

**CITY OF MESA  
HUMAN RELATIONS ADVISORY BOARD (HRAB)  
September 26th, 2018 Minutes**

The Human Relations Advisory Board (HRAB) of the City of Mesa met on September 26th, 2018 at 6:00pm in the Lower Level City Council Chambers at 57 E 1<sup>st</sup> St.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Cliff Moon- Chair  
Colleen Byron- Vice Chair  
Amy-Lyn Faatoafe  
Alvaro Gonzalez  
Joseph Holmes  
Nadia Khalighi  
Silvia Stanford  
Mark Tompert  
Ron Williams

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Louis Wade

**STAFF PRESENT**

Andrea Alicoate  
James Duty  
Anne Gervase  
Ruth Giese  
Tara Hall  
Edward Jones  
Jodi Sorrell  
Paul Thomas  
Ray Villa

**GUESTS**

Samuel Leal

1. Chair's Call to Order.

Dr. Byron, acting Chair for the meeting, called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

(1a) Announcement of excused absences.

Mr. Wade was announced as an excused absence.

2. Items from Citizens Present. \*

There were no citizens present who wished to speak to the Board.

3. Approval of minutes from the August 22nd, 2018 Board meeting.

It was moved by Dr. Moon, seconded by Mr. Tompert that the above-mentioned minutes be accepted as written.

Upon tabulation of votes, it showed:

AYES- Dr. Moon, Dr. Byron, Ms. Faatoafe, Mr. Gonzalez, Mr. Holmes, Ms. Khalighi, Ms. Standford, Mr. Tompert, and Mr. Williams.

NAYS- None

4. Discuss and make recommendations on Mesa Police Department Monthly Community Engagement Report.

(4a) Updates on Diversity related police incidents and activities.

Mr. Villa addressed the Board and began by announcing his retirement from the department on October 4, 2018, and introduced Tara Hall as his interim replacement.

Mr. Villa went on to provide details of recent events and plans within the department. He discussed his participation in a community meeting on Monday, September 24<sup>th</sup>, that included members of different advisory boards to discuss the direction of the Police Department with regard to diversity issues. One of the issues they discussed was how they will change the format of the Citizen's Police Academy. Starting in spring of 2019, the academy's format will change to become shorter in length, more intense, more hands-on, more interactive, more relevant to citizens, and will have more of a community engagement format to it overall.

Next, Mr. Villa explained a new Parents' Academy the department will be starting to address issues with juvenile delinquency and mentorship. The program will target specific geographical areas with higher rates of delinquency and will be tailored to the specific types of delinquency issues being experienced. Dr. Byron asked for an example. Mr. Villa responded that, for example, some areas with larger populations of migrants are experiencing issues with parents who are threatened with arrest or deportation if the parents physically discipline their children. In this situation, the program would educate and empower parents on what types of physical discipline are legal. Mr. Villa went on to describe another issue where a high number of students at an elementary school were bringing weapons to school. The Parents' Academy would be tailored in that area to address parenting issues that are allowing children access to weapons to be brought to school. Lastly, Mr. Villa described issues with children using cell phones and social media inappropriately, and how the academy would be tailored to educate and guide parents on setting and enforcing appropriate cell phone and social media guidelines for children.

Mr. Villa also explained the department's intention to revitalize its advisory boards due to lack of engagement, including changing their leadership.

Finally, Mr. Villa discussed the department's intention to expand its focus on community engagement from only specific officers within the department to all officers. To help measure this, the department's dispatching software will feature tools officers can use to record and report their community engagement activities while on duty.

Dr. Byron and Dr. Moon thanked Mr. Villa for his service, congratulated him on his retirement, and welcomed Ms. Hall as his replacement.

(4b) Updates on scheduling of upcoming Police Advisory Board meetings.

Discussion only; no action taken by the Board.

(4b-1) Updates on a meeting of the LGBTQ Community Forum.

Dr. Moon explained that there were not enough interested citizens for the first forum meeting, so the committee is considering adjusting its approach to enhance citizen participation, including the day of the week, etc. The forum is expected to meet again in late October, and Dr. Moon will provide an update at the next meeting.

