

Social Service Human Relations Board
Minutes of the Special Meeting, Tuesday, April 1, 2008

1. CALL TO ORDER and ROLL CALL: President Wasko called the meeting to order at 7:41 p.m. Present were President Wasko, Vice-President Chen, Members Nielsen, Franz, Villareal, and Soglin along with staff members Jones and Wright. Member James arrived at 7:44 p.m.
2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The special meeting minutes from December 6, 2007 were approved. M/S Franz, Villareal and unanimous.

3-A. REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG) PUBLIC SERVICES FUNDING ALLOCATIONS: President Wasko explained that members Franz and Soglin will recuse themselves from this part of the meeting. Wasko introduced Community Development Program Manager Terri Wright.

Wright presented the staff recommendation for FY 08-10 public service funding. She explained that this meeting was the Board's public hearing regarding CDBG public service funding recommendations. During this meeting, the Board should review the recommendation and provide their feedback to City Council in the form of a letter. Two board members should be identified to represent the Board at the City Council's April 15, 2008 public hearing regarding CDBG.

Wright referred the Board to the overview of funding recommendations that were included in the Board packet. She provided a brief overview of the applicant pool and funding decisions. She explained that two staff people were tasked with rating each proposal. Proposal scoring rubrics were included in the packet. She further commented that the City received funding requests totaling approximately 2.5 times more than what is available.

Wright explained that, in total, the City received 16 public service proposals. Three applicants were not eligible for funding because they did not comply with CDBG guidelines. She explained that staff had provided instruction regarding eligibility through a pre-proposal conference, and that the three ineligible applicants did not attend the pre-proposal conference. Eight of the nine recommended applicants currently receive CDBG funding. Wright explained that this program year has been very competitive in the youth services category and that City staff will attempt to collaborate with those agencies not be funded.

Wright reminded the Board that program income received by June 20, 2008 will slightly increase the public service cap for program services. She anticipates \$5,000 to \$7,000 in addition funding for public services. In the previous years, additional mid year allocations have been made to BANANAS, Inc. child care voucher program and she recommends that the Board support this practice again because they can quickly use that money to enroll additional families in their childcare voucher program.

Wright commented that CDBG funding continues to decline, and that a decrease in the number of home sales and refinances has a significant adverse impact on program income. She mentioned that after the 2010 Census additional reductions in CDBG may occur and that pre-planning will need to occur to help the City prepare for dwindling public service dollars.

Wright concluded her statements by stating that citywide budget cuts are affecting CDBG because staff yet workloads are increasing and there is uncertainty about the future budget.

President Wasiko recommended the Board hear public comment, ask questions, formulate letter from Board.

Speakers:

Helen Tewolde, Alternatives In Action (AIA), FROSH student – Ms. Tewolde explained that she was a student at AIA and a youth coach. She stated that AIA offers three different programs available HOME project after school leadership program, BASE charter school, and a childcare center Home Sweet Home. She stated that she would be the first student in her family person in her family to attend college and that AIA is helping her prepare. She is very happy about the Board's funding recommendations as they can benefit the program, and she is passionate about, the "First to go to College" goal.

Garyn W. Calvin, AIA, BASE Sr., Mr. Calvin stated he was a participant in the Stepping Stones program at AIA, which is a bridge program for high school and College of Alameda students behind in school credit. This program is helping him learn what he needs to know to go to college. This program is "What's Up."

Jim Franz, American Red Cross – Alameda Service Center, Director, Mr. Franz first expressed that Paul Russell from the Alameda Food Bank was unable to attend because he is on vacation. Through Jim, the Food Bank expressed their appreciation for their recommendation. Mr. Franz stated the Red Cross provides a very broad range of services for low-income folks in Alameda, including rental and utility assistance for Alamedans, many on the brink of homelessness. They also provide disaster preparedness and safety planning. He explained that in order to provide a safety net, it is critical all components are funded and he encourages the continued support of safety net programs. He added that the Red Cross sponsors the Alameda Services Collaborative lunches that happen quarterly.

Lisa Gross, Bay Area Community Services, Director, stated her program serves the mentally and physically disabled, and that BACS welcomes anyone with psychological issues. Their clients are low-income, many receive Medi-Cal and 21% have been homeless. BACS provides coaching, collaboration, independence, help to avoid incarceration and offer employment opportunities. Ms. Gross thanked the staff for their support.

Liz Nickels, Building Futures with Women and Children (BFWC), passed the floor to Liz Varela.

