

## **Social Service Human Relations Board**

### **Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Social Service Human Relations Board (SSHRB), April 27, 2017**

#### **1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

President Blake called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m. Present were Vice-President Hyman, and members Sorensen, Hastings, Jenks, Chilcott, and Youngblood.

#### **2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the regular meeting of March 23, 2017 were approved as presented. M/S Hastings / Chilcott Unanimous

#### **3. AGENDA ITEMS**

##### **3.-A UPDATE ON POTENTIAL CHANGE TO FEDERAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG) FUNDS FOR FY17-18 AND IMPACT ON PUBLIC SERVICES -- CLAUDIA YOUNG, DIRECTOR OF RENT & COMMUNITY PROGRAMS, HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF ALAMEDA**

Ms. Young explained that, on May 2, 2017, City Council will hold a public hearing to consider staff recommendations for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)/Home Investment Partnership (HOME) Annual Action Plan for the FY17-18 Program Year. The federal budget for FY16-17 is the source of funds for CDBG/HOME programs during the City fiscal year FY17-18. However, Congress has not yet approved a budget for the current fiscal year (FY16-17).

HUD issued written guidance to all entitlement jurisdictions regarding the preparation of Action Plans for the coming year. The guidance states that jurisdictions may follow the ordinary public hearing process and assume level funding from the prior year, but the approval Resolution must include language that acknowledges a potential budget decrease in CDBG/HOME funding and a statement of how a lower amount will be budgeted.

She went on to say that staff is recommending that all activities funded through CDBG/HOME will be proportionally increased or decreased from the estimated funding levels to match the actual CDBG/HOME grant amounts once appropriated by Congress. This is in line with SSHRB's funding recommendation letter for the two year funding cycle (FY16-17 and FY17-18). She added that, in the unlikely event that the federal budget has not been adopted by the start of the City fiscal year (July 1, 2017), no CDBG funds would be available until a budget is adopted.

#### **Public Comment:**

Cindy Houts, Alameda Food Bank Executive Director, shared that CDBG funds represent 7% of the Food Bank's annual budget, and is used to help fund the cost of utilities, rent, and other expenses. She was concerned about the impact on the budgets of all nonprofits if these funds were to be eliminated.

Alison DeJung, Eden I&R Executive Director, stated that this is the agency's 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and each year the agency receives 23,000 calls from residents of the City of Alameda, and provides 44,000 referrals. She added that nearly 100% of the calls come from low income

individuals, 48% of whom are disabled. While not funded from the Public Services portion of the CDBG allocation, Ms. DeJung said that she had come to this evening's meeting to meet the Board, and to share that any cuts in CDBG funding would also have an impact on EDEN I&R.

Liz Varela, Building Futures with Women and Children (BFWC) Executive Director, shared that Alameda's Midway Shelter was started by members of the community 30 years ago, and has been operated by the BFWC for the past 15 years. All CDBG funds are used for shelter operations, and represent 12% of the shelter's annual budget. In addition to the value of the grant, CDBG funds help BFWC leverage other resources. Her hope is that, if the CDBG program were eliminated, the City of Alameda would consider using its General Fund to replace the loss. She added that Midway Shelter has been at the same site for more than 20 years, needs a new site for operations, and hopes to be able to relocate to North Housing.

Erin Scott, Family Violence Law Center (FVLC) Executive Director, stated that some cities in Alameda County have shifted the funding for FVLC services from CDBG to their General Fund. Working in partnership with the Alameda Police Department, Alameda Hospital, and other service providers, FVLC responds to every domestic violence call in the City of Alameda, providing emergency assistance to victims, including the filing of restraining orders, and other legal services. While their scope of services in the City of Alameda goes beyond what is funded by CDBG, these funds are critical to their agency being able to maintain a presence in Alameda.

Angie Watson-Hajjem, Fair Housing Counselor for Eden Council for Hope and Dignity (ECHO), shared that ECHO is the agency contracted by the City of Alameda to provide fair housing counseling and landlord\tenant mediation services. Given the lack of affordable housing in the City of Alameda, ECHO continues to see an increase in calls. They work closely with the Rent Review Advisory Committee (RRAC) to assist Alamedans facing eviction and/or increases in their rent. She added that now it is more important than ever for these type of services to be available to Alamedans at risk of losing their housing.

Discussion:

After a brief discussion, a motion was made to "call a special meeting of the Board in the event that there was a cut in CDBG funding that might impact the ability of grant recipients to continue to provide services in the City of Alameda"

M/S Hyman / Youngblood Unanimous

### **3.-B WORK GROUP PROGRESS REPORTS**

#### **Assessment and Awareness Workgroup:**

President Blake shared that the survey is nearing completion and will be released in late August/early September.

#### **Human Relations Workgroup:**

Staff shared that the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Unity Picnic is planned for September 23 at Crab Cove. In addition to the Black Achievers Alliance (BAA), SSHRB, the Alameda Collaborative for Children, Youth, and their Families (ACCYF), and Alameda Unified School District (AUSD) roundtables will assist in coordinating this year's event. The workgroup will meet with ACCYF members to discuss conducting an "In the Mix" event in the spring of 2018.

#### **Homeless Action Plan Committee Workgroup;**

Member Youngblood announced that APD will post 30-day notices at Jean Sweeney Park in June, in preparation for an eviction of homeless individuals encamped in the park. She added that Operation Dignity has been providing case management and referrals to those living in the encampment, and some of the residents have already been placed in temporary or permanent housing. The challenge will be to continue to provide services to these individuals once they have been evicted from the park. Long-term, additional funds will certainly be needed to continue providing adequate services. The workgroup will work to develop a draft of policies and procedures for serving Alameda's homeless population, and plan to present that draft to the Council by the end of the year.

### **4. BOARD/STAFF COMMUNICATIONS, NON-AGENDA - NONE**

### **5. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS - NONE**

### **6. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 PM  
M/S Blake / Chilcott Unanimous

Respectfully submitted by:  
Jim Franz, Secretary