

AMENDED
HUMAN SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD
CITY OF MESA
MESA CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
57 EAST 1ST STREET, LOWER LEVEL
May 22, 2003
-MINUTES-

MEMBERS

Mr. Greg Holtz, Chair
Ms. Susan Klecka, Vice Chair
Ms. Teresa Cotton
Mr. Michael Graham (Excused)
Dr. Carlos Vallejo
Mr. Bob Hisserich
Ms. Elaine Nelson
Mr. Ken Salas

GUEST

Ms. Judy Kent
Mr. Raymond Jones
Ms. Kim Reynolds

STAFF

Ms. Nichole Ayoola
Ms. Kathleen Kelly
Ms. Ruth Anne Norris
Mr. Bryan Raines
Ms. Lisa Wilson

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Greg Holtz called the meeting to order. He welcomed Ruth Anne Norris, Interim Director of Housing Services and Bryan Raines, Neighborhood Services Manager to the meeting.

DISCUSS AND APPROVE MINUTES OF APRIL 24, 2003 MEETING

The minutes of April 24, 2003 were reviewed and approved unanimously with the following changes: Page 3, paragraph 3; the word "awarded" was replaced with "recommended".

COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS

There were no citizen comments.

DISCUSSION OF DRAFT HOUSING GOVERNING BOARD MEMO AND ORDINANCE

Ruth Anne Norris reviewed information to the Board explaining the Draft Housing Governing Board Ordinance. She explained, in an effort to have more participation from Section 8 recipients on housing programs, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires that a person receiving Section 8 rental assistance serve on the governing board for a housing agency. For the City of Mesa Housing Services, that governing body is represented by the City Council. We need to come up with a way to have a Section 8 resident serve with the Council on a governing board strictly for the purpose of approving Section 8 related materials. Ms. Norris offered two alternatives to the Board. The new body would consist of the Mesa City Council members and a Mesa Housing Services Section 8 resident joining them for that discussion relevant to Mesa's Section 8 program.

The other alternative would be for the City of Mesa to take a step back and have Housing Services return to its previous status as an independent Housing Authority. Ms. Norris informed the Board that this would be a regression that would create additional challenges for Housing Services employees. Because they are all City of Mesa employees, to change the status of Mesa Housing Services would change the status of all of their employees. Housing Services operates other programs besides Section 8 and would have to change their entire structure to meet this one requirement.

Monica Michelizzi of the City Attorney's Office is assisting Ms. Norris and Housing Services staff in deciding the best way to implement the governing board.

H&HSAB member Carlos Vallejo suggested creating a subcommittee. Present this person as a member and make the committee a part of the Mesa City Council. This specified person would then submit the discussion and concerns to Council.

Ms. Norris agreed to forward this recommendation to Council if the Board desires. Some members thought that this would just create more meetings. The H&HSAB members decided to discuss the idea of a governing board at the June 24th meeting.

DISCUSSION OF H&HSAB APPLICANTS

Nichole Ayoola provided the Board members with the new Community Action Program area map. The new map was updated with census data from 2000. She also explained the City of Mesa's is considered a Community Action Agency designation and the City receives federal dollars, CSBG, and SSBG dollars to administer a Community Action Program. MesaCAN is the agency the City of Mesa contracts with to administer the Community Action Program. This Board is a Community Action Program Board. It is required to have three elected officials or representatives thereof for clarification, three representatives of low-income residents and three representatives of a special interest group, which include business, industry, labor, faith, social services, and education. On June 30, 2003 there will be four seats vacant. Three of the applicants representing two of those seats addressed the Board this evening. The Mayor will directly appoint the elected official seat.

The applicants were Judy Kent, Kim Reynolds, and Raymond Jones. Board members were able to review the resumes of each candidate prior to the evenings meeting. All three applicants addressed the Board members by stating their interest in human services. They answered and asked questions of the Board.

Mr. Holtz emphasized two important duties. They are the responsibility of being an advocate for the housing and human services community and the responsibility for fiscal integrity.

Ms. Ayoola provided further details of the responsibilities of Board members. The first is to act as the Community Action Program Board, which means members will discuss and approve the Community Action Plan. The second is that the Board is advisory to the City Council. The Board doesn't set policy but they do advise the City Council on Housing and Human Services policy. She also briefly explained the application process and recommended that the applicants educate themselves on the housing and human service needs in the community. Board members offered their support and words of encouragement to the applicants.

DISCUSSION OF H&HSAB HUMAN SERVICE RECOMMENDATIONS TO MESA CITY COUNCIL

At the meeting held on May 15, 2003 the Mesa City Council voted to approve up to an additional \$150,000 for human services in an effort to hold Community Bridges Prevention Partnership, Save the Family Foundation, and Mesa Community Action Network harmless from the last funding cycle. On May 22, 2003, the City Council approved the recommendation and the three agencies will receive this amount, which increases the Human Services budget by \$96, 206.

Board members were asked for their comments regarding the budget process. Mr. Holtz felt it was important for the Mesa City Council to be aware of the reaction of the Board to the process.