Liz Varela, Building Futures with Women and Children (BFWC) , Program Director, stated the Midway Shelter has been operating on the island for 17 years and originally started as a community project with a previous Mayor. BFCW took over the shelter six years ago. They also operate two shelters in San Leandro. She explained that there is a much higher level of community support and involvement in Alameda. She explained that all dinners are cooked and delivered by Alameda residents. She further explained that Alamedans are generous with time and donation to the shelter, and Midway staff and clients feel and see the difference. She thanked the community and staff. She also thanked the staff for support in rehabilitation of Midway's facility. Ms. Varela further stated the (BFWC) has been expanding its mission to include an emphasis on ending homelessness and domestic violence. There

will be a change in case planning to support housing plans and she looks forward to supporting further collaboration with other services here in Alameda.

Patricia Murillo, Alternatives in Action, Executive Director, stated she wanted to express thanks to the staff. It has been eight years since the last time AIA was funded with CDBG. This year, AIA will relocate to a new location at the Woodstock School campus and partner with AUSD. The new transition center will open and be able to provide regional occupation programs for youth. CDBG funding will support the job training programs that include ROP credits.

Genevieve Cross, Women's Initiative for Self-Employment (WISE) stated she is thrilled to be included in the funding recommendations. WISE is in their 20th year of helping train women to be entrepreneurs', with all training classes in English and Spanish. She further stated WISE has been established in other cities and apply and receive CDBG funding for their cause. They have wait lists in five counties they are located in. Thank you to staff.

Chen – How do people obtain these programs, do they walk-in or is there a referral system?

Wright – Each program or agency has their own process for in-take, some are referrals some are walk-ins.

Franz – Some are given multiple referrals, it varies by agency.

Chen – Is there more demand than available services?

Wright – Yes.

Villareal – Are the services you are offering supplemental to school?

Murillo – Yes. This year I learned that there are very few academic programs available to students during the summer. Alameda Unified and Oakland Unified are providing only remediation. We are the only program during the summer that will allow students to work towards through future by providing academic enrichment and college credit. There aren't any other programs on the island offering young people the opportunity to do that. They are the only afterschool program that allows school credit that she is aware of for grades 9 to 12.

Wasko – Do you need to be a student at BASE to participate in the program?

Murillo – During the summer program, we serve Encinal High students, Alameda High, BASE students and Oakland Unified students in the 5-6 week intensives.

Villareal – Do you collaborate with the College of Alameda?

Murillo – Yes. Two of our classes currently are articulated with the Peraltas. They handle that articulation process so that students can earn college credit.

Nielsen – So how many classes do you offer?

Murillo – Currently, we have two classes where young people can get vocational education credits. One is through our sound studio and the second course is through HOME SWEET HOME early childhood education course. We have other elective classes that aren't ROP classes where young people can get general elective credit but its not really towards a certificate or ROP credit.

Nielsen – And you offer an internship component as well?

Murillo – Yes. We currently have an internship component now at BASE. In addition, what we were hoping to do was expand that program so that young people who were part of HOME project who might be at Encinal high school or other schools will be able to access an internship through the center. The concept is a little like an internship library. Previously, the internship program has been primarily for our seniors.

Nielsen – And how are you leveraging resources with the Boys and Girls Club?

Murillo – We're working with the Boys and Girls Club to find ways to link services. One of the things the Boys and Girls club does really well is hooking youth ages 8-13. One of the things that is challenging, I can speak on that because I was a Boys and Girls Club staff member for several years in San Francisco, is continuing to connect high school aged youth to the Clubhouse unless there is a real structured program with a clear link to career planning. We are currently working with the Boys and Girls Club so that it can become a target internship site for some of our young people. The co-location part is key.

Nielsen – So it sounds like the reduction is not going to impact quality of services?

Murillo – We had planned to do some academic support planning that we won't be able to do. We'll increase our fundraising efforts in order to work towards implementing that.

Wasko – The Red Cross funding went from \$61k to \$41k, does that mean less people will be served?

Franz – No. We asked for less this year. The funding cuts were made at the staffing level because Craig our case manager is retiring. More will be done by collaborating and working with case managers at other agencies and training volunteers to do more. I'll also be focusing more time on Alameda by reducing some of my broader Bay Area responsibilities.

James – Looking at the scores, there is only a very small point difference between two of the funded programs and the Filipinos for Affirmative Action proposal. Why wasn't Filipinos for Affirmative Action funded?

Wright – Lack of available funding is the primary reason. The most applicants were within the youth development category. You also have to remember from a needs perspective that the safety net services have always been identified as the highest needs in the community priority. While there have also been strong support for youth development services and economic development services, its about finding ways to balance all of these needs. For example, the Four Bridges Program represents the only program funded for people with disabilities.

James – This is a follow up question. Are all currently funded grantees fulfilling their contractual obligations?

