

**City of Alameda, California  
SOCIAL SERVICE HUMAN RELATIONS BOARD  
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2023  
DRAFT MINUTES**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

President Scott Means called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

**2. ROLL CALL**

Present: President Scott Means, Vice President Samantha Green, Board Members Gerald Bryant, Michelle Buchholz, Bernie Wolf, and Cindy Pile (attended remotely)

Absent: Board Member Dianne Yamashiro-Omi (excused)

City staff: Yasamin Obaidy, Lisa Fitts, and Andre Fairley

President Means announced that Board Member Pile requested to participate remotely, under the “Emergency Circumstances Exception,” for in-person attendance. This exception applies to a physical or family medical emergency preventing the Board Member from attending in person. SSHRB must vote to approve the exception. If not approved, the member can only participate as a public attendee and cannot vote.

A motion to approve Board Member Pile’s request was made by Board Member Buchholz and seconded by President Means. Ayes: President Means, Vice President Green, Board Members Bryant, Wolf, and Buchholz. Nays: none. Abstained: Board Member Pile. Motion passed 5-0-1.

**3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**3-A Review and Approve September 28, 2023 Draft Minutes**

A motion to approve the September 28, 2023 minutes was made by Board Member Buchholz and seconded by Vice President Green. Ayes: President Means, Vice President Green, Board Members Bryant, Buchholz, and Wolf. Nays: none. Motion passed 5-0.

**4. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None.

**5. AGENDA ITEMS**

**5-A Discussion with Nonprofit Organizations and Recommendation to Direct the Preparation of a Needs Statement to Confirm the Ongoing Needs for the Fiscal Year 2024-25 Community Development Block Grant Action Plan; to Designate the President of the Social Service Human Relations Board and/or another Board Member to Review the Statement and Represent the Board at the December 5, 2023 City Council Needs Public Hearing; and to Determine that CDBG Public Services Funding Will Be Prorated for Fiscal Year 2023-24, based on available funds**

The presentation was given by Yasamin Obaidy, a Management Analyst with the City of Alameda. The following is a summary of the key segments:

- CDBG are federal funds provided by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (also known as HUD).
- CDBG funds are intended to assist low-and moderate-income households by developing viable urban communities that provide:
  - decent housing,
  - a suitable living environment or
  - economic opportunity
- In 2020, the City of Alameda submitted a Five-Year Strategic Plan, which outlined the housing and community development priority needs through 2025.
- This year, City staff contacted 37 local service providers, asking three questions:
  - What service does your organization provide?
  - What do you see as the biggest need for the communities you serve?
  - What do you feel is often unknown or unseen about the communities you serve, which would be helpful for the public to understand?
- City staff received responses from 16 of the 37 providers contacted.
- Funding for the next fiscal year (FY) is derived from two sources:
  - Entitlement Allocation from HUD
  - Program Income received in the previous FY
- Public Service funding is capped at 15% of the FY entitlement allocation plus the program income received in the previous FY.
- The current FY (2023-24) received a CDBG allocation of \$1,123,711.
- Estimated FY 2024-25 CDBG allocation is \$1,183,711.
- City staff is asking for SSHRB's authorization to pro-rate ( $\pm$  5%) next year's public services awards based on previous FY allocations.
- A list of upcoming key dates:
  - Tonight – SSHRB receives public comment and directs the preparation of a Needs Statement
  - November 2, 2023 – SSHRB Needs Statement Finalized
  - December 5, 2023 – City Council Public Hearing on Community Needs
  - January 10, 2024 – CDBG & HOME FY 2024-25 NOFA/RFP Released
  - February 9, 2024 – CDBG FY 2024-25 NOFA/RFP Responses Due
  - May 7, 2024 – City Council Public Hearing
  - July 1, 2024 – Start of Program Year

President Means thanked Ms. Obaidy for her presentation and opened the floor for public comment.

