

KNOXVILLE-KNOX COUNTY COMMUNITY ACTION COMMITTEE

March 23, 2023

MINUTES

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Knoxville-Knox County Community Action Committee was held at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday March 23, 2023. The meeting was held at the Western Heights Head Start/Early Head Start building.

BOARD MEMBERS PARTICIPATING

Ms. Virginia Anagnost  
Ms. Desiree Beasley  
Mr. Chris Caldwell – representing Mayor Glenn Jacobs  
Ms. Anna Compton  
Ms. Polly Doka  
Commissioner Kim Frazier  
Mr. Buz Johnson  
Ms. Dena Mashburn – representing Mr. Kevin Parton  
Mr. Orris Nero  
Ms. Martha Olson  
Mr. Terrell Patrick  
Judge John Rosson  
Mr. Tank Strickland  
Ms. Kenyadah Sullivan  
Mr. Derek Tate  
Dr. Sandra Twardosz  
Ms. Melissa Vanderburg  
Ms. Lula Williams  
Mr. Charles Wright

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

Rev. Sam Brown – representing Representative Sam McKenzie  
Mr. Doug Burton – representing Mr. Jeff Welch  
Ms. Ann Jefferson  
Ms. Kori Lautner – representing Superintendent Dr. Jon Rysewyk  
Councilwoman Gwen McKenzie  
Ms. Ashley Ogle – representing Mr. Ben Bentley  
Ms. Judy Poulson  
Ms. Jennifer Searle – representing Mayor Indya Kincannon

The meeting opened with a moment of silence presented by Mr. Tank Strickland, board chair, presiding. Mr. Strickland thanked the Western Heights Head Start/Early Head Start staff for an outstanding breakfast and wonderful hospitality to the board members and visitors.

1. SENIOR COMPANION SNOWFLAKE BALL RECOGNITION

Ms. Deisha Finley, Volunteer Management and Special Projects associate director, presented the Senior Companion Advisory board members with mementos and flowers thanking them for their tremendous fundraising effort at this year's event. The 2023 Snowflake Ball raised \$142,599 making it the most successful CAC fundraising event to date. Ms. Lora Clayton, Senior Companion volunteer, received the 2023 Champion of Seniors award.

2. MINUTES (MAILED)

Mr. Strickland asked if there were additions or corrections to the minutes of February 23, 2023, board meeting. There being none, the minutes were approved as distributed.

3. ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mr. Buz Johnson presented the Administrative Committee Report from Wednesday, March 15, 2023, and made the following report:

Mr. Tim Royster, from HG&A Associates, met with the committee to review the Retirement Plan Audit for the years ending June 30, 2022 and 2021. The report and related forms have been submitted to the Internal Revenue Services as required by law. The Head Start/Early Head Start financial report and program report for the month of February were reviewed. No action is required. The committee approved the Head Start/Early Head Start Self-Assessment Plan for 2022-2023. Full board approval is recommended. This will be a separate agenda item. The committee approved the Knox County Finance Advance Repayment Plan. Full board approval is recommended. This will be a separate agenda item. Approved the personnel actions on the attached sheet. The Homeless Services report for February was reviewed. No action is required. A revised Report of Investments as of February 28, 2023 will be included in the board packet. The Administrative Committee recommends that the agreement with PYA be increased by \$15,000 to a total of \$60,250 to partially compensate them for the additional costs of completing the 2021 audit. Full board approval is recommended. The committee reviewed the local budget requests that have been submitted to the City of Knoxville and Knox County. Full board approval is recommended. This will be a separate agenda item. The committee reviewed and approved the Funding Summary for March 2023. Full board approval is recommended. This will be a separate agenda item. Plans are being made for the March 23, 2023, board meeting held at the Western Heights Head Start Center where Sr. Companions Advisory Board will be recognized for their fundraising efforts.

Mr. Johnson moved to accept the Administrative Committee Report for March 15, 2023. Ms. Virginia Anagnost seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Chris Caldwell moved to accept the agreement with PYA to increase payment by \$15,000 to a total of \$60,250 to partially compensate for the additional costs of completing the 2021 audit. Commissioner Kim Frazier seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

#### 4. KNOX COUNTY FINANCE ADVANCED REPAYMENT PLAN

Ms. Kelly reviewed the Knox County Finance Advance Repayment document, found in the packet. The federal grant funding received by CAC requires the agency to expend money and submit reports to funding sources for reimbursement. This creates a time and cash flow issue between when the funds are expended and reimbursement is received. Knox County provides CAC the cash flow necessary to participate in a wide range of grant funded opportunities and accomplish the most good for the community.

In June 2006, Knox County formalized the arrangement for providing advances for CAC operations in the amount of \$2.5 million. In 2009, this amount was increased to \$6 million to cover increased expenditures under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA). Payments to Knox County totaling \$3.6 million have been made, leaving a balance of \$2.4 million.

