

Social Service Human Relations Board
Minutes of the Special Meeting, November 20, 2014

1. **CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL -**

Vice President Villareal called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. Present were members Williams, Hyman, Radding, and Blake. President Biggs was absent.

2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The Minutes of the special meetings of October 2, 2014 and October 22, 2014, were approved as presented.
M/S Hyman/ Williams Unanimous

3. **AGENDA ITEMS**

3.-A **COMMENTS REGARDING THE NEEDS STATEMENT FOR THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG) PUBLIC SERVICES NON-HOUSING COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2015-16**

Claudia Young, Housing & Community Development Program Manager at the Housing Authority of the City of Alameda, explained that Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) monies are federal funds provided by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to develop viable urban communities, primarily for low- and moderate- income persons, through decent housing, suitable living environments, and economic opportunities.

The City is required to prepare a Five-Year Strategic Plan, which outlines the housing and community development priority needs, that will inform CDBG funding decisions for the upcoming five-year period. To receive CDBG funding, the City has to submit to HUD an annual Action Plan detailing the programs, activities, and resources to address the housing and community development needs identified in the Five-Year Strategic Plan. The Social Services and Human Relations Board (SSHRB) provides a statement to reflect the priority social service needs in the community to the City Council.

Housing and Community Development staff held a Community Workshop on October 22, 2014 (See Attachment A - "Notes from October 22 Breakout Group"). Ms. Young stated that tonight's goal was to review and assess needs for the Annual and Five-Year Consolidated Planning processes, and to develop a needs statement for presentation at a City Council meeting, tentatively scheduled for January 6, 2015.

In response to questions from members of the Board, Ms. Young shared that, this year, funding for EDEN I&R's 2-1-1 program, and ECHO's Fair Housing program will be identified and funded separately from public services projects. The amount of public services funds available for 2015-16, should be known by January.

Speakers:

Liz Varela, Executive Director, Building Futures with Women and Children (BFWC), began by explaining that BFWC receives CDBG funds for three different programs: Midway Shelter, Homeless Prevention Services, and coordination of the Domestic Violence Task Force. She added that BFWC also manages Bessie Coleman Court, a transitional and permanent housing program at Alameda Point.

She explained that, because of cuts in funding from the State and other sources, Midway Shelter would most

likely need to close if CDBG funding were to go away. BFWC has operated Midway Shelter for the past 12 years, and has the highest success rate in the County for moving its residents from homelessness to permanent housing. In recent years, HUD has moved its focus from supporting shelters to funding “Rapid Rehousing”, making it a challenge for them to continue to operate Midway and their two shelters in San Leandro.

Ms. Varela said that BFWC currently has other funding to supplement its CDBG Homeless Prevention (Rental Assistance) program, but there is no guarantee that this funding will continue. With rents continuing to rise in Alameda (and everywhere else), this rental assistance program for families and individuals in crisis continues to provide a critical service.

BFWC’s coordination of City of Alameda Domestic Violence Task Force (DVTf) continues to bring together the Alameda Police Department, Alameda Hospital, Family Violence Law Center, Alameda Family Services, Alameda Point Collaborative, and SSHRB to work on Domestic Violence issues. Last year’s high points included partnering with the ACCYF to provide education and activities in support of Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month (February), and a DV Speak-Out event on the steps of City Hall in October, which featured Mayor Gilmore, Supervisor Chan, APD Chief Rolleri, and Alameda County District Attorney Nancy O’Malley.

Sharon Aminy, Program Manager for Eden I&R’s 2-1-1 program explained their client interview and referral process, and shared a 12-month overview of the types of 2-1-1 data that the agency collects related to calls they receive from Alamedans. (Attachment B Eden I&R Presentation). She shared that Eden I&R operates 24 hours a day / 365 days a year, and that their services are available in a number of languages. They provide an intake interview with first-time callers that assesses the client’s income and needs.

In response to questions from members of the Board, Ms. Aminy shared that shelter calls are a little higher than in the past, they do receive calls for services from members of the LGBTQ community, they do provide follow-up, and that Alamedans prefer referrals to local programs as opposed to those in other cities.

Erin Scott, Executive Director, Family Violence Law Center (FVLC), shared that, like Eden I&R’s 2-1-1 program, FVLC takes calls 24 hours a day / 365 days a year. FVLC has a mobile response team that can go to meet clients at the hospital, police department, or scene of incident, and they can assist with referrals, transportation, and, if needed, motel assistance. While they do all of these services, this is not how CDBG funds are utilized. CDBG funds provide domestic violence legal services. Last year, CDBG funds provided legal assistance to 25 clients, and 28 clients were served. In all, FVLC provided a variety of services to 175 Alamedans. Much of what they do is related to helping clients apply for and receive restraining orders. She shared that restraining orders have become more complicated, and can include custody and child support, visitation, who stays in the apartment, and even caring for pets. In response to questions from member Williams, Ms. Scott shared that, in addition to herself, FVLC has a managing attorney and two staff attorneys. Hearings are split between courts in Alameda and Hayward.

Mary Roberts De La Parra, President, Terra Green CDC, shared that her organization was founded in 2008, is based in Alameda, and focuses on comprehensive community and economic revitalization. She said she is here to support the goals that Ms. Young spoke about regarding the CDBG programs. Terra Green CDC focuses on green initiatives, and their programs assist with affordable housing, access to food, micro-lending and green workforce development. They are certified by a number of federal entities, and their micro-lending program assists individuals and small businesses. She noted that California has the highest poverty level in the country, especially as it relates to children. She added that she came tonight to introduce her organization and

the services they provide, and work more closely with Claudia, and to be an asset to the community-at-large. They are currently the only CDC in Alameda, and soon will be the only CDFI.

