

City of Alameda, California
SOCIAL SERVICE HUMAN RELATIONS BOARD (SSHRB)
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2019

FINAL MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Vice-President Pravda Wright called the meeting to order at 7:09 p.m.

Roll Call: Vice-President Pravda Wright, Boardmember Moustafa Aly, Boardmember Kristin Furuichi Fong, Boardmember Cheryl Harawitz, Boardmember Sarah Lewis, and Boardmember Johanna Paillet-Growl

Absent: President Christine Chilcott

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Boardmember Furuichi Fong moved to approve the minutes of October 24, 2019. Boardmember Paillet-Growl seconded. The minutes of October 24, 2019 were unanimously approved as written.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

4. AGENDA ITEMS

4-A Public Hearing on the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and Identifying Needs and Priorities

Alameda Housing Authority Management Analyst Lisa Fitts presented the Regional Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice that was recently conducted for Alameda County with comment from jurisdictional staff and Alameda stakeholders. Fitts explained that the Social Service Human Relations Board's (Board's) task is to identify the priority areas that may be considered for CDBG Non-Housing Public Services funding based on the information presented. She explained the CDBG Public Services program, its purpose, process, and proposed timeline. Fitts noted that while fair housing was funded last year with CDBG Public Services, this issue area may be supported under another funding stream, except for counseling. Following Fitts' presentation, members of the public had a chance to provide comment. The following remarks were made by members of the public:

- Cindy Houts, Executive Director of the Alameda Food Bank, thanked the City and the Board for supporting the Food Bank through the CDBG funds. She discussed the services they provide to the community and its partnerships with the Housing Authority, Alameda Family Services, and Dine and Connect program. The Alameda Food Bank has agreed to be the fiscal sponsor of the Dine and Connect contract with the City, which currently serves dinners to homeless residents once a month at Immanuel Lutheran Church and will expand to two additional sites starting in January 2020.

- Angie Watson-Hajjem, Housing Coordinator for ECHO Housing, talked about the services her organization provides, focusing on the landlord and tenant mediation services, counseling, and renter rights advocacy. Services are open for both landlords and tenants. ECHO Housing also investigates housing discrimination, conducts community education, and provides rental assistance to Alameda residents. Hajjem thanked the Board for its support and expressed ECHO Housing services depend on CDBG funding.
- Katherine Schwartz, Executive Director of Alameda Family Services (AFS), drew attention to the continued need of Alameda students for mental health services. She discussed the programs AFS provides to Alameda Unified School District (AUSD). She explained that although AFS has a presence at school sites, the AUSD Needs Assessment found that double the effort is needed to adequately support families and students with intervention services to help them thrive. She requested that the Board take the need for youth mental health into consideration in its deliberation of priorities.

Ana Bagtas, Community Development Analyst also presented the results of a mini-survey conducted to facilitate the community's participation in the needs assessment and CDBG stakeholder input- gathering process. The survey was a short, three-question assessment to review, reconfirm, and prioritize the top ten community and social service needs of Alamedans as identified in SSHRB's 2017 Community Needs Assessment. A total of 44 surveys were completed.

Staff and subject-matter experts fielded questions from the Board. The Board deliberated on each of the areas of need confirmed in the mini-survey and the Fair Housing Impediments Report presented by staff. The Board concluded that the following areas of need call for attention:

- Affordable housing
 - Encourage HUD to increase number of Section 8 vouchers
 - Encourage and incentivize more landlords to accept Section 8 vouchers to increase the supply of affordable housing
- Fair housing
 - Promote fair housing enforcement and outreach
- Tenant/Landlord mediation and counseling, tenants' rights, and housing support
 - Provide affordable tenants' rights/legal services
 - Increase protection for renters
- Food security and food services
 - Increase access to healthy, affordable foods
- Homelessness services
 - Provide shelters, showers, storage, day center, restrooms, mental health, and housing navigation services
 - Develop housing options that include rapid rehousing, permanent support housing, independent housing, etc.
- Mental health
 - Increase services available for low-income people and for all ages
 - Address stigma about accessing services
 - Address youth anxiety and depression
- Safety and anti-crime programs
 - Increase programs to keep the community safe
- Transportation/shuttle service and pedestrian safety

- Encourage better bus service, accessible transportation
- Support more crosswalks

The Board recognizes the importance of affordable housing, fair housing, and transportation and considers them of high priority. Given the limits of the CDBG Public Services funding, as well as the planning efforts currently underway for these issues, the Board recommended that affordable housing, fair housing (except landlord/tenant counseling, which is not covered under CDGB administration), and transportation be addressed and funded appropriately through other channels.

Boardmember Lewis made the motion to authorize President Christine Chilcott to write the Needs Statement letter to be presented to City Council that reflects the priority areas of homeless services, food security, housing support, mental health services, and safety and crimes. Boardmember Aly seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

4-B Workgroup Reports

- **Census 2020 Workgroup:** Eric Fonstein announced that there was a County meeting on November 18. The County is developing the following: PSA competition for youth, train the trainer program, collateral materials for outreach, and methodologies to count the homeless. The Alameda Complete Count Steering Committee is meeting on December 2. The goal of this meeting is for each Subcommittee to identify at least two community events to conduct public education and outreach on the census. The County commended Alameda for holding the Unity Picnic event—the first census community outreach event in the County. As was evident at the Unity Picnic, people are still confused about the citizenship questions and who gets counted.
- **Homeless Action Plan Workgroup:** Boardmember Harawitz reported that the HEAP Ad Hoc Committee did not meet in October since a lot of things are still up in the air. Bagtas continues to update the group and sent a progress report on the projects.
- **Youth Mental Health:** Fonstein reported that the website and the campaign were launched at the Unity Picnic. The workgroup is continuing to work on the campaign. AUSD launched a poster contest that captures the campaign tagline “See, Talk, Support.” The deadline will be extended.

5. STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

5-A Homelessness Updates and Initiatives. Bagtas reported on the following:

- **Sunsetting Homelessness Meter Program:** Public Works ordered the parts and awaiting shipment. It takes a minimum of 12 weeks after placing the order for the parts to arrive.
- **Homeless Housing, Assistance, and Prevention Program:** The City is contracting with St. Vincent de Paul to administer this program, which is funded through HEAP.
- **Health Van:** Alameda’s homeless are now receiving non-emergency and urgent care services through the Alameda Health System’s Mobile Health Clinic. The service is provided once a month to coincide with the Dine and Connect program at Immanuel Lutheran Church.

5-B Report on Unity Picnic and Community Service Award events:

- Boardmembers provided the following feedback regarding the Unity Picnic:
 - Great event, nicely put together
 - Great information tables
 - Move the event to the front of the park next time to get more people to participate. Some people thought it was a private party.
 - Loved the drumming
- Boardmembers provided the following feedback regarding the Community Service Awards:
 - Nice celebration, good energy
 - The room was full, everything looked wonderful
 - It was rewarding to see people's accomplishments
 - Loved the youth awards
 - Very impressive speakers

6. BOARD COMMUNICATIONS, NON-AGENDA

None

7. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

None.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Boardmember Paillet-Growl made a motion to adjourn. Boardmember Aly seconded. The meeting adjourned at 9:03 p.m.