Wright – Yes. We have high performers. We do monitoring every couple of years. Sometimes we find administration issues. In the case of administration performance issues, CDBG regulations are very clear that City staff should work with the grantee to improve those systems. Its technical assistance. If anyone has a performance issue, we would work with the agency from a technical assistance standpoint to solve that problem. In this competitive environment, if something is not working; it behooves them to work with us. No one is close to getting me in trouble at all. We have some incredibly high performing programs.

Nielsen – I have a question for Four Bridges, with the Mental Health Services Act, do you foresee an increase in funding?

Gross – Yes. We hope so. A group that is researching what works is visiting us. We hope to continue that relationship, and we hope to get part of that project funded. But, while there is a lot of money out there, it may be two to three years before it trickles down to programs.

Nielsen – In regard to Sentinel Fair Housing, what happened to the business license requirements for owners of single unit rental properties? Currently, they do not need to obtain a business license because of a loophole in the licensing requirements.

Wasko – This is not the purview of this Board.

Wright – Wasko is correct, but as a citizen you can talk to the Planning Board or this being a business license function within the Finance Department. Wright offered to look into the issue further. There might be many other reasons why it is not practical.

Wasko – This is an issue that's been on our written agendas for our joint meetings with City Council for the last three years. It was identified as a way to get a list of single-unit landlords so that more of them can be provided with fair housing training.

Wright – I'll work to see where the lines of communication lie.

Villareal – Regarding WISE, the requested funds was for \$25k and the recommended funds is \$40k?

Wright – There is more flexibility because they are eligible for non-public service funds. I increased the funding so that the agency could include starter grants so that they can purchase computers and other technology that would be helpful in starting helping the women start their businesses.

Chen – Filipinos for Affirmative Action's scores were right on the line, but they got zero funding. Why couldn't you use your discretion to provide them with funding?

Wright – Unfortunately there is not enough money in the public service cap to fund everyone who applies for funding. If I can I try to think outside of the box, I do. But they are a public service program, and there is just not a place where I can be flexible on the public service cap.

Wasko – I have comments about the rider about giving any additional money resulting from program income to BANANAS. I know Franz has said he'll be 'okay'. But, I know what's going on in the housing market and with foreclosures, and I think we are going to see more people than we've ever seen before seeking rental assistance. I want to keep the option open incase we have more need for rental assistance.

Wright – I do think the market is changing. Staff can come back to the Board to see if the need is greater in childcare or in rental assistance.

Villareal – If that mid year money can remain unrestricted, can it be applied to any of the programs recommended for funding?

Wright – Well, I want to be able to maintain that the funding be provided –like rental assistance or childcare vouchers, rather than for operational support such as salary. When you establish an operational service level, you generally try to maintain that service level so that you are not reducing people's salaries. I wouldn't want to give an agency extra money and then yank it from them. BANANAS and the rental assistance program have an opportunity to ramp up or ramp down based on the amount of funding without impacting operational funding for staff.

Villareal – Some of the service providers have been funded for several years, and the need is clearly there. At the same time, is there an expectation that their funding will continue on a regular basis or is there ever any opportunity for new public service programs to be provided funding beyond one or two new programs a year?

Wright – On a practical matter, once the program is established and then the funding tightens, it is very difficult to establish new programs. These programs have constituents who value these programs and they are doing a good job. They work well together.

Nielsen – I'm a little concerned that some of the agencies that did apply were off the mark with what the requirements are. I'm wondering if there is anything to be done to cultivate these applicants?

Wright – It is not only money that we value as a resource. Partnerships are a resource, and staff will contact with these applicants who are not funded to connect them to other sources and help them understand how they can be more competitive.

Wasko – I want to echo and emphasize the Alameda part of this. I think as each of you spoke there was a little Oakland in there. I also know how families start out here in Alameda and then because of economics end up in Oakland, but money is intended exclusively for Alameda residents.

Wright – No. If service providers say they are serving Alameda residents and other communities, they need to 'primarily' serve Alameda. However, they can serve some others. Homeless programs cannot restrict their services to only Alamedans.

Wasko - Does the Women's Initiative for Self Employment (WISE) have wait lists that will migrate to Alameda, or will you do a new recruitment for Alameda?

Wright – WISE will use the funding to serve Alamedans. There are already a number of Alamedans on our waiting list. We will also advertise within Alameda.

Wasko – Do you (WISE) have a site location here in Alameda?

Cross – No, but when we have gone into other areas, we have partnered with other organizations to hold our trainings there. It allows us to do cross referrals and limit travel time for our participants.

Chen – The CDBG process is very complex and we are lucky to have it here in Alameda.