In August 2002, Knox County provided funds to construct the Mobile Meals Kitchen in the amount of \$2.3 million dollars to be repaid over a 20-year period. The CAC annual allocation was increased by \$167,000 per year to cover the repayment. The Mobile Meals Kitchen loan will be repaid this year and we are proposing to use a portion of the funds to make a regular annual repayment in the amount of \$131,679.96 a year for twenty years to cover outstanding advance. The balance of the funds will remain with CAC.

This will resolve an observation made by the Knox County auditor regarding the advance in 2022. In order to implement this, CAC needs to execute a promissory note and enter into contract with Knox County specifying the repayment.

This will not change the day-to-day operations of CAC and will not preclude CAC entering into any subsequent grants that may be required in the future to meet community needs. Future increases to the amount advanced by Knox County may be necessary to ensure adequate funding is available to CAC when opportunities for additional grant funding become available.

Mr. Charles Wright moved to execute a promissory note and enter into contract with Knox County specifying the payment in the amount of \$131,679.96 a year for twenty years. Commissioner Frazier seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

## 5. HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START ANNUAL REPORT

Ms. Suzanne Inman, Head Start associate director, presented Head Start's Annual Report presentation. The Covid-19 pandemic has continued to affect the CAC Head Start/Early Head Start program. In the 2021-2022 school year, regular services for children resumed to full-class sizes and in-person services. While the program was able to do this in a limited capacity, staffing shortages prevented this goal from being fully met.

Here are some highlights from the 2021-2022 Annual Report:

- Children
  - Head Start served approximately 30.2% of eligible, preschool children and 6.8% of eligible infants and toddlers in Knox County, for a total of 736 children
  - The average monthly enrollment was 66.6% for Head Start and 82.7% for Early Head Start for the 2021-2022 school year. This was due to the staffing shortage, which resulted in the inability to open thirteen preschool classrooms
  
- Services
  - 97% of children received medical exams
  - 77% of children received dental exams
  - 725 children received developmental screenings
  - 14% of preschool children had an IEP and received on-site services
  - 16% of infant and toddlers had an IFSP and received on-site services
  - 24% (177) of children were identified as having a mental health need
  - 236 children transitioned to Kindergarten
  - 262 children were transported on 16 bus routes
  - 2,341 direct services and referrals were made to assist 480 families with clothing, food, utilities, interpretation services, food delivery, etc.
  - Thousands of nutritious breakfasts, lunches, and snacks were served on site
  - 86% (50) of teachers and home visitors received assistance from a mental health consultant
  
- Families
  - The program served 627 families
    - 34% two-parent families
    - 66% single-parent families
  
- Parents, Family, Community Engagement
  - 100% of families attended virtual orientation sessions
  - 385 parents and family members contributed 1,726 hours in virtual center meetings: parent committee, policy council, educational advisory, etc.
  - Families continued to access to Ready Rosie, an early education tool aligned with Early Learning Outcomes Framework (ELOF) designed to help deepen family engagement efforts

- Head Start teachers provided Family Involvement Starts Here (FISH) folder each week, containing a creative curriculum for at-home learning
- School Readiness  
Head Start includes data on children's school readiness that meets or exceeds the widely-held expectations for ages three to five on Development and Learning Progressions for 190 kindergarten-bound children. Here are some of the physical, social and academically-ready indicators:
  - 100% received needed medical services
  - 100% were current on immunizations
  - 99% had ongoing source of medical care
  - 90% received a dental exam
  - 74% demonstrated concern about the feelings of others
  - 92% demonstrated confidence in meeting own needs
  - 79% managed separations without distress and engaged with trusted teachers
  - 65% verbally counted to twenty, with support

Early Head Start includes data on children's school readiness that meets and/or exceeds the widely-held expectations for ages birth to three on Development and Learning Progressions for 100 infants and toddlers. Here are a some of the physical, social and academically-ready indicators:

- 97% demonstrated traveling skills
- 89% demonstrated gross, motor-manipulation skill
- 100 % identified as needing medical services received them
- 99.5% were current on immunizations
- 90% managed feelings
- 96% responded to emotional cues
- 96% comprehended language
- 100% showed curiosity and motivation
- 89% noticed and discriminated rhyme
- 94% demonstrated knowledge of patterns
- Dual Language Learners (DLL)
  - 25.4% of enrolled children were DLL
  - 71% of DLL spoke Spanish
  - 57% of DLL children were considered non-English speaking: by the end of the school year, 83% of DLL children tested as being limited or fluent English speakers
- Staff
  - Of 188 staff members, 28 were current or former Head Start parents
- Achievements
  - All Centers continue to receive the highest rating of three stars from the Star-Quality Child Care Program

- CAC Head Start/Early Head Start is in full compliance with the standards of the following regulatory agencies: State Childcare Licensing, Child and Adult Food Program, and Department of Transportation
- Playground development and renovation at each playground in the program have developed outdoor learning opportunities, natural play areas, and helped to provided time and space for gardening

The full report including the summary of the community assessment and annual budget and expenditures is available online or in hard copy.

