

Social Service Human Relations Board
Minutes of the Special Meeting, October 2, 2014

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

President Biggs called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. Present were Vice President Villareal and members Williams, Hyman, Radding, and Blake. Member Robles-Wong was absent.

2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Special Meeting of August 19, 2014, were approved as presented.
M/S Radding/ Blake Unanimous

3. **AGENDA ITEMS**

3.-A **PUBLIC INPUT REGARDING PROVIDING ASSISTANCE TO ARSON VICTIMS, AND A DISCUSSION OF ROLE APPROPRIATE FOR SSHRB**

On September 28, 2014, the City of Alameda's Fire Department responded to eight fires between 1:00 A.M. and 5:00 A.M. While there were no injuries, four families were displaced from their homes, and five businesses suffered damage. The Red Cross provided emergency assistance to the families. Most of the families affected have lost all of their belongings, and will not be able to return to their apartments. Calls have been received by the Mayor and other city staff from individuals and businesses, asking how they can help the families, and what role the City might play. The Board has been asked to gather input from the community and determine if there are actions the Board might take to work with the community to assist the arson victims.

Joe Dalipe, Island Print Express, explained to the Board that he has interest in playing a role in organizing a community response to raise funds for the arson victims. He has been in contact online with more than one hundred community members who would like to participate in this effort.

President Biggs shared that he had met with City staff, and one of the thoughts was to establish a Mayor's Fund for Arson Victims at First Community Bank to receive donations, which would be distributed to the arson victims. The City would also consider hosting a fundraiser, possibly a pancake breakfast or a concert in a park. The Board, staff, Joe Dalipe, and other community members could establish a committee to determine how the funds might be allocated. Assistant City Manager Alex Nguyen said that the City would be willing to waive permit fees for this and other fundraisers for the arson victims.

Mark Sorensen, Executive Director of the Alameda Chamber of Commerce, voiced concern regarding the City taking the lead, noting that a multiunit fire on Santa Clara Avenue the previous week displaced a number of families, and there has been no talk of the City assisting them, or any other victims of fires that occurred in the past. Since the Red Cross assisted victims of arson fires, and past fires in Alameda, he suggested that money raised at a fundraiser should be given to them. He shared that he understood that the arson fires raised the concern of the entire community, but, while it is fine for others to assist these families, it is not the business of the City to play the lead in this effort.

Member Williams shared that the city of San Francisco has a system in place to set up the collecting of funds restricted for a specific group.

After a discussion, it was determined that the City playing the lead in raising funds for a specific event at this time would be a “slippery slope”, but participating in the creation of a mechanism for the community to respond would be positive.

Joe Dalipe added that he agreed that a fundraiser should benefit the Red Cross, but was also willing to help lead the community effort to raise additional funds specifically for the arson victims.

Member Hyman shared that some of the families with children attending school in Alameda are being assisted by the teachers and families in those schools.

Bill Smith, Vice President of Renewed Hope commented that, whenever people want to do something good, a mechanism to accomplish that should be established. He added that he also had concerns that the process be equitable.

After further discussion, it was agreed that it would not be appropriate for the City to establish a bank account to assist the arson victims, but supported the idea of community members doing so. There was also agreement that the Board assist in holding a community fundraiser to benefit the Red Cross, and that permit fees, if any, would be waived for this event, and for any other community fundraising events to specifically assist the arson victims.

A motion was made to establish a committee made up of President Biggs, member Villareal, and staff to help facilitate a community fundraiser benefiting the Red Cross Disaster Services, and to work with Joe Dalipe and other community volunteers to create a mechanism for receiving and equitably dispersing funds to assist victims of the recent arson fires.

M/S Williams / Villareal Unanimous

3-B. **REPORT ON HOMELESS COUNT CONDUCTED ON WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 24 AND DISCUSSION REGARDING DATA COLLECTED AND NEXT STEPS TO COMPLETE THE PROJECT**

President Biggs thanked Board members for participating in the homeless count, and provided some preliminary data based on interview reports and notes turned in by homeless count team members. Seventeen individuals were encountered, with nine of them being observed, and eight being interviewed. Five of the eight interviewed reported being chronically homeless, and four of those who were interviewed reported using the Alameda Food Bank. A few areas such as the belt line had a higher concentration of homeless/ encampments, and some of the encampments found were abandoned. It was noted that because of the rain that morning, some individuals may have gone elsewhere for shelter. Those interviewed included veterans, and mental health issues among the chronically homeless. Half of those interviewed listed Alameda as their last permanent residence. One individual had been sleeping outdoors in the same place for five years, and another was living on the streets next to an apartment complex managed by his mother and stepfather. One shared that he had a caseworker in Hayward, and two of the veterans were receiving services from the VA.

