

KNOXVILLE-KNOX COUNTY COMMUNITY ACTION COMMITTEE

February 29, 2024

MINUTES

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Knoxville-Knox County Community Action Committee was held at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, February 29, 2024. The meeting was held at the Ross building.

BOARD MEMBERS PARTICIPATING

Ms. Virginia Anagnost  
Ms. Desiree Beasley  
Dr. Andrew Brown– representing Superintendent Dr. Jon Rysewyk  
Mr. Doug Burton – representing Ms. Amy Brooks  
Mr. Chris Caldwell – representing Mayor Glenn Jacobs  
Ms. Anna Compton  
Ms. Polly Doka  
Ms. Megan Johnson  
Councilwoman Gwen McKenzie  
Ms. Victoria Moore  
Mr. Orris Nero  
Ms. Ashley Ogle – representing Mr. Ben Bentley  
Ms. Martha Olson  
Mr. Terrell Patrick  
Mr. John Rosson  
Dr. Ragan Schriver  
Ms. Kenyadah Sullivan  
Mr. Derek Tate  
Dr. Sandra Twardosz  
Ms. Lula Williams

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

Rev. Sam Brown – representing Representative Sam McKenzie  
Mr. Kevin DuBose – representing Mayor Indya Kincannon  
Commissioner Kim Frazier  
Mr. Buz Johnson  
Ms. Dena Mashburn – representing Mr. Kevin Parton  
Ms. Judy Poulson  
Mr. Charles Wright

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

1. MINUTES (MAILED)

Ms. Doka asked if there were additions or corrections to the minutes of December 7, 2023, board meeting. There being none, the minutes were approved as distributed.

2. ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mr. Terrell Patrick presented the Administrative Committee Reports from Wednesday, January 25, 2024, and February 21, 2024, and made the following reports:

January 25, 2024

The committee approved the personnel actions on the attached sheet. The committee reviewed the Report of Investments renamed Report of CD's and Bank Accounts. No action is required. The committee received an update on the FY22 and FY23 Audits. The FY22 is projected to be completed on or before June 30, 2024. Work is being done to prepare for the FY23 audit. It would be desirable to release this report by Sept. 30, 2024 but that timetable has not been finalized. Additionally, PYA at the time has not agreed to work on the FY24 audit. 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 2023 were reviewed. Ms. Hauge, Head Start director, informed the committee that the Change in Scope application has been approved. Committee was informed a new 5-year grant cycle has begun. No action is required. The committee reviewed and approved the Health and Safety Screener: Policies and Procedures for Head Start Programs. The Governance, Leadership, and Oversight Capacity Screener for organizations that operate Head Start/Early Head Start programs was reviewed and approved. Many of the items in the screener are similar to the Organizational Standards that apply to Community Action Agencies. Full board approval is recommended. This will be a separate agenda item. The committee recommends Ms. Victoria Moore be approved to serve on the board in Group 2 (Community Representatives), replacing Ms. Ann Jefferson. 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 reviewed the City of Knoxville Capital request. Full board approval is recommended. This will be a separate agenda item. The committee reviewed and approved the Funding Summary for January 2024. Full board approval is recommended. This will be a separate agenda item. 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.

February 21, 2024

The committee approved the personnel actions on the attached sheet. The committee reviewed the Report of CD's and Bank Accounts. No action is required. The committee received an update on the FY22, FY23, and FY24 Audits. The FY22 is projected to be completed on or before June 30, 2024. Work is being done to prepare for the FY23 audit. It would be desirable to release this report by Sept. 30, 2024, but that timetable has not been finalized. Additionally, PYA at the time has not agreed to work on the FY24 audit. The Homeless Services report for January were reviewed. The Head Start/Early Head Start financial report and program report for the month of January were reviewed. No

action is required. The Procedures/Criteria for Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance (ERSEA) of children in Head Start/Early Head Start were explained and reviewed. Full board approval is recommended. This will be a separate agenda item. The committee was advised of the Head Start Full Enrollment Initiative (FEI) and the need to submit a Corrective Action Plan leading to achieving and maintaining full enrollment. Various approaches were discussed including designing a Change in Scope plan. Full board approval is recommended. This will be a separate agenda item. The committee was advised that the following Head Start Policy Council members were elected to serve as CAC Board Representatives for the current year: Ms. Kenyadah Sullivan and Ms. Megan Johnson. Full board approval is recommended. The plan for covering emergency/unplanned short-term absences of the Executive Director was reviewed. No changes are needed. The committee will develop a Succession Plan to guide and manage executive transition insuring agency sustainability and effective leadership over time. The committee will engage in further planning during subsequent meetings. The committee reviewed the Local Budget requests. Full board approval is recommended. This will be a separate agenda item. The committee reviewed the Equal Opportunity Policy Statement. Full board approval is recommended. This will be a separate agenda item. The committee reviewed the Transit Equal Opportunity (EEO) policy update. Full board approval is recommended. This will be a separate agenda item. The committee was informed that CAC will be participating in the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration of Community Action. Arrangements have been made with the History Project (Jack Neely and Paul James) to produce a book about the history of CAC. Other events are also being planned. The committee reviewed and approved the Funding Summary for February 2024. Full board approval is recommended. This will be a separate agenda item.

