

Social Service Human Relations Board

Minutes of the Regular Meeting, Thursday, March 22, 2012

1. **CALL TO ORDER and ROLL CALL** President Wasko called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. Present were:, members Biggs, Holder, Nielsen, and Radding..
Absent was: Vice-President Villareal and Member Dailey.

- 1-A. **SEASON FOR NONVIOLENCE WORD OF THE DAY AND DAILY READING**

President Wasko announced that the Season For Nonviolence word of the day was “Equality” and she read the daily reading being used in our schools and at public meetings.

Daily Reading: “The Word for March 22 is EQUALITY. The Constitution of the United States says that all people are equal, and all people have the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Do you think that everyone in our city is treated equally? If not, what could you do to help change this?”

2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Regular Meeting, February 23, 2012 were approved as corrected.

M/S Nielsen / Radding Unanimous

3. **AGENDA ITEMS**

- 3-A. **FOLLOW UP ON CDBG PUBLIC HEARING REGARDING FY12-13 NEEDS STATEMENT**

Debbie Potter, Community Development Program Manager explained that she was addressing the Board regarding follow up to the February 21, 2012 City Council meeting, which included a public hearing to consider adopting the Social Service Human Relations Board’s (SSHRB’s) recommended public needs statement for FY12-13. The annual public needs statement is adopted to set the priorities for awarding CDBG funds for public services activities for the upcoming fiscal year. She related that public comment following the staff report included concern over the continued reduction in Block Grant and other Federal and State funding for public services. She added that there was interest on the part of public speakers to look at ways to expand opportunities to bring in more funding for public services. Council members also expressed support for looking for strategies to enhance the money coming in for social services. She explained that the item before the Board is a follow up to that idea and was a request for the Board to look at ways they might be involved in strategizing with the larger community (businesses, residents, non-profits in the community) to raise additional funds. Stating that staff would work with the Board, she asked that SSHRB direct its Resource Sharing Work Group to develop a process by which non-profit providers’ can enhance their fund raising capacity and partner with the community to maximize provision of social services. She added that 2012/2013 CDBG Technical Assistance funds (\$5,000) would be made available to help build the fund raising capacity of Alameda’s non-profits.

President Wasko thanked Debbie Potter, adding that she appreciated that the City was interested in continuing this dialogue. She added that some other cities refer to other funding sources in addition to CDBG funds, and that it is helpful when city government participates in applications for larger grants.

Member Biggs also thanked Debbie Potter and said he and the workgroup look forward to working with City staff, providers, and the community on this project.

Member Nielsen asked a number of questions regarding the nature and level of support that will be provided by City leadership and staff.

Debbie Potter responded that the City will assist in identifying non-financial aid, and the leveraging of resources. City staff, including SSHRB staff will be available to support these efforts, and the RSWG will work with staff to determine the process for allocating the \$5,000 CDBG funds for TA.

President Wasko voiced concern that the RSWG was being asked to play a role in developing a non-profit organization, and the motion was crafted to assure that this was not the case.

A motion was made to accept the staff recommendation for the Board's Resource Sharing Workgroup to recommend and develop a process by which non-profit providers' can enhance their fund raising capacity and partner with the community to maximize provision of social services.

M/S Biggs / Nielsen Approved 4 Yes / President Wasko Abstained

3-B. **REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG) PUBLIC SERVICES FUNDING ALLOCATION**

Claudia Young, Community Development Program Manager made a presentation regarding staff's recommendations for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding for public services. She explained that the Board's recommendations will be included in a letter to the Council for their consideration when adopting the final 2012-13 Action Plan at their May 1st City Council meeting.

The CDBG entitlement allocation for FY2012-13 is \$1,017,685 (a reduction of 17.2% compared to the previous year). Federal regulations cap the amount of CDBG funds that can be expended on Public Services not to exceed 15% of the current CDBG allocation plus the prior year's program income. The program income for FY11-12 is estimated to be approximately \$200,000, and the total amount of funds available for Public Services is \$182,653.

