

Social Service Human Relations Board
Minutes of the Regular Meeting, April 24, 2014

1. **CALL TO ORDER and ROLL CALL**

President Biggs called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Present were members Radding, Williams, Robles-Wong, and Blake. Absent were Vice President Villareal, and member Watkinson

2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Special Meeting, April 1, 2014 were approved as presented.
M/S Radding\Williams Unanimous

3. **AGENDA ITEMS**

3-A. **ASSESSMENT OF HOMELESSNESS IN ALAMEDA - PRESIDENT BIGGS**
ACTION item with a suggested time limit of 40 **minutes**

In response to concerns of homelessness in Alameda brought to the attention of the Board by a concerned West End resident, President Biggs has asked that the Board consider conducting an Assessment of Homelessness in Alameda that would result in a status report on the number of homeless in Alameda, current services available and potential gaps in services. This issue has also been brought to the attention of APD Chief Paul Roller, and Vice Mayor Ezzy-Ashcraft, who recently joined President Biggs and the concerned citizen for a walking tour of Webster Street for the purpose of gathering first-hand information. President Biggs has asked staff to invite Building Futures with Women and Children (Midway Shelter), other Alameda service providers, and those mentioned above to speak on this item if they so choose.

Vice-Mayor Marilyn Ezzy-Ashcraft shared that she had heard concerns from some of her constituents regarding homeless individuals on the West End. She joined President Biggs and a West End resident on a walk down Webster Street, during which time they encountered one homeless woman. Homeless individuals have been seen around McDonald's, the post office, and St. Barnabas. After meeting with APD Officer Ledbetter, she said it appears that simple solutions for these individuals are not available through the resources currently in the City of Alameda, and that perhaps County resources could be accessed.

President Biggs thanked Vice-Mayor Ezzy-Ashcraft for joining us this evening, and then introduced APD Officer Ledbetter who was accompanied by APD Sgt. Munoz. President Biggs shared that Officer Ledbetter has been directly involved in interventions with homeless people in Alameda, and has also been known to go above and beyond, in an effort to assist these individuals. He asked her to provide her understanding what the situation is regarding this issue.

Officer Ledbetter began by passing out a packet of APD resource materials regarding local and County resources currently being used to help address the issue of homelessness. She said that she first wanted to share the County resources that are available, and explain the Police Department's community efforts to deal with homelessness.

She explained that the packet included information regarding innovative police\mental health collaborations in Alameda County, information regarding crisis intervention training for law enforcement officers and trainings regarding helping consumers in the community learn more about the 5150 process. Homelessness is a countywide issue, and best dealt with in a collaborative effort bringing together law enforcement, Alameda County Behavioral Health, and allied service providers. The goal is to build a solid collaboration between police, County and local resources to help deal with the issue of homelessness.

APD joins other police departments in a monthly meeting with BART. They share information regarding individuals, finding that Oakland's and other police departments are aware of homeless individuals APD encounters in Alameda. They work together to try to find solutions to deal with some of the chronic cases, including the woman on Webster Street referred to above. Through these collaborations, they have been able to connect this woman to some services, and are working to try to identify housing for her. Alameda police officers carry resource materials to share with homeless people they encounter, in an effort to connect them with some local, but mostly County, resources that might assist them.

In answer to questions from Board members, she shared that they estimate that there are around 12 chronically homeless individuals in Alameda, not connected to housing. This number seems to be relatively stable, and in many cases they have talked to individuals between 10 and 20 times, often about the same issue (drunk in public, etc). Rarely do they encounter homeless families, and it is expected that some of the individuals come to Alameda perceiving that it is a safe place. Of the 12 or so who are seen most often, the majority are older men, some who have lived in Alameda all of their lives. Mental health and substance abuse issues are common to many of these individuals. One of the best resources for assisting these individuals is the Crisis Response Program of Alameda County Behavioral Health. They will often respond immediately (8-4, Monday thru Friday), or will follow up on a call received when they are not on duty. While their primary focus is mental health, they will also try to assist with referrals to housing, and other resources.

Victoria Johnson, the Housing Authority's Director of Housing and Community Development, shared that while the Alameda Housing Authority does not provide housing or programs for the homeless, in the long term they would like to get more vouchers that are designated for homeless. At this time they have 570 units of housing, 1820 households in the voucher program, and another 150 units in partnership with other providers. These households pay rent equivalent to 30% of their income. She added that she would like to have materials to show the need for housing the homeless, a history of the resources we have had in the past, where we are now, and how we perceive the need for additional resources. This would be a helpful tool as we try to identify additional funding.

Liz Varela, Executive Director – Building Futures with Women and Children- shared that working together with “Everyone Home” the new trend in working to end homelessness is, in addition to providing shelter space, to combine counseling and rental assistance and efforts to “rapidly re-house” those who become homeless. It is been found that the longer a household or individuals are homeless, the more difficult it is to re-house and stabilize them. Regarding a homeless count, she stated that every other year the County does a homeless count, but it is done by accessing information from a service database and service providers, as opposed to actually going on the street and counting\identifying individuals.