Dr. Moon also explained that, with regard to the question about LGBTQ youth raised at the last meeting, it was decided that there were too many guardian-related questions involved with including youth. However, he is working on meeting with local school

representative to solicit their advice on how to proceed with ensuring issues specifically related to LGBTQ youth are included in the forum's objectives.

Ms. Alicoate added that the City is in alliance with the forum and its objectives and intends to fully cooperate and support its mission.

5. Hear and discuss presentation on City of Mesa Transit updates.

Ms. Sorrell, Transit Services Director, introduced Mr. Brooks, Accessible Transit Services Manager with Valley Metro, to present on the Valley Metro's planned expansion of services in Mesa.

Mr. Brooks began his presentation by describing the goals of the presentation, and by encouraging the Board's feedback for further improvements in their program. The goals were to explain the proposed changes to their current program for seniors and disabled persons and to explain the process of providing input to Valley Metro regarding the proposed changes.

Mr. Brooks then provided an overview of the current programs offered by Valley Metro for seniors and disabled persons. The first is a fixed route transit system, including buses and the light rail. The second is a paratransit system called Dial-A-Ride. The third is a ride choice program. Mr. Brooks explained that the fixed route transit system is fully equipped for use by senior and disabled persons, exceeding the requirements of federal law. It is the most cost-efficient and the method most strongly encouraged for use by Valley Metro of senior and disabled persons. Seniors and disabled persons who are certified with Valley Metro receive free use of the fixed route transit system. This service came at a cost to the region of \$4.25 per trip in 2017.

Next, Mr. Brooks discussed Dial-A-Ride, the Citywide paratransit option for seniors and disabled persons between 4am and 1am each day. It is a shared-ride, advanced reservation service. It is highly regulated by the federal government and has very high employee screening requirements. The service costs approximately \$40.95 per trip.

Lastly, Mr. Brooks discussed their Ride Choice service. He explained the service is not required to be provided by law and its operation is not subject to many of the same legal requirements the other two services are. It is essentially a transit voucher program that allows senior and disabled persons to use taxi services for transit at a significantly reduced cost. For example, a 7-mile trip would normally cost an average person \$18.00 to take by taxi according to current rates. However, it would only cost a voucher holder \$3.00. Mr. Brooks pointed out that one major issue with this program is that, as taxi companies raise their rates, the distance they can go on a voucher decrease. Valley Metro is working to address that issue currently. The primary benefits of the program are that it makes transit available all hours of every day, it does not require reservations, and it does not require participants to share their ride. It is ideal for short local trips but costs the region approximately \$14.89 per trip.

Mr. Brooks went on to explain the challenges facing their programs. The number of eligible participants is increasing, as is the cost of paratransit, while revenues are decreasing. Paratransit is expensive, citywide, and in areas it is not needed. However, Ride Choice is a lot less expensive and a lot more flexible. As a result, Valley Metro would like to reduce paratransit in Mesa to only operate areas where public transit is available, to meet the legal requirement. They will then expand the Ride Choice program to cover all other areas of the City. Valley Metro will also enhance the

Ride Choice program in addition to expanding its reach, making it for ADA-certified people (he explained approximately 90% of all seniors meet the requirements to become ADA certified), fixing the distance of a \$3.00 voucher at 8 miles regardless of rate hikes by taxi companies and regardless of the type of taxi (to include wheelchair accessible vehicles), and they are also planning to include rides provided by Lyft. Lastly the program will expand in the number of trips allotted per participant. The current program limits trips to 16 one-way trips per month, 40 for participants that go to work, school, or medical appointments. Under the proposed plan, those numbers would increase to 20 and 50, respectively. The proposed changes to Ride Choice are set to go into effect December 1, 2018.

Mr. Brooks explained Valley Metro's plans to meet with affected residents in areas where services are proposed to be changing to gather their input and address their concerns. Public hearings are scheduled in January and February 2019, as required by law whenever ADA-paratransit service areas are changed. Valley Metro is proposing for Council and the Valley Metro Board of Directors to act on the proposal in February 2019. Valley Metro is planning to provide public education about the changes throughout March, April, and May 2019.