Ten proposals were submitted for review with a total request for funding of \$276,951, \$94,298 more than is available. Staff convened a three-person panel to review the proposals. The panel included Claudia Young, Jim Franz and Cyndy Wasko. In reviewing the applications, priority emphasis was placed on Safety Net Services (food, shelter, health and wellness, personal safety and homeless prevention services (such as short term rental and utility assistance). A funding strategy was developed based on the Board's needs letter, the upcoming loss of HPRP / Rental Assistance funds in August 2012, and the fact that the Public Services funds now available represent a 17.2% reduction as opposed to the 10% previously anticipated.

Ms. Young referred to the packet's spreadsheet of Recommended Public Service Programs and funding levels, noting that the funding recommendations allocate 100% of estimated Public Services funding for FY12-13. She noted that, of the ten proposals submitted, nine are recommended for funding.

President Wasko shared how difficult the allocation process. All of the service providers requesting funds are providing quality services doing creative work, but there's just not enough money to go around. In the end the decisions were based on keeping Alamedans in need housed, fed, and safe. Numbers served versus dollars requested was also a factor in making decisions.

Staff added that the \$31,000 funding reduction combined with the need to replace rental assistance dollars no longer available with HPRP funding made it impossible to fund everyone.

Member Biggs asked Ms. Young if the previous year's performance was taken into consideration. She said all service providers were achieving or exceeding their program goals, and performance was not an issue.

Member Nielsen noted that the priorities and needs listed in the Board's letter to the council on January 24, 2012 were determined anticipating a maximum 10% cut. Since it wasn't until mid-February that the 17% cut was announced, the needs in our letter were a little more comprehensive than they had to be. This may have been one of the reasons why the priority needs used were more focused on preserving the safety-net.

Public Comment:

Liz Varela – Executive Director, Building Futures with Women and Children, thanked the Board for “really getting” safety-net services and valuing them in the community. Midway Shelter has been in Alameda for 25 years and had the highest housing outcomes in the County this year. Even so, the shelter struggles to maintain its services and keep its doors open. BFWC operates 3 shelters and would need to consider closing one if they lose State funding. Shelters have fixed cost and can only cut to a certain point.

She also thanked the Board for seeing the need for Rental Assistance (RA). Providing the casework component for HPRP RA funds, BFWC has developed a real understanding of the value of providing a service that helps keep people from becoming homeless. She explained that with the loss of HPRP funds BFWC will now seek State RA funds to supplement the \$20,000 CDBG grant. If the funds are not available, they will work with community partners and staff to develop the cost effective RA program. President Wasko thanked Ms. Varela for the quality services provided by BFWC.

Margie Rocha – Executive Director of ECHO Fair Housing said she was thankful for the staff recommendation which kept their funding at the same level as last year, adding she knew we didn't have any more funds to give. She knows that they will continue to carry a large caseload, and noted that some landlords are taking advantage of low-income tenants by forcing them to live in sub-standard housing. These families often fear retaliation if they complain, and ECHO helps by representing them and keeping them from being evicted. She hopes the Board will recommend the staff report.

President Wasko thanked Ms. Rocha for the service provided by ECHO, and for being willing to serve 250 persons with \$7,290. In a response to questions from member Nielsen, Ms. Rocha explained that funding for Fair Housing (discrimination) services do not come out of the 15% set aside for Public Services. The services are provided without regard to a household's level of income. Their tenant-landlord counseling program has a mediation component that sometimes help keep a family from becoming homeless by resolving a misunderstanding. Other times they achieve they assist by assuring that the client is receiving due process. Ninety-five percent of these families are low-income.

Marc Morales – Teen Program Director for Alameda Boys and Girls Club thanked the City and Board for their continued support. As they approach the Club’s one-year anniversary, they have grown their membership to over 400 youth 6 to 18. He estimated that 70% are low-income, and more than 70% are receiving a scholarship and receive all services at no cost. CDBG funding will help them provide Health & Wellness and Culinary Arts programs. They collaborate with AUSD, ARPD, AEF, APC, the College of Alameda, and others. Their membership is split about 60% male / 40% female, and are 70%-80% minority. Their health services include dental, vision and other health screenings, visits from the “Breath Mobile”, and rides to dental appointments at the college.