Jackie Krause - Manager of the Mastick Senior Center - shared that homeless individuals, mostly women, come to the center, sometimes have lunch, and often use the facilities to clean up. She has not seen an increase in the numbers recently, and these individuals are welcome as long as they follow the rules of the program.

Information provided by Jane Chisaki - Director of the Alameda Free Library - mirrored that provided by Ms. Krause. The library however, has had some issues, including one of a young boy in countering a naked homeless individual cleaning up in the bathroom. Again, as with Mastick Senior Center, these individuals are welcome as long as they follow the rules.

President Biggs shared that "Homeless people are not the problem." "The Problem is that people are homeless."

After discussion, members agreed that it would be helpful to get a better understanding of the number of homeless in the City of Alameda, gain a better understanding of immediate and long-term needs, and, working with APD, assist as we are able, in providing resources and referrals to move them to services. Staff shared that, because the SSHRB no longer expends funds to participate in the 4th of July Parade, there are funds (+/- \$1,000) available in the SSHRB budget for 2013\14, to assist with providing resources to these individuals.

A Motion was made to have the Board conduct a survey of the homeless in Alameda, and that an expenditure not to exceed \$750 be used, if necessary, to provide resources and referral materials to those individuals.

M/S Radding/Roble-Wong Unanimous

3-B. **BRIEFING FROM KELLY HARP, PRESIDENT, AND MEMBERS OF THE CITY OF ALAMEDA COMMISSION ON DISABILITY ISSUES REGARDING THE COMMISSION'S DRAFT UNIVERSAL DESIGN ORDINANCE**

President Biggs explained that he had met with the President and members of the City of Alameda Commission on Disability Issues, and has invited them to make a presentation to the Board, regarding their work on drafting a Universal Design Ordinance. He then introduced CDI President Kelly Harp.

Ms. Harp shared that the purpose of Universal Design Guidelines is to enhance the full life cycle use of housing, without regard to the functional limitations or disabilities of a home's occupants or guests, in order to accommodate a wide range of individual preferences and abilities. She distributed a document that included information regarding the history of this proposed ordinance, and a rationale as to why Universal Design would be a positive thing for Alameda. (Minutes Attachment A)

She emphasized that there is a real advantage, to persons with permanent or temporary disabilities, having these accommodations built in, or having housing constructed so that accommodations can easily be added. In response to a question from the Board, she shared that the Five Unit threshold for requiring these modifications is based on cost-effectiveness to the builders. She added that the number of accessible units constructed depends on the size of the development.

President Biggs thanked Ms. Harp for her presentation, and asked that she keep the Board updated as to its progress.

3-C. **REQUEST FOR BOARD TO CONSIDER CO-SPONSORING ALAMEDA'S 5th ANNUAL HARVEY MILK DAY CELEBRATION PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES**
STAFF ON BEHALF OF VICE-PRESIDENT VILLAREAL

Staff shared that this item has been placed on the agenda at the request of Vice-President Villareal, who is also serving as co-chair of this year's 5th Annual Alameda Harvey Milk Day Celebration Committee. Since the inception of this Alameda community celebration in 2010, the Board has been one of its co-sponsors. Other co-sponsors for this year include AUSD, ACCYF, and congregations from Alameda's faith community. This year's Celebration will take place over a period of 11 days, starting with a free screening of MILK at the Alameda Theater on May 21, and concluding with an event at the Alameda Free Library on Saturday May 31st, at which time the Committee will present books and other resource materials to help provide the community with a better understanding of the LGBTQ community. On May 22, the Encinal High School Drama Department will present a production of The Laramie Project, and on May 30, First Congregational Church will host the Oakland East Bay Gay Men's Chorus.

Vice-President Villareal requested, in addition to signing on as a co-sponsor of this year's events, that the Board authorize expenditure not to exceed \$500 to be used for the purchase of books and other educational materials to be given to the Alameda Free Library, to augment its collection of materials related to the LGBTQ community. Staff shared that these funds are available in the SSHRB budget for 2013\14.

A Motion was made to have the SSHRB co-sponsor events and activities of the 5th Annual Alameda Harvey Milk Day Celebration, and that an expenditure not to exceed \$500, be used for the purchase of books and other materials related to the LGBTQ community, to be given to the Alameda Free Library.

M/S Robles-Wong/Williams Unanimous

4. **BOARD/STAFF COMMUNICATIONS, NON-AGENDA** - Information - 10 minutes

Member Robles-Wong shared that the second annual Alameda Pacific Islander Cultural Festival to be held on Sunday May 18 At South Shore Center.

5. **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS**

6. **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 PM. M/S Williams\Radding UNANIMOUS

Respectfully submitted by:

Jim Franz
Secretary