

Social Service Human Relations Board

Minutes of the Regular Meeting, Thursday, December 8, 2005

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL: President Bonta called the meeting to order at 7:42 pm. Present were President Bonta and Members Hollinger Jackson, Hanna, Chen, Franz. Vice President Wasko was absent. Staff: Beaver, Brown, Harris.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The minutes of the October 27th meeting were approved with changes as noted. M/S (Hollinger Jackson/ Bonta), to approve 4/0 with Member Franz abstaining.

Member Franz recused himself from Items 3-A., and 3-B., and stepped down from the dias.

COMMENTS REGARDING NEEDS RELATED TO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PUBLIC SERVICES FUNDING, AND FORMULATION OF NEEDS STATEMENT TO THE CITY COUNCIL: Secretary Beaver reviewed a handout (CDBG 101) describing the CDBG process and the SSHRB role and timeline. President Bonta welcomed the audience and invited speakers to address the Board regarding community public service needs.

Speakers:

Meredith Owens, Alameda Power and Telecom, Energy Manager Supervisor: AP&T works together with the American Red Cross to provide low-income residents assistance with utilities through their Energy Assistance Program and the Energy Ease Program. Fifty percent of the people in these programs are seniors or disabled. There is an expected increase in natural gas prices, which is to be substantial this season. Up to 85% of households heat with gas, and the impact may be 83% to 123% increase in heating costs. They are in the process of developing a resource packet for others that will be loaded with tips and information, with a lot of outreach opportunities. Packets will be available at Alameda Housing Authority and ARC will distribute them. She further stated that being proactive with increased gas bills coming, she is here to give this group a heads up on what is ahead.

George Phillips, Alameda Boys & Girls Club and West Alameda Teen Club, Director: Thanks to DSD and the CDBG staff for all the help they provide. He was delighted to see the priorities on the slideshow and stated their programs handle much of those priorities. He explained the programs at Esperanza and Chipman Middle school, including a Career Exploration program that has placed 4 young people in jobs. They are relocating the Club facility to the back half of the Woodstock School site. The project will cost an estimated \$7million. He stated that within a bike ride of Esperanza there are roughly 3,800 kids needing after school services. Forty to sixty kids are currently being served at Esperanza and forty to eighty kids at Chipman.

Jim Franz, American Red Cross, Director: Mr. Franz stated that even though this community has been generous with donations in the times of need, there are a lot of community services still needing support. The Spectrum Program for energy assistance is already out of funds. There is a tremendous impact with rising energy costs, for example seniors who are in all electric apartments find that their utilities can be as much as their rent. He further explained the impact of national disasters on local fundraising. He stated they are still getting checks for Katrina relief, yet the Food Basket program is down about \$3,000 right now compared to other years. Toys for Tots usually has about 3-4,000 toys, currently has only about 400.

BANANAS, Inc.: Wasn't present to speak, but provided a handout.

Staff member Liz Harris reported on the status of the Board's Needs Assessment and described some of the preliminary data analysis. With 187 variables, completing the assessment will take more time, but preliminary analysis indicates a high need for employment-related services and an array of safety net services. Harris explained that the survey, has a 5% error margin, and should be completed in February – March 2006.

Recommendation - M/S (Hollinger Jackson / Bonta) to prepare a letter for Council stating that non-profit fundraising impacted by national and international disasters, emphasizing removal and employment barriers and continued support of safety net services and increased community outreach. M/S (Hollinger Jackson/Hanna) to have Bonta and Wasko review the letter. Unanimous. President Bonta will represent the Board at the Council meeting on January 17th.

RECOMMENDATION TO THE CITY COUNCIL REGARDING AMENDMENT NO. 1 TO THE PUBLIC SERVICE PORTION OF THE FY05/06 ACTION PLAN: Staff member Beaver explained additional funds from program income and unexpended project funds. She further explained that the Board had previously suggested any additional funds be distributed to safety net service providers but that staff was recommending all extra funds go to the Red Cross to help address the impacts of increased energy costs in 2006.

Speaker Jim Franz, Director, ACCESS Program at American Red Cross: He stated that Harbor Island Apartment terminations had depleted the direct assistance fund and fundraising was severely decreased so additional funding for energy assistance would be put to good use. M/S (Chen / Hollinger Jackson) to support the staff recommendation. Unanimous. This will be on Council agenda for January 3, 2006.

Member Franz resumed his seat at the dias.

ORAL COMMUNICATION: Taken out of order. Ms. Terri Wright asked if she could take a group photo of Carol and the Board.

ADOPTION OF THE 2006 MEETING SCHEDULE: M/S (Hollinger Jackson / Bonta) to accept the 2006 meeting schedule as submitted. Unanimous.

WORKGROUP PROGRESS REPORTS:

Assessment and Awareness Workgroup – President Bonta reported that staff is finalizing the survey report and certain Board members are working on specific parts.

Family Services Workgroup – President Bonta reported that this group hasn't met, but will meet next on January 12th, to continue planning and discussing the Festival of Families.

Sister City Workgroup – Member Chen reported that the dinner at the Chinese Ambassador's home in San Francisco was a good time. Mayor Johnson received a golden key from Wuxi, China on behalf of the City. This group will meet and discuss a Lunar New Year celebration. A welcome letter to Asuchio will be on the December 20, 2005 Council agenda, and he will be there to represent the Board.

Alamedans Together Against Hate – Member Hanna reported a contribution had been received and that this group would send a thank you letter to the First Presbyterian's Mission Committee. This group will need to meet and start planning for the Mayor's July 4th parade. He would like to attend a CAHRO Conference in Sacramento on January 9th. CAHRO membership, which has been an annual expense in years past, is the only expense, Hanna will cover his lodging expenses. M/S (Bonta/Hollinger Jackson) approving the conference and membership expense for CAHRO. Unanimous.

BOARD/STAFF COMMUNICATIONS: Board members agreed that Vice President Wasko's holiday / retirement party was a great time! Beaver confirmed she would continue to staff the Board as a part time employee.

ADJOURNED – President Bonta adjourned the meeting at 9:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Beaver, Secretary

CB:sb