President Wasko and others members agreed that the B&G club does “great work”.

Kathleen Seabolt – West Alameda Community Programs Director Alternatives In Action (AIA) thanked City staff and the Board for the CDBG funded partnership they’ve had with AIA these past years, and added as an Alamedan she appreciated the Board’s focus on safety-net services.

AIA has been operating as a leader in youth programming and she hoped this group could help find some funding outside of CDBG to help keep their programs going. She hoped AIA could participate in an “open door for funding opportunities as they came along”. She highlighted AIA programs that prepare youth for college and employment, and allow them to participate in events such as Project Youth View, Funk the Violence, and their Neighborhood Block Party.

President Wasko thanked her for coming, adding “we genuinely support you for speaking to youth where they are” She shared that the team tried and will continue to try to help identify other funding sources for AIA.

Tina Fleton – Bananas thanked the Board for their many years of support and said that she appreciated and understood the need for safety-net services. The recommended cut in funding however will be very difficult for them, and she hopes we will consider them if and when other funding might be available. This cut will force many families to remain on their waiting list and not receive vouchers. Bananas transferred 5 families from our vouchers to a long-term program this year and will continue to try to transfer others currently in the program. She explained that the program provides a monthly \$250 payment per child for 12 months. This helps families seek or retain employment or education opportunities.

President Wasko thanked Ms. Fleton for her passion and for the services provided by Bananas, adding that the Board would be happy to provide letters of support for other grants.

Jamie Almanza – Executive Director, Bay Area Community Services (Four Bridges) said that she has just joined the organization and they recently lost their Meals On Wheels grant in Oakland. She wished that there could be a formula that kept agencies from losing 100% of their grant, as she understood how devastating that can be. She went on to say that Four Bridges, a 2-day-a-week drop in program, is the only mental health services program in Alameda for persons 18 and older. Without their services, many of their clients would be on the streets talking to themselves, or institutionalized. All are severely impoverished, 70% reside in Alameda, 50% are of color, and 70% are older adults. Many live in board-and care facilities. The program provides training money manage and other life-skills, and counseling related to substance abuse. It includes a reduced-cost lunch.

President Wasko welcomed Ms. Almanza to Alameda and thanked her for coming to represent BACS. She added that we rarely see a BACS representative at our meetings, and hopes that she will come back.

Discussion:

Member Biggs voiced appreciation for all those who came out to speak, adding that last night he attended a meeting hosted by Supervisor Chan that detailed the large cuts coming to childcare programs.

He thought the staff and allocation team did a wonderful job given the resources and stated that we need to find other ways to fund programs. This year he (APC), realizing the funding cuts and safety-net priority, did not apply for funding for their VITA program.

Member Radding referred to the need to “ration services” and appreciated the difficult choices the team had to make. He noted that we had not heard from FVLC, and their representative announced she was there, but had not filled out a speaker slip. (She was invited to speak)

Public Comment (cont’):

Elena Ortiz- Grants and Contract Manager, Family Violence Law Center (FVLC) shared that, given recent cuts in funding, FVLC needed to look at which services would be most important to provide. Focusing on Emergency Relocation and partnering with the Family Justice Center and other DV providers, they have been able to assist 85 clients as opposed to the 25 required in the grant. While primarily a provider of legal services, they have a 35-year history of partnering to support prevention and intervention services.

Discussion: (cont’):

Member Radding asked what the AFB grant was used for.

Staff replied rent, utilities, and staffing. Staff also provided clarification on the formula used to determine the total funds available for Public Services.

Staff also clarified a question as to the rationale for characterizing Four Bridges as a safety-net program. This is the only place for this population to go, otherwise they might be on the streets. Safety-net is a “place of last resort”

Member Nielsen asked for clarification regarding the Girls Inc. program.