Ms. Kenyadah Sullivan moved to accept the January 25, 2024 Administrative Committee Report. Mr. Derick Tate seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Patrick moved to accept the February 21, 2024 Administrative Committee Report. Mr. Orris Nero seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Doug Burton moved to accept Ms. Victoria Moore to serve on the board Group 2 (Community Representative), replacing Ms. Ann Jefferson. Ms. Martha Olson seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Councilwoman Gwen McKenzie moved to accept Head Start Policy Council candidates Ms. Kenyadah Sullivan and Ms. Megan Johnson to serve as CAC Board Representative for the current year. Ms. Sullivan seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

### 3. NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

Ms. Beasley presented the following slate of officers for the period February 1, 2024 through January 31, 2025, as follows: Mr. Buz Johnson, board chair, Dr. Ragan Schriver, vice chair, Ms. Desiree Beasley, secretary. The chief financial officer of Knox County, Mayor Glenn Jacobs, serves as the CAC treasurer.

Ms. Beasley moved to accept the slate of officers as presented. Dr. Sandy Twardosz seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Ms. Beasley presented the following Administrative Committee appointments: Mr. Terrell Patrick, Administrative Committee chair, Dr. Ragan Schriver, member appointment.

Ms. Beasley moved to accept the Administrative Committee appointments. Councilwoman McKenzie seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Ms. Anna Compton, will temporarily replace Mr. Charles Wright on the Administrative Committee. Mr. Wright is undergoing rehab from an illness.

Mr. Nero moved to accept the temporary replacement of Mr. Charles Wright with Ms. Anna Compton. Ms. Sullivan seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

#### 4. WESTERN HEIGHTS UPDATE

Ms. Lisa Higginbotham, Special Projects director, presented an update on Transforming Western. The staff for Western Heights was introduced and a PowerPoint highlighted the following:

- 106 households with 304 individuals are currently working with CAC case management
- 112 total households have been served
- Over 100 individuals have engaged in family activities such as Back-to-School and Parent Fairs
- 21 residents are receiving employment assistance
- 5 residents are receiving education assistance
- Monthly community calendars and newsletters are being created for Western Heights residents

Dr. Andrew Brown moved to accept the Western Heights update report. Ms. Lula Williams seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

#### 5. EQUAL OPPORTUNITY POLICY STATEMENT UPDATE

Ms. Windie Wilson, Human Resources director, presented changes to the Equal Opportunity Policy Statement found in the board packet. The changes predominantly updated the current policy in the areas of inclusivity, non-discrimination, and the definition of gender, bringing the policy in alignment with current national standards as defined by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC non-discrimination statements).

Mr. Nero moved to accept the updated Equal Opportunity Policy Statement. Councilwoman McKenzie seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

#### 6. TRANSIT EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM UPDATE

Ms. Wilson presented the report found in the board packet. This update is part of the Transit Triennial Review. The only change to this program is the addition of the updated Equal Opportunity Policy Statement and language adjustments in the report reflect that updated policy.

Mr. Nero moved to accept the Transit Equal Employment Opportunity update. Mr. Burton seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

7. HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START

Ms. Renee Hauge, Head Start director, reviewed the Head Start/Early Head Start Procedures/Criteria for Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance (ERSEA). Ms. Hauge explained ERSEA is the method Head Start uses to recruit new program participants. The Selection Criteria Summary gives a detailed review of the selection criteria used by Head Start to prioritize children for enrollment. There is a new section for returning families which adds points for families that have above 90% attendance from the previous year. Mr. Tate asked if these updates are due to the teacher shortage. Ms. Hauge replied that these criteria have become even more important due to the limited slots caused by the staffing issue. Even though the board approved a Change of Scope in 2023, competing with Knox County Schools makes it very difficult to attract teachers. Dr. Brown explained that Knox County Schools are experiencing the same issues with staffing with salaries being the main issue. He stated this is not only a statewide issue but a nationwide issue. Ms. Sullivan stressed that although attendance is considered a priority in Head Start, absences due to illness are not counted against families under consideration.

