Center and Target, two on-demand stops in West Alameda will be eliminated. For this current fiscal year, these two stops were changed from fixed route to on-demand stops. So far, no customers have requested to use these on-demand stops.
2. **Open the Alameda Paratransit Shuttle to the Public:** Although a stable ridership base exists for the Alameda Paratransit Shuttle, the shuttle bus is underutilized. Currently, the shuttle is open to the public on a **one**-year trial basis. Staff would like to allow the public to use the Alameda Paratransit Shuttle on a permanent basis. So far, the use of the shuttle by the general public has not impacted seniors and individuals with disabilities. This recommendation is consistent with Alameda CTC's Paratransit Program Implementation Guidelines.
3. **Benches, Poles and Signs:** Staff will work with the adjacent residents, tenants and property owners to install shuttle bus stop benches, bus stop signs/poles and schedule display signs, where appropriate.

The Board voiced its concern regarding the effect that opening the Paratransit Shuttle service to the public

might have on the continued availability of these services to those for whom they were originally intended. Staff shared that ridership was down (partially due to the loss of a very popular driver on the route), and that, if participation by the public created overcrowding, they would return to a policy of limiting that participation. Staff added that the City would monitor this issue on a continuing basis.

There was also discussion regarding the subsidized taxi service, which includes return trips from medical appointments. The primary change in the service is that customers will have access to significantly more trips per month than in the past. This change is possible due to increased funding for fiscal year 2014-15.

It was moved and seconded to approve the recommended program changes, with the understanding that staff will monitor the effect on Paratransit Shuttle ridership to assure that opening the service to the public does not limit continued full access to these services for the seniors and disabled, for whom the program is primarily intended.

M/S Villareal/Radding Unanimous

3-C. **REPORT BY MEMBER WILLIAMS ON SB 48, THE FAIR EDUCATION ACT**

Member Williams distributed copies of, and shared information regarding SB 48, the FAIR Education Act, which states that a teacher shall not give instruction on, and a school district shall not sponsor any activity that promotes a discriminatory bias on the basis of race or ethnicity, gender, religion, disability, nationality, or sexual orientation (SEE ATTACHMENT B).

Until the passage of SB 48 in July 2011, the list only specified race, sex, color, creed, handicap, national origin, or ancestry. Member Williams shared that she was curious why there has not been more conversation regarding this bill in our community before now.

This was clarified by comments from VP Villareal, and Sean Cahill, who attended the meeting to be available as a speaker on this agenda item.

After the passage and implementation of Lesson 9, which preceded the passage of SB 48, advocates and supporters of Lesson 9 concentrated their time and efforts on its implementation. During this time, and as part of these efforts, the LGBTQ Roundtable was formed to help assure better accountability regarding these lessons for K-5. The Roundtable then expanded its advocacy to include K-12.

While the Roundtable and other advocates face the challenge of having sufficient resources and time to deal with the issues included in SB 48, the feeling is now is the time. Roundtable member Olivia Higgins is identifying and working with efforts to meet this challenge Statewide, in particular with programs in Los Angeles. Sean Cahill said that the SSHRB was very supportive of the passing of Lesson 9, and that the ACCYF has helped to provide a community voice for the LGBTQ Roundtable and its allies.

Member Williams explained that this is not just a policy discussion, it's a legal discussion. School districts don't have a choice on this issue. President Biggs concluded the discussion, saying that, while today's discussion has been part of an Information Agenda Item, the Board should also consider what actions it might take in the future to help support the implementation of SB 48 in our community.

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

Staff announced two events that will be happening to kickoff Black History Month. Both are supported by the Encinal High Black Student Union. The first is a gospel concert on February 28, and the second is a community picnic at Washington Park on March 1.

Member Biggs announced that he had been contacted by Laura Thomas regarding a community discussion regarding rent control at Buena Vista United Methodist Church, on January 28.

5. **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS**

Angie Watson-Hajjem, Fair Housing Counselor from ECHO Fair Housing shared that she had come to introduce herself to the recently appointed members of the Board, and to provide a brief explanation as to the services provided by ECHO.

ECHO's Fair Housing Counseling Program conducts site investigations and enforcement in response to reports of housing discrimination complaints, performs audit-based investigations to determine degrees of housing discrimination existing in designated areas, and provides fair housing education for members of the housing industry including managers, owners, realtors.

ECHO's Tenant/Landlord Counseling Program provides information to tenants and landlords on their housing rights and responsibilities. Additionally, ECHO has trained mediators to assist in resolving housing disputes through conciliation and mediation. The primary objective of the program is to build awareness of housing laws and prevent homelessness.

ECHO has been providing these services in the City of Alameda since 2008, and has been providing these services in the East Bay for the past 50 years.

6. **ADJOURNMENT**

President Biggs announced the passing of Mary Rudge, long-time Poet Laureate of Alameda. Mary Rudge was a poet and artist whose world travels took her to China, Sri Lanka, Ireland, Hungary, Austria, and many other places. She wrote poetry to try to help with world peace, and to give a voice to the farmworkers, and many people, who are seldom heard. She shared her poems at the City Council meetings, with students in our schools, and with the community. She will be missed. Below is an excerpt from one of her poems.

“And in the rite of passage, leaving the flower
of the world in full bloom
beyond decay, released to sky,
even we, transformed,
leap from a body’s spun threads
to butterfly flight.”

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 PM, in memory of Mary Rudge M\S Williams\Blake UNANIMOUS

Respectfully submitted by:

Jim Franz
Secretary