Mr. Brooks informed the Board on how individuals can submit their feedback to Valley Metro regarding the proposed changes. There is an online option, an email option, and a traditional mail option. Valley Metro also plans to provide staff and instructions at some of their larger scheduled meetings for applying for ADA certification, and for signing up for the Ride Choice program.

Mr. Williams asked Mr. Brooks to explain the qualifications for becoming ADA certified. Mr. Brooks explained the qualifications.

Mr. Williams the asked if there are any documentation requirements for ADA certification. Mr. Brooks responded that citizens must visit the Valley Metro Mobility Center to apply for certification, and they are provided free transportation to do so. Once there, Valley Metro staff interview the applicant and take them through a simulated transit situation to gauge the applicant's ability to use transit services. Medical documentation is not required.

Dr. Byron asked Mr. Brooks how Valley Metro defines "senior". Mr. Brooks responded that is senior is considered anyone who is 65 years of age or older.

Mr. Tompert commented that he met with both Ms. Sorrell and Mr. Brooks the day before and commended them for changes they are proposing.

It was moved by Mr. Tompert, seconded by Mr. Gonzalez, that the Board support Valley Metro's proposed ADA policy improvements.

AYES- Dr. Moon, Dr. Byron, Ms. Faatoafe, Mr. Gonzalez, Mr. Holmes, Ms. Khalighi, Ms. Stanford, Mr. Tompert, and Mr. Williams.

NAYS- None

6. Hear and discuss presentation on Mesa City Courts updates.

Mr. Thomas and Ms. Gervase reported on two changes at the Mesa Municipal Court to the Board. The first change was regarding Rule 11 procedures, which pertains to competency for defendants to stand trial in criminal cases. Originally, the procedures required sending a defendant to a local doctor for an evaluation, then requiring the defendant to report back to the Court. The Court would then have to refer them to Maricopa County Superior Court, who would then refer them to medical evaluations before holding a hearing and then referring them back to Mesa Municipal Court. This process resulted in a 40% failure to appear at the initial evaluation at Mesa Municipal Court, and then once referred to Maricopa County Superior Court, it takes several months before the defendant was evaluated by two doctors and appeared for their superior court hearing. To improve the process, Mr. Thomas met with Maricopa County Superior Court and met with the appropriate committees to arrange to hold all medical evaluations at the Mesa Municipal Court at the initial evaluation. Because of the change, the failure to appear rate in Rule 11 cases dropped to approximately 5% and the average number of days for completing each case dropped to approximately 45 days. The pilot started in 2015 and the Court has processed 541 defendants to date under the new process.

Dr. Moon asked Mr. Thomas about the selection process of doctors who meet with defendants at Court evaluations. Mr. Thomas responded that the doctor's qualifications are determined by statute, so doctors must satisfy the requirements of the statute. He also explained that the doctors are under contract and readily available the Court.

Mr. Williams asked how many of the 541 defendants previously mentioned were veterans. Ms. Gervase responded that the percentage is very low, but those that are determined to be mentally competent are referred to Veterans Court, while those who are not are referred for veterans' services. Mr. Thomas added that the number of veterans with potential competency issues are not tracked, because the Court's focus is on connecting veterans with services regardless of competency.

Mr. Thomas then explained the new Community Court to the Board. Defendants who provide any signs of any underlying social issue which might be contributing to their criminal activity, such as homelessness, mental illness, drug addiction, etc. The purpose of Community Court is to address the criminal transgression while connecting the defendant with appropriate services to assist with the underlying social issue and prevent recidivism. Mr. Thomas explained that in 2017, 120 defendants in Mesa Municipal Court were without addresses, and those 120 defendants were involved in 1047 of their cases for the year. He calculated the estimated costs to process those cases at \$500,000-\$600,000. The goal of the new Community Court is to improve these numbers and costs.

Mr. Tompert commended Mr. Thomas and Ms. Gervase on their work in improving services while reducing costs and time required to process cases. He further mentioned a previous program by Mesa Fire and Medical for improving services to mentally and emotionally challenged individuals that expired after its grant funding ended.