Mr. Nero moved to approve the ERSEA procedures/criteria. Dr. Brown seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Ms. Hauge advised of the Head Start Full Enrollment Initiative (FEI) outlining the need to submit a Corrective Action Plan to achieve and maintain full enrollment by January 29, 2025. In Nov/Dec. 2023, Head Start reduced the number of preschool slots from 743 to 510 as indicated in the Change of Scope. Even with the enrollment adjustment, Head Start is still struggling to hire enough staff to run the program. Head Start programs are required to maintain full enrollment which is defined by the Office of Head Start as 97% of slots filled. Currently Head Start is enrolled at 83% capacity, and Early Head Start at is at 70% capacity. In order to reach full enrollment, the program would have to hire 30 additional staff. If the program is unable to reach and maintain full enrollment, there could be a potential loss of substantial funding. In order to address this critical situation, the program is proposing to apply for another Change of Scope to reduce the slot level in both preschool and Early Head Start. This strategy could then free up enough funding to address teaching staff salaries and improve working conditions in Head Start classrooms by reducing the number of children in classes and adding additional staff to those classes with high need children. Ms. Olson asked about staff salaries and Head Start recruiting practices compared to Knox County Schools. Ms. Hauge commented on current pay scale and then shared a long-range goal to “Growing Your Own Teachers” by partnering with University of Tennessee and Pellissippi State Technical Community College by supporting their higher education. Additional avenues are being explored to support current staff and to make working at Head Start more appealing.

Mr. Burton moved to submit a Corrective Action Plan that includes the subsequent development of a new Change of Scope with the goal of achieving and maintaining full enrollment. Ms. Sullivan seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Ms. Hauge reviewed the Head Start Governance, Leadership, and Oversight Capacity Screener found in the board packet. Every 5 years, CAC Head Start starts a new funding cycle. This document outlines the responsibilities of the CAC Board and the Head Start Policy Council.

Dr. Twardosz moved to accept the Head Start Governance, Leadership, and Oversight Capacity Screener document. Dr. Brown seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

#### 8. SUCCESSION PLAN

Ms. Kelly reviewed a brief history of Community Action Committee and its 60 years of service provided to the Knoxville and Knox County community. Although there is a plan for emergency/unplanned short-term absence of the executive director, the agency will need to engage in further planning to develop an executive succession plan and a schedule for executive transition. It is our responsibility to ensure that services we have provided for the past 60 years will continue with sustainability and effectiveness long after we are gone. We want the community to be able to count on the stability and level of care that has been the CAC standard. Over the years certain key functions of the organization have been absorbed at the executive level. To prepare the agency for transition it will be necessary to expand the senior administrative staff to include a Chief Program Officer, a Chief Finance Officer, and a Development Director. Funding for two of these positions have been included in the budget request made to the City and County.

#### 9. LOCAL BUDGET REQUESTS

Ms. Kelly reviewed the City of Knoxville and Knox County Local Budget requests found on the attached sheets. Ms. Kelly noted the Head Start budget is overburdened with lease payments in the amount of \$300,000 per year to cover the cost of building the Western Heights Head Start Center. CAC is requesting the City and County each add \$150,000 to the CAC base allocation which will be designated for Head Start. This will free up Head Start funds for salary and staffing adjustments necessary to support the resolution of the Head Start under enrollment issue. Funds are requested to support the Development Director and Chief Program Officer positions. Funds are also requested to support the implementation of safety and security recommendations at CAC facilities and a salary study.

Ms. Kelly noted that the City Capital Request, found in the board packet, for roof and tile floor replacement has been presented to the City of Knoxville.

Mr. Tate moved to accept the Local Budget and City of Knoxville Capital Project requests. Ms. Williams seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

#### 10. GRANTS, CONTRACTS, AND APPLICATIONS

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

## **January 2024 Funding Summary**

### **Beardsley Farm**

School Garden Program. Received \$3,750 from the TEGNA Foundation for School Garden Program activities, which provides hands-on learning experiences and fresh produce distribution to students at Knox County Schools including Lonsdale, Beaumont and South Knox Elementary, as well as the Western Heights Boys and Girls Club.

Seed and Plant Distribution Program. Received \$2,000 from TVA to provide seeds and seedlings for up to 1,000 low-income individuals in Knox County.

New Ground Garden Program. Received \$10,000 from the Lawson Family Foundation to contract with refugee community members to coordinate with Beardsley staff, organize gardeners, translate information, provide education, and provide supplies to gardeners. This program allows gardeners to grow food to offset grocery bills.

### **CAC Transit/Safety**

CAC Transit, Volunteer Assisted Transportation (VAT), & Head Start. Received \$5,000 from Public Entity Partners (PEP) for driver safety activities, trainings, and materials for FY 2023-2024.

CAC Mobile Meals Kitchen and Beardsley Farm. Received \$3,500 from Public Entity Partners (PEP) to provide cameras and security upgrades at the MM Kitchen and Beardsley Farm.

Cyber Security Grant. Received \$2,000 from Public Entity Partners to provide cyber security services for servers and computers throughout the agency.

### **Head Start**

Head Start and Early Head Start. Received \$12,893,183 from the Office of Head Start to provide educational and support services to low-income children and families between January 1, 2024 to December 31, 2024.