#### Public Comment:

- Rabbi Meir Shmotkin of Chabad of Alameda, a non-membership-based organization, shared a few stories, highlighting the positive impact made on the community.
- Lindsey Bruckstein, Bananas Board Member, shared an overview of the organization and its goals. Highlighting the following:
  - Helping families find childcare and available government subsidies (when needed).
  - Help coordinate with playgroups and parent workshops, educating parents on how to raise young children.

- Offer professional development for childcare providers.
  - Helping individuals start their own childcare business via their business incubator program.
  - Assist unhoused families by paying for childcare and providing diapers.
  - Offer social services and support groups.
  - Bananas has been working in Alameda and surrounding cities for the past 50 years.
- Laura MacInnis, Senior Staff Attorney at Family Violence Law Center, shared an overview of the organization and its goals. Highlighting the following:
  - Helps diverse communities heal from domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking.
  - Advocate for justice and healthy relationships.
  - Provides 24-hour, crisis intervention services to survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault. Free legal services, civil legal services, family and housing law services.
  - Funding from the City has allowed them to continue their Family Violence Prevention Project which provides confidential trauma-informed legal intervention and legal services to survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking.
  - FVLC and their community partners have noticed an alarming increase in the severity of violence, resulting in the need for legal assistance.
- Liz Varela, Executive Director of Building Futures with Women and Children (BFWC), shared the following:
  - BFWC is a domestic violence, homeless, and housing agency.
  - Their mission is to build communities with underserved individuals and families where they are safely and supportively housed, free from homelessness and domestic violence.
  - They run the Midway Shelter in Alameda, which is a 35-year-old shelter serving women and children.
  - Provide domestic violence support services and run the homeless resource center (coordinated entry access point for unhoused neighbors).
  - Currently working with Alameda Housing Authority (AHA) and Alameda Point Collaborative (APC) on 90 units of permanent supportive housing (North Housing.)
  - BFWC has staff members who serve on the City's CARES Team and Domestic Violence Task Force who meet monthly to discuss community needs.
  - The Midway Shelter has tremendous support from community partners (Alameda Family Services and Alameda Unified School District).
  - Families/individuals are offered accommodations until they are permanently housed, which can last up to a year.
  - BFWC connects families/individuals with housing options, medical care, and additional support services. However, there are many cases where individuals continue to struggle with mental health and/or addiction.
- Teale Harden, Executive Director of the Alameda Food Bank (AFB), shared the following:
  - The main program funded by the City of Alameda is the Island Community Market, a free grocery store where clients can come and shop for free once a week (requires eligibility).

- Additional programs include Home Deliveries for those unable to do their own grocery shopping as well as food delivery to Independence Plaza and Alameda Unified School District.
  - Partnered with Chris Tam from All Good Living to provide additional resources for children who are unhoused or at the risk of becoming unhoused.
  - Based on their metrics, AFB is serving 40% more individuals than they have in previous years, averaging 1000 families per week at the Island Community Market.
  - As of October 2023, there have been 1200 new families registered with AFB.
- Steve Van Lare, Treasurer with Shelter in Peace shared his thoughts on current challenges in Alameda. Highlighting their number one concern:
  - Lack of affordable housing and landlords unwilling to rent to families in need of affordable housing.
  - Shelter in Peace has helped over 100 individuals secure housing. However, many of these individuals are new to the County and continue to face day-to-day challenges.
- Alison DeJung, Executive Director of Eden Information and Referral (I&R), shared the following:
  - Eden I&R is the operator for Alameda's 2-1-1-Line, which is the 24/7 multilingual phone line that connects individuals and families to critical health, housing and human services.
  - Last fiscal year 2-1-1 handled nearly 2400 calls and two-way text message conversations. And 3800 health, housing, and human service referrals. This included screening 238 callers and transferring 186 (who were homeless) to the Mid-County access point through the County's coordinated entry system.
  - The number one reason for Alameda residents contacting 2-1-1 year after year is housing (rental assistance, emergency shelter, and transitional housing).
  - Other top needs include utility assistance, legal information services, material goods, mental health assessments and treatment, public assistance programs, food assistance, and individual family support services.
  - Eden has been working as part of a regional partnership with the organization Tenants Together and all other 2-1-1s in the area on the California Eviction Prevention Project.
  - Eden staff applauds City staff for their continued support/commitment to the community.