Ms. Faatoafe and Dr. Byron also commended Mr. Thomas and Ms. Gervase on their work and the benefits of the programs.

7. Discuss and take action on meeting with various educational institutions to assess strides being made to address diversity issues within schools.

Ms. Alicoate reported that Dr. Michael Garcia of Mesa Public Schools will be presenting to the Board at the January Board meeting.

8. Create a recommendation to Mayor and Council on providing City services to individuals with mental health and substance abuse issues.

Mr. Tompert raised the question as to why Mesa Fire and Medical allowed their mental health services program to expire when the grant funding expired. Ms. Alicoate responded that she has reached out to Mesa Fire and Medical regarding the question and hopes to have information to provide to the Board by the next meeting.

Dr. Byron proposed a discussion at the next Board meeting after receiving Mesa Fire and Medical's response and drafting a letter as well.

9. Discuss and take action on the development of community fairs and events such as, but not limited to, a Police and Community Coming Together Fair, Women's Empowerment Event, and Youth Peace Building Summit.

Dr. Moon stated he had met with Devin with Mesa Community College regarding her assistance with the Women's Empowerment Event, and Devin recommended having a half-day event rather than a full-day event due to limited resources. Dr. Moon is expecting further information from Devin on a proposed date for the event.

Mr. Gonzalez spoke about the Youth Peace Building Summit, informing the Board that he spoke with Kevin at Benedictine University about hosting it and they had agreed to hosting it. Dr. Moon and Ms. Khalighi added that they have been in contact with representatives at Benedictine University as well and are working on setting a date. Ms. Alicoate added that she will follow up with Benedictine University as well.

10. Review 2017-2019 Strategic Plan to assess priorities for 2018/19 Board year.

The Board members reviewed the plan, and Dr. Moon asked Ms. Alicoate regarding rescheduling the regional Human Relations Advisory Commission meeting. Ms. Alicoate responded that it is expected to occur this Fall, but a host city has yet to be determined. She will continue to keep the Board apprised of the details as they are determined.

Dr. Moon then asked Ms. Alicoate regarding item 2, about a study to be done with CDBG funds. Ms. Alicoate responded that she will follow up with Mr. Dennis Newburn. Dr. Moon followed up with a request to ask Mr. Newburn to present to the Board at a future meeting.

Ms. Alicoate then brought goal #3 to the Board's attention, specifically regarding the Mayor's request for the Board to begin tracking specific data types. Dr. Moon responded with his belief that the requested data had been submitted. Ms. Alicoate further clarified additional program data that would need to be tracked and reported, and that she will prepare a framework for further guidance at the next Board meeting.

Dr. Byron proposed agendaizing a recurrent letter to the Mayor and City Council with bullet points on each of the Boards monthly meetings to keep them informed, with the hope of having a plan complete by the end of the calendar year.

11. Discuss and take action on the cancellation or rescheduling of the following Board meetings:

(11a) November 28, 2018 Board Meeting was rescheduled to December 5, 2018.

(11b) December 26, 2018 Board Meeting was cancelled.

12. Scheduling of future agenda items, general information, and Board attendees at upcoming meetings and events including those set forth below.

(12a) Next Board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 24, 2018 at 6PM in the Lower Level City Council Chambers (57 E 1<sup>st</sup> St).

(12b) Celebrate Mesa will be held on October 20, 2018 from 5:00PM to 9:00PM at the Red Mountain Soccer Complex (905 N Sunvalley Blvd).

Dr. Byron asked whether Board member participation at Celebrate Mesa an instance of the data tracking would be discussed previously for the strategic plan. Ms. Alicoate responded in the affirmative.

13. Hear reports on conferences and/or meetings attended.

Mr. Gonzalez reported on his participation in the Mesa K-Ready event.

14. Adjournment.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:41PM.

**\*Members of the audience may address the Board on any item. The Arizona Open Meeting Law (ARS § 38-431 et seq.) limits the Human Relations Advisory Board to discussing only those matters listed on the agenda and other matters related thereto.**

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**Si necesita asistencia o traducción en español, favor de llamar al menos 48 horas antes de la reunión al 480-644-2767.**