KNOXVILLE-KNOX COUNTY COMMUNITY ACTION COMMITTEE
September 24, 2020
MINUTES

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Knoxville-Knox County Community Action Committee was held virtually from the Ross building at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, September 24, 2020 using the digital platform Go to Meeting.

BOARD MEMBERS PARTICIPATING
Ms. Virginia Anagnost
Ms. Desiree Beasley
Mr. Doug Burton – representing Mr. Jeff Welch
Mr. Chris Caldwell – representing Mayor Glenn Jacobs
Commissioner Charles Busler
Ms. Anna Compton
Ms. Polly Doka
Mr. Buz Johnson
Mr. Charles Lomax – representing Mayor Indya Kincannon
Vice Mayor Gwen McKenzie
Mr. Orris Nero
Ms. Ashley Ogle – representing Mr. Ben Bentley
Ms. Martha Olson
Mr. Terrell Patrick
Ms. Judy Poulson
Judge John Rosson
Mr. Thomas Strickland
Mr. Derek Tate
Dr. Sandra Twardosz
Ms. Jennifer Valentine – representing Dr. Martha Buchanan
Ms. Lula Williams
Mr. Charles Wright

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT
Ms. Emili Alexander
Ms. Renee Kelly – representing Superintendent Mr. Bob Thomas
Mr. Ronald Thompson Sr.
Mr. Patrick Wade – representing Rep. Rick Staples
The meeting was opened with a moment of silence presented by Ms. Virginia Anagnost, board chair, presiding.

1. **MINUTES (MAILED)**

Ms. Anagnost asked if there were additions or corrections to the minutes of August 27, 2020 board meeting. Ms. Judy Poulson stated that the motion and approval for the Grants, Contracts, and Application section had been omitted in the minutes. This was noted and will be corrected in the minutes. The minutes were approved with the correction.

2. **ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE REPORT**

Ms. Polly Doka presented the Administrative Committee report from September 16, 2020, and made the following report.

Approved the personnel actions on the attached sheet. COVID-19 protocols to be followed for staff who are sick or who may have family members who are sick were reviewed and endorsed by the committee. This will be a separate agenda item. The committee approved the report of the Office on Aging Invested Funds. No action is required at this time. The committee reviewed the Head Start and Early Head Start financial report for the month of August 2020. There were no summer program services provided at the centers due to COVID-19. The Head Start/Early Head Start refunding package was reviewed including a budget summary and a description of program options. Full board approval is recommended. This will be a separate agenda item. The committee reviewed an update of the Community Needs Assessment. Social Work Office of Research & Public Service (SWORPS), will present highlights from the assessment at the September meeting. The full report will be issued and presented at the October meeting. Full board approval is recommended. This will be a separate agenda item. In compliance with the Organizational Standards, the committee reviewed and approved a report of the Risk Assessment, which is conducted every two years. A summary of the report will be presented to the full board. Full board approval is recommended. This will be a separate agenda item. The committee was advised that the Community Action Plan for the period October 1, 2020 through September 30, 2021 has been approved. A program and budget summary will be presented. Full board approval is recommended. This will be a separate agenda item. The committee reviewed Grants, Contracts, and Applications for September 2020 on the attached sheet. Full board approval is recommended. This will be a separate agenda item. Plans for the September meeting were discussed. Opportunities will be available for small groups of board members to participate on-site at the East Center and Ross building. Call-in options will be available as well.

Ms. Doka moved to accept the Administrative Committee report. Mr. Charles Wright seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.
3. **COVID-19 RESPONSE REVIEW**

Ms. Barbara Kelly presented the Knoxville-Knox County Community Action Committee COVID-19 Response for August 1, 2020 – August 31, 2020. Highlights are as follows:

**Housing & Energy**
- 45 homes weatherized and repaired

**Energy & Community**
- 1,537 LIHEAP client phone calls addressed
- 1,111 LIHEAP clients assisted by mail
- $134,250 LIHEAP financial assistance provided
- 17 Project HELP applications approved

**CAC Transit**
- 7,008 CAC Transit trips provided to 850 riders
- Enhanced sanitation continues as do masks required and provided by CAC

**Nutrition**
- 36,967 Mobile Meals prepared in the Mobile Meals Kitchen
- 29,102 Mobile Meals and congregate meals delivered
- 18,270 meals provided to 1,066 children
- 24,172 wellness checks were made to Mobile Meals recipients

**Green Thumb & Beardsley Farm**
- 4 nutritional and cooking video lessons produced and presented
- 123 children received Beardsley Boxes at the Grab & Go Meal Sites
- 2,025 pounds of fresh produce distributed
- 43 fresh eggs contributed to community members
- 120 community garden plots maintained

