

Date: February 22, 2023
W.I.: 1111
Referred by: Commission

ABSTRACT

Resolution No. 4566

Resolution of Appreciation for Behrouz (Bruce) Samar upon his retirement from MTC and ABAG after nearly 28 years of service.

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RE: Resolution of Appreciation for Behrouz Samar

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
Resolution No. 4566

WHEREAS, Behrouz Samar, who is more widely known as Bruce, has retired from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission after nearly 28 years of combined service to the Commission and to the Association of Bay Area Governments, during which time he was a key member of the team of technology professionals who both literally and figuratively keep the agencies operating; and

WHEREAS, Bruce originally joined the ABAG staff in March 1995 through a hiring process managed by Atti Williams, and over the years worked as a computer technician, a senior network administrator and as a senior information technology specialist; and

WHEREAS, blessed with the rare gift of universal patience, Bruce cheerfully provided help whenever summoned to aid a colleague who had misused, mistreated or otherwise messed up his or her computer or who might simply have needed an upgrade; and Bruce invariably performed these services without raising his voice or finding fault with either computer or colleague, even if said colleague was a serial client incapable of remembering a password over the course of a long weekend, let alone a vacation, and who for the umpteenth time did the walk of shame over to Bruce's cubicle for a password reset; and

WHEREAS, the question of what Bruce actually did is one for which many answers are revealed, as during many of his ABAG years Bruce was one of just two full-time members of the Association's information technology team and thus provided desktop support while also performing a wide variety of other IT-related tasks that included ordering computer equipment, building out the server room, racking and configuring network equipment, performing operational maintenance and repairs on myriad types of hardware that may or may not have at least once included a toaster; and

WHEREAS, Bruce also would help colleagues set up home computer systems acquired through the ABAG computer purchase program, which was guided by a simple set of rules: buy whatever Bruce

tells you to buy and then attend a thrown-together brown bag session in the conference room, an easy-to-follow protocol that sadly fell out of use once it became cheaper to simply buy whole systems; and

WHEREAS, despite the changing economics of computer purchasing, Bruce remained a conservationist who unfailingly saved every piece of equipment just in case it might someday be needed and who then figured out innovative ways to reuse these items when they eventually could be found, whether in that doublewide cube with its own locking door, in the server room, or perhaps just right over there; who became known for ‘making it work’ by soldering network cables himself; and who also implemented the purchase of recycled printer cartridges, which led to significant cost savings and reduced waste; and

WHEREAS, Bruce earned an ‘A’ in a networking course at Laney College, despite attending class just once, which was long enough to demonstrate that he knew as much about networking as the instructor did and also long enough for Bruce to lead his fellow students on a short walk over to ABAG’s former headquarters location on Eighth Street in Oakland for a tour of the Association’s server room; and

WHEREAS, Bruce is an early-adopter of technology who quickly became a high-volume user of Slack and then brought much of the rest of the MTC-ABAG staff along with him; and

WHEREAS, despite his enthusiasm for Slack, Bruce also frequently was at the receiving end of good old-fashioned emails from colleagues seeking computer assistance, responding to 2,861 such requests in the five-year span from January 2017 through February 2022, while also frequently using Slack and Teamviewer during the COVID-19 pandemic to make sure people received the help they needed; and

WHEREAS, well known for his love of gadgets, Bruce brought much to the collective table, including an industrial-strength juicer for the morning juice club and an early-model portable convection oven used to prepare the roast turkey for several agency potlucks, an activity that proved effective in suffusing the office with the aroma of roasting poultry and in whetting his colleagues’ appetites; and

WHEREAS, Bruce once previously considered retirement before ABAG's 2016 move to San Francisco and the subsequent integration of the MTC and ABAG staff, going so far as to write a retirement letter before withdrawing it due to his fondness for his coworkers, his appreciation of the relationships he had formed over the years and his sincere enjoyment of helping people; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the staff and commissioners of MTC honor Bruce's dedicated service to the agency and to ABAG, thank him for his patience in resolving his colleagues' computer troubles and other technical issues over decades, and warmly extend to him and his wife Patti congratulations on making this retirement stick and offer best wishes for many years of good health, beautiful and bountiful work in their garden, and the enjoyment of more time spent with their four adult children and several grandchildren.

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Alfredo Pedroza, Chair

The above resolution was approved by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission at a regular meeting of the Commission held in San Francisco, California, and at other remote locations, on February 22, 2023.