### **Office on Aging**

Savings Check Up. Received \$125,000 from the National Council on Aging to provide access to benefits for older adults through August 2025.

Office on Aging. Received \$189,224 from ETHRA for increase in supportive services such as information and referrals, benefits screenings, and outreach.

Volunteer Assistance Transportation (VAT). Received \$65,731 from ETHRA for assisted transportation for individuals 60 and older.

J.T. O'Connor Center. Received \$138,179 from ETHRA for health and wellness activities.

J.T. O'Connor Center. Received \$55,343 from ETHRA for evidence-based programing.

### **Social Services.**

LIHEAP. Received \$3,620,158.04 for regular FY 2024 LIHEAP funds and \$92,766.01 LIHEAP Infrastructure funds to provide utility assistance.

## **Proposal/Application Summaries**

### **Social Services**

Social Services Opioid Initiative. Applied for \$650,000 from the Knox County Opioid Settlement Funds to support the salary of one Recovery Navigator who will coordinate treatment options for 50 individuals, pay for residential/outpatient treatment, medication assistance, transitional recovery housing, and related transportation expenses.

### **Office on Aging**

Tech Smart Knox Seniors. Applied for \$500,000 from the TN Broadband Office to support digital literacy and training for 500 individuals age 50 and older.

## **February 2024 Funding Summary**

### **Beardsley Farm**

Community Garden Program Improvements. Received \$9,000 from Whole Cities Foundation (Whole Foods) to support over 35 garden locations throughout the City of Knoxville. Funds will be used to purchase soil, greenhouse seeds, wood for raised bed improvement, water bills, and other needed equipment.

2024 Snow Day Benefit. Raised \$23,000 at the Beardsley Farm Annual Snow Day held on February 9, 2024, at the Mill and Mine. Over 450 tickets were sold, 130 silent auction items were donated, and 10 different soups were enjoyed by all.

### **Social Services.**

Elizabeth Homes. Received \$137,283 to renew a rapid re-housing grant from HUD to provide homeless families with case management, housing search and placement, and financial assistance for deposits, utilities, and rental assistance.

Families in Need. \* Received \$233,742 to renew a rapid re-housing grant from HUD to provide homeless families with case management, housing search and placement, and financial assistance for deposits, utilities, and rental assistance.

\*Note: A request to HUD to consolidate the Families in Need and Elizabeth Homes programs was made this year.

Resources Extended to Assist the Chronically Homeless (REACH). Received \$104,580 from HUD to provide homeless families with case management, housing search and placement, and financial assistance for deposits, utilities, and rental assistance.

## **Proposal/Application Summaries**

### **Head Start**

Staff Retention Grants. Applied for \$332,000 from TN DHS Childcare Improvement Pilot – Staff Retention Grant for each Head Start center. The grant would provide \$2,000 for each full-time staff and \$1,000 for each part-time staff.



**Social Services**

Homeward Bound. Applied for \$130,000 from CDBG funds from the City of Knoxville to support two case managers who will work with youth ages 18-24 and seniors over 60 who are homeless or at-risk of becoming homeless.

Homeward Bound. Applied for \$220,000 from CDBG funds from Knox County to support two street outreach workers, one homeless service coordinator, and one part-time case manager who will work directly with Knox County Jail Work Release inmates to find housing and employment.

Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG). Applied for \$125,000 from THDA to provide direct assistance for deposits, application fees, and rental assistance for homeless households.

**Nutrition Services**

CAC Senior Specific Programs. Applied for \$40,000 from First Horizon Foundation to provide a range of projects including small home repair, home-delivered meals, senior housing community gardens, pet care, and additional expenses.

Ms. Beasley moved to accept the grants, contracts, and applications as presented. Mr. John Rosson seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

11. PROGRAM UPDATES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

The following announcements were found in the board packet and highlighted:

**Pancake Fest.** Friday, March 22, 2024, 7:00 am to 12:00 pm, at the J.T. O’Connor Center. Cost is \$5.00.

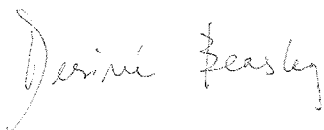
**Mobile Meals March for Meals.** Thursday, March 28, 2024. Program starts at 10:00 am. A CAC bus will take board members to the MMK at 9:30am. Please note the March board meeting will begin at 10:30 am.

**Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA).** Free tax preparation for low-to-moderate income households and individuals. BY APPOINTMENT ONLY. Call 865-244-3086.

**TACA Conference.** Monday, April 29, through Wednesday, May 1, 2024, at the Chattanooga Hotel. This year’s conference is in celebration of community action: past, present, and future. If you are interested in attending, please let Cathy Gonzalez know by Tuesday, March 5.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,



Desiree Beasley, board secretary