**Office on Aging**
- 3 clients assisted with legal help/Justice Center
- 25 Emergency services
- 15 healthcare/COVID-19 testing sites
- 33 other COVID-19 related calls
- 51 COVID-19 stimulus/CARE Act benefits
- 1,552 City of Knoxville 211 calls
- 122 ChatBot conversations
- 2,715 direct services provided such as case management, senior crisis situation, elder abuse case management, pet related visits, senior care, Medicare savings applications, SNAP applications, senior day care and telephone assistance.
Social Services
- 946 information and referral contracts
- 18 housing placements
- 4 mortgage assistances
- 34 housing assistances
- 103 utility assistances
- 45 rental assistance
- 374 housing counseling
- 167 unemployment process assistance/counseling
- 60 weekly unemployment Certifications made
- 2,446 direct services such as case management, housing, grocery, income, employment/unemployment assistance

Ms. Kelly shared examples of how CAC is helping the community: A benefits specialist worked with a 58-year-old client with a degenerative disease to obtain disability benefits, which he had been denied in the past. The appeal was successful and the client obtained disability benefits and $9,000 in back payment. His power and water have been restored for the first time in two years and arrangements are being made for much needed home repairs. A Youth WINS case manager reported her successful efforts to secure housing for a high school senior who was living in her car after being abandoned by her family. The student is currently housed, has a part-time job, and is on schedule to graduate this year. The Families Together Academy has gone virtual, and assists clients in court ordered classes, such as Anger Management. CAC Housing & Energy was able to install two (2) additional freezing units at the Mobile Meals Kitchen. Thank you to CAC partner SYSCO for loan of a freezer truck for the past 6 months.

Ms. Windie Wilson, human resource director, reviewed Protocols for Staff Who are Sick or Who May Have Sick Family Members on the attached sheet. This policy is to keep CAC staff, clients, and volunteers safe and healthy.

Ms. Anagnost complimented the staff on a job well done under extraordinary circumstance.

4. HEAD START

Ms. Renee Hauge, Head Start associate director, reviewed Head Start’s school readiness goals in the context of changes that have to be made due to COVID-19. She reminded the Board of the program’s 3 school readiness goals and the program’s commitment to those goals. This school year will look different in many ways. The curriculum and classroom practices will have to be adjusted to help assure children’s health and safety. One of those adjustments will be to make sure that children have as much outdoor time as possible. Because it is more difficult to transmit and contract COVID-19 while outdoors, this is a time when children and staff can engage in learning activities that they may not be able to do indoors – activities like circle time, singing, etc. This has led to a renewed commitment to the development of outdoor play spaces at Head Start centers.

Ms. Hauge presented a PowerPoint highlighting the natural playground located at the Anderson-South Head Start Center. The development of this playground was completed by the former Center Manager
of that center, Donna Price. Ms. Price will be assuming a new role in supporting Head Start Center Managers with center operations and helping to develop similar playgrounds and outdoor classrooms at the other Head Start centers. Ms. Hauge showed pictures of different elements of the natural playground and how those elements facilitate children’s learning and development across developmental domains. The learning that takes place in these outdoor environments helps to support the program’s progress in achieving the important school readiness goals of physical health, social competence and academic readiness. Parents and community partners also contributed to the development and upkeep of the outdoor playscape offering opportunity for parent engagement and community involvement in the Head Start program.

Ms. Nancy Thomas, Head Start director, reviewed a Fact Sheet for Head Start/EHS Refunding Proposal located in the board packet. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the program has reorganized service delivery options to make sure services are provided in a safe manner and in order to continue to provide quality services. This reorganization includes:

1) Center-based services for extended hours for Head Start and Early Head Start will be provided at the Anderson, East II, and North Centers. Parents will provide their own transportation for extended day services. Part-Day preschool services (which include Head Start bus transportation) will be provided at the Claxton, East I, and LTR Centers.
2) Children enrolled in center-based options will attend 2 days per week.
3) Some children will be served through a virtual learning program. Many parents do not feel safe sending their children to a center and prefer to receive their services virtually.

$779,501 COVID-19 funding used throughout FY20-21 was approved on September 23, 2020 and will be used to continue health and safety improvements at the centers.

Ms. Doka moved to approve the Head Start/EHS refunding proposal. Mr. Orris Nero seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

5. CSBG UPDATE

Ms. Kelly informed the board that CAC is still in discussion with the Tennessee Department of Human Services over carryover funding from fiscal year 2018. The board will be kept informed of the progress.

6. NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Ms. Linda Daugherty, associate director of The University of Tennessee Social Work Office of Research & Public Service (SWORPS), presented an overview of the Community Needs Assessment. The key findings from the 2020 CAC Needs Assessment are as follows:

- Poverty level in Knoxville has risen 3.2% and 1.6% in Knox County since 2013
- Ten census tracts in Knoxville have extremely high levels of poverty
• Black/African Americans continue to experience the highest levels of poverty. In Knoxville, 41.3% of Black/African Americans live below poverty level compared to 22.1% of Whites
• The Hispanic/Latino population has grown to 5.7% in Knoxville and 4.1% in Knox County
• Correlation between education and household income continues. Median annual earnings in 2018 among those with graduate or professional degrees in Knox County was $63,065, compared to $18,217 for those who did not graduate from high school
• 30% of households are defined as ALICE, (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed)
• Pre COVID-19 unemployment rate in Knoxville was 2.9% and 3.2% in Knox County. This is lower than the state rate of 3.7%
• Current fair market rent (FMR) for a two-bedroom unit in Knox County and Knoxville is $915 per month. To afford a two-bedroom unit, a household needs to earn $36,600 a year or, roughly, $17.60 an hour
• One in ten households (11.1%) in Knoxville and 6.2% in Knox County do not own a vehicle.
• Opioid prescriptions have declined but opioid overdoses continue to rise. Drug related deaths in Knox county in 2018 were most often the result of synthetic opioids

A final report will be presented at the October board meeting.

7.   RISK ASSESSMENT

Ms. Lisa Higginbotham, director of special projects, informed the board that one of the Organizational Standards requires a formal Risk Assessment every two years. In conducting this assessment CAC used the format from the CSBG Technical Assistance Guide and modeled the assessment after Marquette University’s Internal Risk Assessment. Ms. Higginbotham reviewed the 7 key areas that include: 1) staffing/workforce, 2) training and professional development, 3) policies and procedures, 4) information and technology, 5) environment and safety, 6) fiscal controls, and 7) regulation and compliance. Ms. Higginbotham reported that CAC is considered a low risk entity with regard to the financial and compliance audit.

Dr. Sandra Twardosz motioned to accept the Internal Risk Assessment report. Mr. Wright seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

8.   GRANTS, CONTRACTS, AND APPLICATIONS

Ms. Kelly reviewed the summary of grants, contracts and applications that was included in the board packet:

**Beardsley Farm**
Nourish Knoxville. Received $3,500 from the CARES Act to purchase additional cooler space for produce storage.
CAC Transit
Safety Partner’s grant. Received $3,000 to purchase the TAPTCO (Transit and Paratransit Company) updated Transit 2020 Operator Development Course, which has 33 video programs, to comply with FTA requirements and covers training for federal regulations, safety & defensive driving.

Emergency COVID-19 Relief fund
TVA COVID Community Care Fund. Received $10,000 to provide funds to address immediate needs and hardships created by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Office on Aging
Fidelity Charitable. Placing Animals with Seniors (PAWS) received $8,000 to be used for pet care.

Social Services
Knox County CDBG-CV. Received $385,000 to assist renter households who have been impacted by COVID – 19 who live in Knox County but outside the City limits. Approximately 128 households will receive housing financial assistance for rent and/or utilities.

Knox County CDBG-CV. Received $46,000 to support one case manager’s salary to provide outreach to individuals living on the streets outside the Knoxville City limits. This will be in effect from September 21, 2020 – June 30, 2021.

CAAN (Community Action for Affordable Neighborhoods)
State of TN CARES Act. Received $600,000 to assist households who have been impacted by COVID-19 with utility assistance. Approximately 600 households will receive assistance with utilities through these funds. Implementation details are pending.

Proposal/Application Summaries

Office on Aging
Corporation for National and Community Service. Knox Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) applied for $75,000 to administer programs with 315 volunteers in Knox County. Volunteers will participate in various service activities to improve social support for older adults and to assist local non-profits with capacity building.

Nutrition Services
The Truist Foundation through Mobile Meals. Applied for $10,000 to provide Mobile Meals for clients not funded by Title III of the Older Americans Act.
Social Services
City of Knoxville Emergency Solutions Grant. Applied for $350,000 to conduct homeless prevention and rehousing activities.

Dr. Twordosz moved to approve the grants, contracts, proposals, and applications as presented. Mr. Wright seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

9. CENSUS UPDATE

Ms. Susan Long informed the board that 66% of the population of the State of Tennessee has responded to the Census. 70% of Knox County and 64% of City households have responded to the Census. Census will end on September 30, 2020. Please ask people to call 844-990-2020 if they have not completed the census.

Ms. Anagnost encouraged members to attend upcoming events listed in the board packet.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

[Signature]

Polly Doka, board secretary