Board Question/Comment:

- President Means asked for additional information regarding the process for developing the Needs Statement. Ms. Fitts shared the process from previous years. Where City Staff drafts the statement, incorporating public comment from the meeting. Following review, the President presents the statement to City Council.
- Board Member Buchholz asked for clarification on how the Needs Statements effects the amount designated to each provider. Ms. Fitts stated that there is a

formal that designates specific amounts. However, the timing is dependent on when HUD announces the award amounts.

- President Means shared his takeaway from the presentations and what he believes to be the greatest need(s).
- Board Member Pile asked if the list of providers is shorter this year than previous years. Ms. Fitts confirmed that the list shown during the Staff presentation was the actual list of providers funded this FY.
- Vice President Green is concerned that provider staffing may be impacted by the rising cost of housing. Ms. Fitts shared information about the Inclusionary Housing Programs the City is working on – highlighting that the City continues to promote this housing with all of the non-profit organizations in Alameda.
- Board Member Wolf spoke about the overwhelming need for services and not enough funds. He shared his concern about continuing to use the same funding allocation as previous years.
- Ms. Fitts spoke about the City's annual reporting that includes detailed information regarding non-profit organizations and their individual leveraged funds. Providers then spoke about some of their specific funding sources.
- Liz Varela with Building Futures suggested that the City revise their application to include questions regarding leveraged funds.
- Ms. Fitts shared the priorities areas that were included in a previous Needs Statement (FY 2022-23):
  - Housing and homeless services, including:
    - Providing emergency services such as shelters, showers, storage, day centers, restrooms, mental health, and housing navigation services
    - Developing housing options that include rapid rehousing, permanent supportive housing, independent housing, and more.
    - Increasing the supply of affordable housing.
    - Promoting fair housing.
  - Domestic violence, including:
    - Addressing economic insecurity, which often leads to increased risk for homelessness and legal problems.
    - Providing shelter and prevent homelessness for individuals fleeing sexual violence.
  - Information and referral services
  - Legal information services
  - Mental health and crisis intervention
  - Disaster-related cash grants
  - Food pantries and food security
    - Add nutrition and health
  - COVID-19 diagnostic tests
- Board Members identified the following areas which should be added to the needs list:
  - Race and equity
  - Childcare
  - Advocacy and coordination
    - Wraparound services to support marginalized and underserved communities.

- Board Members discussed the pros and cons of approving the option to fund CDBG Public Services at a prorated amount for the upcoming FY. The alternative option would be issuing a new request for proposal.
- Ms. Fitts highlighted that the upcoming year is the final year of Alameda's 5-Year-Plan and confirmed that City staff plan to meet with non-profit organizations when developing the new 5-Year-Plan.

President Means asked the Board if they were ready to vote on the following recommendation:

- Direct the Preparation of a Needs Statement to Confirm the Community Needs for the Fiscal Year 2024-25 Community Development Block Grant Action Plan;
- Designate the President of the Social Service Human Relations Board and/or another Board Member to Review the Statement and Represent the Board at the December 5, 2023 City Council Needs Public Hearing;
- Determine that CDBG Public Services Funding Will Be Prorated for Fiscal Year 2024-25, based on available funds.

A motion to approve the above recommendation was made by Board Member Buchholz and seconded by Board Member Bryant. Ayes: President Means, Vice President Green, Board Members Bryant, Buchholz, Pile and Wolf. Nays: none. Motion passed 6-0.