Judge John Rosson moved to accept the Head Start/Early Head Start report. Ms. Dena Mashburn seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Ms. Hauge, Head Start/Early Head Start director, asked the board to review the Self-Assessment Plan 2022-2023, located in the board packet. The Self-Assessment activities and processes are designed to strengthen the Head Start program and the services delivered to children and families. Results of the Annual Self-Assessment are used in conjunction with the program's Community Assessment to inform long-range planning and goal setting for continuous program improvement.

Mr. Orris Nero moved to accept the Head Start/Early Head Start Self-Assessment Plan for 2022-2023. Ms. Kenyadah Sullivan seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

## 6. LOCAL BUDGET REQUESTS

Ms. Kelly requested that the board review the Knoxville City and Knox County requests for July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024. Attracting and retaining employees is increasingly difficult as CAC salaries lag behind comparable employers. Funds in support of a 4% salary increase are being requested from both the City and County.

Mr. Johnson moved to approve the City and Knox County budget requests. Mr. Nero seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.

## 7. CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY REVIEW

Ms. Lisa Higginbotham, Special Projects director, provided board members with a review of the CSBG Programs Service and Satisfaction Survey Analysis. Ms. Higginbotham noted that this survey captures only client feedback from CSBG funded programs and does not capture agency-wide data.

Ms. Higginbotham discussed some participant highlights of the 2023 Customer Satisfaction Survey. There were 211 surveys completed for this analysis. Some participant highlights were:

### Most Prevalent Client Challenges

- 32% of those surveyed lack reliable transportation
- 31% of those surveyed lack of money for utility bills
- 31% of those surveyed lack of money for rent/housing
- 20% of those surveyed lack of money for food
- 14% of those surveyed found difficulty finding employment

### Top Five Services Applied For

- 32% applied for utility payment assistance
- 31% applied for affordable housing assistance
- 27% applied for transportation assistance
- 25% applied for rent payment assistance
- 25% applied for food pantry items, clothing and household items

### Client Satisfaction Findings

- 93% received the services applied for
- 100% were helped in a timely manner
- 99% were treated with respect
- 99% received the information/services they needed
- 86% were informed about other CAC or community services
- 100% would recommend CAC to family and friends

### Top Community Issues Identified

- 76% lack of affordable housing
- 76% mental illness
- 76% crime
- 75% homelessness
- 74% cited a lack of good paying jobs

Ms. Higginbotham said that most of the respondents applied for assistance with housing, utilities, or to be connected with community resources. Ms. Higginbotham noted that a needs assessment survey will be sent to the CAC Board, partner agencies, and staff. Information provided will be reviewed and considered in strategic planning and in the community-wide needs assessment. A copy of the PowerPoint presentation is available by contacting Cathy Gonzalez, executive assistant.

Dr. Sandra Twardosz moved to accept the 2023 Customer Satisfaction Survey report. Ms. Anagnost seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

## 8. GRANTS, CONTRACTS, AND APPLICATIONS

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

### **Beardsley Farm**

Food Distribution. Received \$2,000 per month from Second Harvest Local Food Purchase Assistance grant to purchase local produce to support 134 refugee clients. This funding is for 3/1/23 to 8/31/24.

### **Nutrition Services**

Emergency Food & Shelter Program. Received \$28,193 to support emergency food distribution, Mobile Meals, and meal supplements.

### **Office on Aging**

Office on Aging. Received \$150,000 from the National Council on Aging to provide influenza and Covid-19 vaccine uptake efforts. This funding is for 3/1/23 to 2/29/24.

### **Social Services**

Youth Action Board (YAB). Received \$5,000 from United Way Community Fund to support the Youth Action Board to provide food for meetings, incentives, and household supplies for the Youth WINS participants.

## **Proposal/Application Summaries**

### **Housing and Energy**

Home Rehabilitation Program. Applied for \$1,000,000 from Community Block Development Grant (CBDG) fund to perform health and safety repairs to approximately 50 eligible households.

### **Nutrition**

Mobile Meals. Applied for \$5,000 from the Sequoyah Hills Presbyterian Church Benevolence Fund to provide home-delivered meals to seniors.

### **Office on Aging**

Daily Living Center. Applied for \$972 from the Akima Club to provide personal hygiene for participants.

Knox Placing Animals with Seniors (PAWS). Applied for \$5,000 from the Akima Club to provide veterinary services.



## **Social Services**

Workforce Connections. Applied for \$4,000 from the Knoxville Bar Association to expand our service to justice involved youth and young adults who are addressing challenges faced in obtaining housing, employment, and training.

Resources Extended to Assist the Chronically Homeless (REACH). Applied for \$180,000 from CDBG Knox County funds to support the salaries of two street outreach case managers and one intake specialist for the REACH program. REACH focuses on individuals living in camps, vehicles, and other places not meant for human habitation.

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

## 9. PROGRAM UPDATES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

The following announcements were found in the board packet or highlighted at the meeting:

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA). Free tax preparation for low-to-moderate income households and individuals. By appointment only, call 865-244-3086.

Pancake Fest. All you can eat pancakes fundraiser will take place on Friday, March 31, 2023, 7:00 am to 12:00 pm, at the J.T. O'Connor Center. Cost is \$5.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Desiree Beasley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'D'.

Desiree Beasley, board secretary