

KNOXVILLE-KNOX COUNTY COMMUNITY ACTION COMMITTEE

January 27, 2022

MINUTES

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Knoxville-Knox County Community Action Committee was held at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday January 27, 2022. A hybrid meeting was held at the Ross building with some members attending in person and other members using the digital platform.

BOARD MEMBERS PARTICIPATING

Ms. Virginia Anagnost
Ms. Desiree Beasley
Mr. Doug Burton – representing Ms. Amy Brooks
Commissioner Charles Busler
Mr. Chris Caldwell – representing Mayor Glenn Jacobs
Ms. Anna Compton
Ms. Polly Doka
Ms. Ann Jefferson
Mr. Buz Johnson
Ms. Renee Kelly – representing Superintendent Bob Thomas
Mr. Charles Lomax – representing Mayor Indya Kincannon
Mr. Orris Nero
Ms. Ashley Ogle – representing Mr. Ben Bentley
Ms. Martha Olson
Mr. Terrell Patrick
Judge John Rosson
Mr. Tank Strickland
Mr. Derek Tate
Dr. Sandra Twardosz
Ms. Jennifer Valentine – representing Dr. Martha Buchanan
Ms. Lula Williams
Mr. Charles Wright

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

Mr. Sam Brown – representing Representative Sam McKenzie
Vice Mayor Gwen McKenzie
Ms. Judy Poulson

The meeting opened with a moment of silence presented by Ms. Virginia Anagnost, board chair, presiding.

Ms. Nancy Thomas, Head Start director, introduced Ms. Angela Cheek, who joined the Zoom meeting and is one of two newly elected Head Start Policy Council members recommended to serve on the CAC Board as Head Start representative for the 2022-2023 school year.

1. MINUTES (MAILED)

Ms. Anagnost asked if there were additions or corrections to the minutes of December 2, 2021, board meeting. There being none, the minutes were approved as distributed.

2. ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Buz Johnson presented the Administrative Committee Report from Wednesday, January 19, 2022, and made the following report.

The committee approved the personnel actions on the attached sheet. The committee reviewed the report of the Office on Aging Invested Funds. The Homeless Services reports for November and December were reviewed. The Head Start/Early Head Start financial report and program report for the month of December were reviewed. No action is required. The nominating committee report was presented. The committee recommends Ms. Desiree Beasley and Mr. Orris Nero, from the Head Start Advisory Board, to serve in category #3 on the CAC Board. Full board approval is recommended. The nominating committee will present a slate of officers to the full board. Full board approval is recommended. This will be a separate agenda item. The committee was informed that a CSBG Desk Top Review of the Organizational Standards is underway. No action is required. The Covid-19 update report focused on the need to continue the core actions and the steps we have taken to continue to insure the safety of staff, volunteers, and clients. CAC and Head Start/Early Head Start staff will be not be required to receive Covid-19 vaccinations by January 2022 to maintain employment. No action is required. The committee reviewed and approved the Funding Summary for January 2022. Full board approval is recommended. This will be a separate agenda item. Plans were made for the January board meeting which will be a hybrid meeting with some members on-site and others participating remotely. The committee conducted a performance evaluation of the Executive Director. The evaluation was based on fifteen (15) key components of the Executive Director's job description. The director was commended on her overall outstanding performance.

Mr. Johnson moved to accept the Administrative Report. Ms. Polly Doka seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Charles Wright moved to accept the committee recommendation to have Ms. Desiree Beasley and Mr. Orris Nero serve in category #3 on the CAC Board. Mr. Tank Strickland seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

3. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Mr. Johnson, Nominating Committee chair, submitted the following recommendations for the election of officers: Mr. Thomas “Tank” Strickland, board chair; Ms. Polly Doka, board vice-chair; Ms. Desiree Beasley, board secretary. The terms are from February 1, 2022 – January 31, 2023. Ms. Anagnost asked if there were any additions or discussion; there was none.

Mr. Johnson moved to elect the slate of officers as presented by the nominating committee. Mr. Wright seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

4. HEAD START UPDATE

Ms. Thomas stated that Head Start/Early Head Start continues to be productive in these challenging times. Head Start follows CDC Covid-19 Preventive Protocol guidelines and works closely with the Knoxville Health Department to ensure the best possible outcomes for the health of the Head Start/Early Head Start children, their families, and staff. At this time, most parent/teacher conferences, parent meetings, and policy council meetings are being held virtually.

The agency is monitoring the Head Start vaccination mandate ruling, suspended pending court review. Currently, 95% of Head Start staff have been vaccinated.

Dr. Sandra Twardosz complimented Ms. Thomas on the impressive vaccination rate of the employees. She asked, “How many staff members did Head Start lose due to the announcement of the mandate?” Ms. Thomas answered, “About 10 staff chose to leave.” Dr. Twardosz asked, “How are the children doing?” Ms. Thomas said that the children are resilient, and that Covid-19 infection among them can be attributed to community and family exposure. Fortunately, while there has been illness among children, families, and staff, there have been no hospitalizations or serious illnesses associated with the recent Omicron variant. The program continues to follow CDC guidelines for quarantine.