Board Members thanked City staff for their presentation and assistance.

#### **5-B Discussion of the Social Service Human Relations Board's Preparation of the \$162,348 Grant Application for the Local Aging and Disability Action Planning (LADAP) Grant Program, Submitted October 2, 2023**

Ms. Fitts took this time to show her appreciation on behalf of City staff. For not only locating the grant but also assisting throughout the application process.

Vice President Green provided an overview of the grant and how the funds could be utilized.

Public Comment – None

Board Questions/Comments – None

#### **5-C Discuss and Review Social Service Human Relations Board Workgroup Reports**

Public Comment – None

- Domestic Violence Task Force (Buchholz, Wolf, Pile) – Board Member Pile shared that the Task Force held a meeting on October 16. During which, providers identified their needs:
  - Need a local group for perpetrators
  - Forge a connection with individuals who are currently housed and received/receiving services from Alameda Hospital
  - Support groups for survivors
- Alamedans Together Against Hate (Yamashiro-Omi, Bryant) – Board Member Bryant announced that the Poetry Slam has been scheduled for Sunday,

November 12, from 12:00 to 5:00 p.m. at the Healing Gardens in Alameda. The plan is for 20-25 students to present and as many adults as possible after that (5-minute presentations with 3-minute breaks in between). Prizes will be given out for the best poem and/or spoken words. Local artists have been invited to join and display their artwork.

- Outreach and Community Engagement (Means, Green) – The Community Needs Assessment (CNA) infographic has been finalized and will be shared with Board Members. President Means and Vice President Green will be presenting at the Library Board meeting on Wednesday, November 8 at 6:00 p.m.

## **6. STAFF COMMUNICATIONS**

Staff Member Obaidy shared an update on behalf of the City of Alameda's Housing and Human Services Division. The following is a summary of the key segments:

- Welcomed Andre Fairley as the Management Analyst with the Housing and Human Services Department.
- Dignity Village
  - Continues to serve the most vulnerable members of our community.
  - The next community meeting with staff, residents, and neighbors will be on November 13, 2023.
- Point in Time Count
  - The Alameda County Office of Homelessness Solutions is preparing to kick off the 2024 Point in Time count. There will be a need for lots of volunteers. We will share more information in future meetings.
- Affordable Housing
  - Last week, Supervisor Lena Tam hosted a community listening session on a possible \$10 to \$20 billion Bay Area-wide affordable housing bond that is being proposed for the November 2024 ballot. The Board of Supervisors will host the next countywide Affordable Housing Summits on Thursday, January 18, 2024, 1:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. Members of the public may attend in person at the Castro Valley library or online.
- General Trends
  - We are noticing an uptick in escalated physical aggression against the encamped community. We continue to encourage our community members to call APD when they need assistance.

## **7. BOARD COMMUNICATIONS, NON-AGENDA**

Board Member Bryant: During the ACCYF Meeting earlier that day, Cindy Acker with The Child Unique Montessori shared some of the comments she's been seeing on Alameda Peeps. Highlighting that individuals are feeling uncomfortable right now with all that is happening in the Middle East and Russia. There has been an uptick in racial/offensive comments posted online. Dr.. Acker mentioned a similar incident that happened in the past and how SSHRB helped form a community meeting where individuals could come together to express and address their concerns.

President Means passed around a copy of the AARP Disaster Resilience Tool Kit which he thought could be insightful to other Board Members.

Board Member Buchholz shared interest in adding an agenda item to the next meeting. She proposed discussing the Great ShakeOut Earthquake Drill, and how SSHRB can help the community prepare for the possibility of a natural disaster.

Ms. Obaidy reminded Board Members that there will not be a SSHRB meeting in November (due to Thanksgiving). The next meeting will be on Thursday, December 7 at 7:00 p.m.

**8. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS**

None.

**9. ADJOURNMENT**

President Means adjourned the meeting at 8:56 p.m.