During the discussion that followed, the consensus was that many of the volunteers would be willing to participate in another homeless count, if the Board decided to undertake one. It was suggested that signage regarding available resources could be put up at some of the locations where the highest concentration of homeless individuals were found.

In response to a question asked by Bill Smith, Vice President of Renewed Hope, it was shared that not all individuals encountered exhibited mental health issues.

A motion was made to refer the information collected to the Homeless Count Committee for analysis and a recommendation as to whether another count should be conducted, and to invite Everyone Home to a future meeting of the Board.

M/S Hyman / Villareal Unanimous

(Member Williams left the meeting)

3-C. **REPORT ON SSHRB/CITY OF ALAMEDA COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARDS EVENT AND DISCUSSION REGARDING CONDUCTING THE EVENT ON AN ANNUAL BASIS**

President Biggs, and members Hyman and Radding shared that the awards presentations at the Everything Alameda event went well, and were well received by the crowd. Members have received positive comments regarding the awards and it was felt that the awardees represented a “good mix” of the community. In response to a question by member Villareal as to why SSHRB had undertaken this project, President Biggs shared that it tied into the promoting of volunteerism, which is consistent with the mission of the Board. Staff announced that the winners of the Community Service Awards would also be recognized at the City Council meeting on October 21st, and that a Proclamation would also be presented at that meeting declaring November 1, 2014, as Extra Mile Day in the City of Alameda. The Extra Mile Day campaign was developed to get cities to set aside one day a year (November 1) as a day to recognize the volunteer efforts of everyone in the community. Member Hyman suggested the Board use this event as a marketing tool to get a broader selection of nominations in the future.

A motion was made for the Board to take on the Alameda Community Service Awards Event next year.

M/S Villareal / Hyman Unanimous

3-D. **REQUEST BY STAFF FOR BOARD TO RECOMMEND SUPPORT OF A MURAL PROJECT DESIGNED BY ALAMEDA HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT CLARE RICKARD**

Staff presented a report regarding a student Mural Project that needed a department of the City of Alameda to take the lead on. Staff requested that the Board support the project, and have President Biggs draft a letter to the Mayor and Council asking that they approve the project, and designate a City department to assist in moving it forward. At an ACCYF meeting regarding the mural, a suggestion was made to make contact with the City of Alameda Art Commission and AUSD, to develop a plan to support projects like this in the future.

During the brief discussion, the Board agreed that this would be a reasonable process.

A motion was made to support the project, and have President Biggs draft a letter the Mayor and Council asking that they assist in moving the project forward.

M/S Hyman / Radding Unanimous

3-E. **DISCUSSION OF THE BOARD'S ROLE IN THE FY15-16 CDBG NON-HOUSING COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT-PUBLIC SERVICES PROCESS**

President Biggs shared that last year the Board's recommendations regarding CDBG Public Service funding for 2014/15 did not match the recommendations made by the CDBG\AHA staff. One of the primary issues was that, while the scoring was intended to be competitive, Echo fair housing services are mandated services, and the plan was to fund Eden I&R 211, regardless of how it scored. This year, the funding for these two programs will be subtracted from 2015\16 CDBG Public Service funds, with the funds remaining being distributed on a competitive basis. President Biggs added that this year, SSHRB will be doing the scoring, and that SSHRB has also been asked to provide feedback by December on the scoring process being used. The CDBG grant applications and score sheets were included in this month's packet. Members are asked to send any comments to President Biggs, so that he and member Radding can review them. They will come back with recommendations at the meeting on October 22nd.

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

Member Hyman announced that the Alameda Fire Department Pumpkin Patch will be distributing free pumpkins to Alameda youth on October 22nd.

President Biggs and staff shared information regarding the "Speak Out" against domestic violence event, sponsored by SSHRB and the Domestic Violence Task Force, that will be held on Thursday October 16th on the steps of City Hall. Speakers include Mayor Gilmore, Supervisor Chan, Alameda County District Attorney Nancy O'Malley, and Alameda Police Chief Paul Roller.

5. **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS**

Bill Smith, Vice President of Renewed Hope, shared that he enjoyed attending the meeting, and announced that a Rental Task Force, made up of community members, had been formed to discuss the challenges facing renters in Alameda. Rising rents have created a situation where many of our citizens can no longer afford to live in Alameda. Mr. Smith shared that the task force will be conducting a number of meetings.

(At the last meeting, President Biggs shared that he has been informed that a Housing Cost and Rents Task Force was being formed, and that the Board may be requested to have one or more members participate. The community group that Mr. Smith is referring to has been formed in its place)

The meeting was adjourned at 9:12PM. M\S Villareal\Radding UNANIMOUS

Respectfully submitted by:

Jim Franz
Secretary