Staff shared that it is a career-path program being conducted at both branch libraries. The program budget is \$6,000, \$2,000 of which is the CDBG grant.

Member Holder asked what the income qualifications were for the Girls Inc program.

Staff shared that they are the same as all the other CDBG programs: low and moderate income.

A motion was made to accept the staff recommendation and draft a letter to be presented to city Council. If less funding is available than anticipated, the Girls Inc. grant would be considered for reduction / elimination before other considerations were made.

M/S Nielsen/Biggs Unanimous

3-C. **REQUEST FROM MEMBER NIELSEN AND PRESIDENT WASKO TO DISCUSS DIVIDING THE ASSESSMENT AND AWARENESS WORKGROUP INTO TWO SEPARATE WORKGROUPS**

President Wasko began by providing some history. In the past, we kept it as one (workgroup) because we were engaged in doing the survey and the outreach, and the survey happened every five years. We are now in a more technologically advanced world and, in the survey we just conducted; we got more than nineteen hundred households responding. The whole assessment piece has become more complicated, and we are getting feedback from the Council that we might consider increasing the frequency of the survey from every five years to every three years, or every cycle of CDBG funding. Awareness is the marketing piece.

Technology has expanded, and there are many more options for getting the word out quickly. However the steps before that, such as setting up web-pages and getting reports out while maintaining accuracy, have become more time consuming.

Another factor is the Brown Act which prohibits more than three board members from coming together to work on a project, without noticing it as a Board meeting, and inviting the community. Dividing into two workgroups allows six Board members to work on the combined tasks that were previously limited to three.

Member Nielsen added that this time we would want to do more, compared to the outreach efforts following the last survey, and dividing the workgroups would divide the workload.

Staff added that the Awareness Workgroups could also be the marketing and media resource for ATAH and other workgroups and Board projects.

Discussion included that members can be on more than one workgroup, and that we've often had four workgroups in the past.

A motion was made that the Assessment and Awareness Workgroup be divided into two separate workgroups.

M/S Biggs / Holder Unanimous

3-D. **REQUEST FROM PRESIDENT WASKO TO DISCUSS CHANGING THE TIME OF REGULAR BOARD MEETINGS FROM 7:30 TO 7:00 P.M.**

President Wasko shared that the poll she requested staff conduct regarding the start time for Regular Board Meetings resulted in 7:00 pm being a time that would work for all members.

After a very brief discussion a motion was made to move the start time for Regular Board Meetings to 7:00 pm. M/S Biggs / Nielsen Unanimous

3-E. **WORKGROUP PROGRESS REPORTS –**

Assessment and Awareness Workgroup – Nielsen Member Nielsen reported on the DV Taskforce meeting which was attended by BFWC, APD, Alameda Hospital, FVLC, APC, AFS, and staff. The history of the task force was discussed, current services provided were shared, and an agreement to continue to meet was reached. SSHRB Staff will discuss next steps with city staff and report back to the group regarding the next meeting.

The division of the A&AWG was discussed.

President Wasko will chair the Assessment WG, and they will take on completing the Community Needs Survey. Other members will be Members Biggs and Radding.

Member Nielsen will chair the Awareness WG, and they will convene the DV Task Force meetings with the intention of identifying a Task force member to chair the group going forward. The Workgroup will also work with the other Workgroups to assist them in promoting their projects.

Other member - ATAH rep

Alamedans Together Against Hate Workgroup – Villareal

Resource Sharing Workgroup – Biggs

Other Members Dailey and Nielsen

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

Staff shared information about the scheduling of a joint meeting with the Council after the budget process is completed.

President Wasko announced that we have been invited to submit our 3rd application for the 100 Best Award. This year is by invitation only.

5. **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS**

There were no Oral Communications

6. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn M/S Radding/ Nielsen Unanimous

Meeting adjourned at 9:25

Respectfully Submitted: Jim Franz – Secretary