Troy Gilbert, Executive Director of the City of Alameda Food Bank (AFB), shared that the AFB is open 6 days a week, and in 2013, served 5,100 residents of Alameda. The AFB started in 1977, as an all-volunteer organization providing a “Bread Line”, and now, its three paid staff and 150+ volunteers provide a balanced food package, with clients having the opportunity to receive food six times a month. Approximately 36% of those they serve are children, 10% are seniors, and a number are disabled. Bi-lingual volunteers are recruited to better serve their diverse clientele, many of whom are first-generation immigrants. In response to questions from members of the Board, Mr. Gilbert shared that the AFB benefits from donations of locally grown produce from Alameda Backyard Growers and Farmer’s Markets. Regarding trends in the need for food in Alameda, he stated that the AFB’s high point was in 2008, when they served 5,600 Alamedans, and that the number has gone down approximately 100 clients a year since then.

Discussion included comments that, given the lack of additional funds available, and the continued need for safety net services, it would be appropriate to craft a letter to the Mayor and City Council that was similar to last year’s. It was suggested that the letter also take into consideration the public comment received this evening, as well as that heard at the Community workshop in October. It was also noted that the Board’s recent Homeless Count identified Alamedans who have already fallen through the safety net, and that we should keep in mind that these individuals continue to need assistance.

A motion was made that the Board continue to recommend only one area of need: preserving Alameda’s “Safety Net”, but that the letter to the Mayor and Council also refer to the other needs mentioned above that, due to lack of funding, cannot be addressed at this time. The motion also contained direction to President Biggs to work with member Radding on crafting the letter.

M/S Williams/Blake Unanimous

3-B. **REPORT ON BOARD’S ROLE IN THE FY15-16 CDBG NON-HOUSING COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT-PUBLIC SERVICES FUNDING PROCESS**

Member Radding reported that President Biggs had received copies of the draft 2015/156 CDBG Public Services RFP, HUD Requirements, and Evaluation materials, and that he and President Biggs had reviewed them to assure that the RFP clearly explained the requirements and conditions needed for funding. Once the completed applications have been received, it will be the Board’s role to evaluate and score them, and make funding recommendations to CDBG staff.

3-C. **REPORT ON 2015 ALAMEDA COUNTY HOMELESS COUNT AND DISCUSSION REGARDING THE ROLE THE BOARD MIGHT PLAY AS IT RELATES TO THE HOMELESS IN THE CITY OF ALAMEDA**

Staff reported that President Biggs had contacted Everyone Home, the organization conducting Alameda County’s 2015 Homeless Count. Rather than having the Board / Alameda volunteers play a role in a count specific to the City of Alameda, Everyone Home asked that the Board help recruit volunteers for the County exercise. The Board still has the opportunity to discuss conducting another City of Alameda Homeless Count at a future meeting. Staff distributed a flyer from the County. (Attachment C)

3-D. **REQUEST FROM ATAH FOR BOARD TO CO-SPONSOR SCREENING OF “FACING FEAR” ON JANUARY 20, 2015.**

Vice-President Villareal reported that ATAH is requesting the Board co-sponsor a free screening of the Academy Award nominated documentary “Facing Fear”, which will take place at the Alameda Theatre & Cineplex on Tuesday, January 20.

The film is about 13 year-old Matthew Boger, who was thrown out of his home for being gay. While living on the streets of Hollywood, he was savagely beaten in a back alley by a group of neo-Nazi skinheads. Boger managed to survive the attack and escape life on the streets. Twenty-five years later, Boger found himself in a chance meeting with a former neo-Nazi skinhead, Tim Zaal. The two men soon realized that they had met before...Zaal was one of the attackers who beat Boger and left him for dead. With their worlds turned upside down, the two embarked on a journey of forgiveness and reconciliation that challenged both to grapple with their own beliefs and fears. Neither could imagine that it would lead to an improbable collaboration...and friendship. The documentary’s director, Jason Cohen, and both of the film's subjects, Mathew Boger and Tim Zaal, will be present for a Question and Answer session with the audience after the screening.

Vice-President Villareal shared that ACCYF and AUSD have already agreed to co-sponsor the film, and that AUSD will provide funds set aside to support ACCYF events and activities to assist with the expenses associated with the screening. He requested that the Board also authorize an amount not to exceed \$500 to support this event. Total expenses are expected to be between \$1,500 and \$2,000.

After a brief discussion, a motion was made for SSHRB to co-sponsor the free screening of “Facing Fear”, at the Alameda Theatre & Cineplex on Tuesday, January 20, and to authorize an amount not to exceed \$500 to support this event.

M/S Hyman / Williams Unanimous

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

Staff shared that low-income families are signing up to receive Holiday Toys for their children, and that the distribution will take place on Saturday, December 20. Volunteers and donations are welcome.

Member Williams shared that she has been in contact with the family of six, four of them children, displaced by the arson fires, to identify their needs, and assist them. She reached out to parents at Bay Farm School, and has been able to help the family. The mother and children have come to her home, met her children, and received dozens of bags of clothing, and some cash donations. They continue to need housing, and are staying in the unheated garage of a family member in Richmond.

5. **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS- NONE**

6. **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 PM. M/S Radding \ Hyman UNANIMOUS

Respectfully submitted by:
Jim Franz
Secretary