James – I have a couple of comments and a recommendation. I should first state publicly that I am a former employee of the Alameda Boys & Girls Club. I worked there for about four years. I was really impressed with the youth who are here tonight, and I think it speaks volumes about the youth and the AIA program. As I suggested at the previous meeting, I think we really need to focus on youth empowerment. I would have put that word, empowerment, in three or four times if I could have. With that said, I want to talk about my first hand observations being an employee there and my observations since leaving the West Alameda Teen Center (WATC). When I look at the information listed regarding the programs they provide, it looks like fiction to me. Not only did I initiate a number of those programs listed; they have not been there since I left. Students are calling me and messaging me asking if they can come to my house to record because the program no longer exists at the Boys and Girls Club. Also there have always been concerns about the number of members and attendance. To see the numbers listed it is very questionable to me. Anyways I'm going to save some of my comments for the City Council. I recommend that of the \$36,500 allocated to youth development, \$19,000 goes to Alternatives in Action considering that they will be unable to do the academic tutoring program because they have received less than they requested. Additionally, I would recommend \$3,000 for FAA, with the remaining money \$14,000 to the Alameda Boys and Girls Club.

Wright – Staff asked James prior to this meeting if he was comfortable being a former employee and sitting on this side of the Board. You should know that staff have been evaluating this feedback that we've received from James and are looking to see what it is we are seeing. You also need to understand that the Boys and Girls Club is in a transition location, so they may not be performing at peak performance.

Wasko – Being that the club is in a development state, transitioning, perhaps this is an opportunity for us to at this time we divert funds for now?

Wright – If the Board would like to suggest that to the City Council that is fine, but staff will still continue with its recommendation. Although performance issues have been brought up, we have not fully demonstrated their validity– everyone gets a chance to meet their goals. They have met their goals and to say they should not receive funding...

Wasko – That is not what we are saying. If they are getting this much funding and their facility is not as big as it was, and historically they have been receiving this much funding, than maybe we should look at it proportionately to their services.

Villareal – James concern about emphasizing education and empowerment is a nationwide one, I strongly believe that we need to promote tutoring and similar academic programs that help students of

color get ahead, earn college credit, and help them focus on the future. I'm a very strong advocate for education. We need to help the underprivileged youth not getting their fair share with the processes that currently exist.

Chen – I'd be more comfortable with James' comments about the Alameda Boys and Girls Club if there was a representative from the agency here.

Wright – This meeting was rescheduled. Alameda Boys and Girls Club staff typically try to be present, but there is a Council meeting tonight and that is where they are.

Wasko – There is also a concern that agencies that traditionally have received funding are relying on funding because they were funded in the past.

Chen – So, should we accept staff recommendations or reject staff recommendation?

Wright – The Board is not able to 'reject' staff's recommendations, you may agree or disagree. The Board's scope is to provide input, assess if funding levels are reasonable, and if activities are consistent with priority needs.

Wasko – Your currently spending \$36,500 between the 2 youth development programs. Could we just split it down the middle? So, Boys and Girls Club is losing \$2,000 and AIA is gaining \$2,000.

Wright – That's a possibility. It's too bad that George Phillips isn't here to let us know if he could make it work with the reduced funding. For the most part the Board and City Council has supported what the staff recommends. I do have a little concern that...

Chen – I'm very uncomfortable with this. The Alameda Boys and Girls Club description says the organization is an afterschool educational service. We aren't giving them the benefit of the doubt here. I'm uncomfortable with changing the staff recommendation without at least giving the Boys and Girls Club an opportunity to respond.

Wright – I'm willing to agree to have a conversation with the Alameda Boys and Girls Club regarding a reduction in their funding.

Wasko – We hope all who have requested funds know how competitive it was. Staff should share the scores. Maybe this as a wake-up call to those agencies that are continually funded that this is a highly competitive process. Thank you to Franz in requesting less funding than in the past. If not for him, we wouldn't be having this discussion.

Wasko – Are we as a Board prepared to move forward with making a statement?

Motion to fund both youth programs equally at \$18,250, accept other funding recommendations as written, and to apply any additional funding to either the Red Cross rental assistance program, BANANAS child care voucher program, or some combination of the two. Staff will draft letter regarding recommendations. Wasko will review and approve. Wasko and Villareal will represent the Board at City Council meeting on April 15th. (M/S James, Chen) and unanimous.

Motion to approve action items only on the remaining agenda. (M/S Franz, Wasko) and unanimous.

3-B. AMENDING BYLAWS TO INCLUDE EXPLICIT PROCESS FOR AGENDA ITEMS:

Member Soglin asked for Board approval for the language to be included in the bylaws of the Board will be, "To place an item on the SSHRB agenda, Board members should contact the Board President or the Board secretary. Items and pertinent information must be received prior to public noticing of the agenda in order to ensure compliance with Brown Act regulations." Motion to approve language (M/S Wasko, Franz) and unanimous.

4. ADJOURNMENT: President Wasko adjourned the meeting at 9:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Melissa Jones
Secretary, Social Services Human Relations Board

MJ:sb