Ken Salas stated that, although it was his first experience, he found it difficult to decide which agencies should get funding. Elaine Nelson added that it is always a difficult process and suggested going with your values, the mission and vision, and the reason that you are a member of the Board. Mr. Vallejo stated, "I guess for me, it was a sense of who knows who and how well you write and express your concerns. It's amazing how things get changed. The political side was "awareness" for me. This is my insight into the process and I am not speaking for the Board". Teresa Cotton stated that she was pleased with being able to ask questions before the meeting because it gave her time to review the answers. Ms. Klecka stated that before there was time to interview all of the applicants but now with the increase of agencies applying, that is no longer a luxury. Due to this, agencies must understand that they need to be clear and precise when writing the proposals. They also need to respond to staff immediately to answer any questions. Mr. Holtz stated, "My opinion of this years budget process for the record, is that we should have received a more realistic goal. It was obvious to me that the \$250,000 was unreasonable. And I think it did a disservice to this Board to try to chunk out that much money from of a budget. I hope next year that before this Board works on so many applications and spend so much time, that Council or staff at least, finds out what the Council desires for a cut. When the process occurred this year, we did our duty, we cut the budget by what we were instructed to cut (even though it was unreasonable). The final budget was put into a political arena. I echo what Carlos said, that the Board did what it could but when it came down to the bottom line of finalizing the budget, it was a political process and not necessarily a process due on a lot of open discussion about the merits of each agency. For what it's worth, that's my two cents that I hope the Council reads. I hope they read everyone's comments. There has been a lot of misunderstanding on the part of the City Council as to how this Board goes through it's budget process and I've heard it in spades recently, that some of the people on the Council don't think that this Board spends a lot of time on looking at this budget so I think that perhaps we should have some type of letter or some kind of one-pager to explain the budget process that this Board goes through. The Board doesn't get credit for looking at a lot of stuff when the budget becomes a political process".

STAFF REPORT

Nichole Ayoola presented her Staff Report. She explained that "Building Blocks for the Future", the East Valley Needs Assessment has been conducting community meetings and focus groups to discuss the needs of the people in our communities. She explained that the final neighborhood meeting for Mesa would be held June 9th at the Mesa Utilities Building community room. In addition to these meetings, core questions have been placed in a survey format that has been made available on the City of Mesa's web page. That can be found at www.cityofmesa.org. The survey is available in English and Spanish. To date there have been approximately 200 survey returned.

The Board was also given a fact sheet provided by the Children's Action Alliance. This fact sheet gives a brief summary of the budget cuts that are specific to human services at the State level.

The Mesa United Way will be sending the Board members invitations to attend the Leadership Giving Society Reception, which is an exclusive invitation-only event for Leadership Givers (those who give \$500 or more annually to Mesa United Way). Hosted by Keno Hawker, City of Mesa Mayor, and the Board of Directors of Mesa United Way, the event will feature a 30-minute performance of Footloose.

Ms. Ayoola spoke about the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) program. The City of Mesa in partnership with the IRS, collected approximately 1/2 million in refunds of which \$240,000 was EITC. Sites were located at Mesa YMCA, Mesa Community College at Dobson, and Mesa Community College at Red Mountain. A volunteer reception was held at the Mesa YMCA in which Councilmember Claudia Walters recognized those that volunteered their time to prepare income tax returns.

The June meeting of the H&HSAB will be the last meeting of the fiscal year. There will be a Board Retreat in August.

A letter from Kathleen Kelly, Director of Community Revitalization to Pat Gilbert, Executive Director of MesaCAN, regarding performance on the contract for MesaCAN Neighborhood Services was discussed. Greg Holtz and Susan Klecka also wrote response letters to the President of MesaCAN, Melissa Schappert. Ms. Klecka and Mr. Holtz summarized the meetings that they attended last year regarding the performance of MesaCAN. Ms. Klecka commented on the issues of the agency and the desire to straighten out the issues. Members of the Board were assured that there was no intent to exclude them from the meetings but some situations call for the Chairman and Vice Chair to become involved. Ms. Klecka stated that she and Mr. Holtz met with the City Attorney because this Board is not allowed to get involved with contract disputes. Ms. Ayoola stated that City staff met with MesaCAN representatives on April 29, 2003 to discuss several ongoing issues. The City had contracted with Herb Paine to complete an analysis of the agency's management practices. MesaCAN is very receptive to having the consultant and are looking forward to a resolution to the disputes.

Mr. Holtz stressed the importance for the agency to perform to the specifications of the contract because they are the CAP agency for the City of Mesa. Mr. Vallejo commended the Chair and Vice Chair on their display of leadership by writing the response letter to MesaCAN.

Ms. Ayoola stated that Board members could send her feedback regarding the three applicants of the open Board positions. Ms. Norris reminded the Board that the application process is always open. Elaine Nelson suggested that Board members submit names of qualified individuals in anticipation of filling future vacancies. This will ensure that vacancies are filled expediently due to unforeseen circumstances. Mr. Holtz stated that the purpose of inviting applicants to address the Board aids in the selection process and also is an opportunity for the Board and the individual applicants to meet.

ADJOURN

Mr. Holtz took a motion to adjourn. Ms. Klecka moved to adjourn and Ms. Nelson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:00 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nichole V. Ayoola, Human Services Specialist