Additionally, Head Start will have a federal monitoring review (Focus Area 2) during the week of February 28, 2022.

5. COVID-19 UPDATE

Ms. Wilson informed the board that Covid-19 cases have been trending up. The Omicron variant is affecting a large number of Knox County residents, and Knox County is still considered an area of significant transmission. One (1) in four (4) people has been infected with Covid-19 in Knox County’s total population. Ms. Wilson informed the board that CAC is being proactive by following the CDC Covid-19 Prevention Protocol guidelines. She also indicated that, based on the Supreme Court ruling regarding OSHA requirements and the current lawsuit against the Head Start vaccine mandate, CAC and

Head Start/Early Head Start staff will be not be required to receive Covid-19 vaccinations by January 2022 in order to maintain employment. CAC staff will keep the board members up-to-date as there are changes with the vaccine mandates. Ms. Anagnost asked, "Is the staff doing well?" Ms. Wilson responded that despite cases of infection, staff is doing well overall and is resilient. She noted that, in line with current CDC guidelines, staff are allowed to return to work after five (5) days of isolation if they no longer have fever and their symptoms are resolving.

6. PROJECT HELP

Ms. Cecelia Waters, Energy & Community Services director, informed the board that monies collected from Project Help make a huge impact in our community. Project Help collected \$207,763 in 2021 and helped 357 households. Project Help provides emergency energy assistance to people in need and living in the KUB service area, regardless of their home's energy source. Ms. Waters shared a client story which is available on YouTube.

7. VITA UPDATE

Mr. Terry Reed, Management Services Support manager, informed the board that the CAC VITA program produced 2,695 returns for tax season 2020. \$3,887,509 was put back into our community with \$963,332 from Earned Income Credit and \$743,949 through the Child Tax Credit. VITA will start preparing 2021 taxes on February 1, 2022, by appointment only. Please call 865-244-3086 to make an appointment.

8. GRANTS, CONTRACTS, AND APPLICATIONS

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

Beardsley Farm

General Sponsorship. Received \$10,000 from United Healthcare for general funding, such as educational programming, refugee assistance, farm maintenance, and many other needs.

Energy and Community

LIHEAP. Received \$391,931 from Tennessee Housing Development Agency (THDA) for direct services.

Office on Aging

Multiprogram Sponsorship. Received \$15,000 from United Healthcare to support multiple programs and events in the Office on Aging.

Social Services

Homeward Bound Hotel/Motel Program. Received \$540,000 from the City of Knoxville ESG-CV Funds to assist families, seniors, and homeless youth with hotel payments due to lack of shelter space and available housing.

Senior Nutrition Services

Mobile Meals. Received \$10,000 from the Knoxville Fire Fighters Association to provide Mobile Meals.

Mobile Meals. Received \$5,000 from the Hobson Wood Foundation to provide Mobile Meals.

Mobile Meals. Received \$2,000 from Scarecrow Foundation to provide Mobile Meals.

Mobile Meals for Parkinson Clients. Received \$1,000 from PJ Parkinson's Support Group to provide Mobile Meals for clients with Parkinson disease.

Proposal/Application Summaries

Office on Aging

Savings Check Up/SNAP Outreach. Applied for \$2,500 from the National Council on Aging to support Boost Your Budget campaign to be held in April 2022. Funds will be used to assist with outreach materials, various activities, and mailings.

Mr. Johnson moved to accept the grants, contract, and applications as presented. Mr. Orris Nero seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

9. PROGRAM UPDATES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

The following announcements were made:

Ms. Higginbotham, Special Projects director, informed the board of the Children's Vaccine Clinic on Saturday, January 29, 2022, at the J.T. O'Connor Center from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. Although the event is focused on children, everyone is invited to attend. All three Covid-19 vaccines and the flu vaccine will be provided at no cost to everyone 5 years of age and older. Ms. Jennifer Valentine instructed the board to contact the Knoxville Health Department at 865-215-5555, to schedule a vaccination appointment.

This year's Snow Day 2022, a Beardsley Farm fundraiser, will take place at Central Filling Station on Saturday, February 5, 2022, from 3:00 pm to 7:00 pm. Join us for music, soup, and a silent auction. Pre-event cost: \$25. Cost at the door: \$30.

The 14th Annual Snowflake Ball, a Senior Companions fundraiser, will be held on Saturday, March 5, 2022, from 6:00 pm to 9:30 pm at Rothchild's Conference Center. Enjoy an evening with live music and a catered dinner. Purchase tickets online or at the Office on Aging. Cost: \$60.

Ms. Beasley thanked the board for their vote of confidence in her by having voted her the new CAC Board Secretary. Mr. Nero thanked the board for allowing him to continue with the CAC Board as an at-large member.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Polly Doka".

Polly Doka, board secretary