

KNOXVILLE-KNOX COUNTY COMMUNITY ACTION COMMITTEE

October 26, 2023

MINUTES

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Knoxville-Knox County Community Action Committee was held at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, October 26, 2023. 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
Rev. Sam Brown – representing Representative Sam McKenzie
Mr. Chris Caldwell – representing Mayor Glenn Jacobs
Ms. Polly Doka
Mr. Kevin DuBose – representing Mayor Indya Kincannon
Ms. Ann Jefferson
Mr. Buz Johnson
Ms. Dena Mashburn – representing Mr. Kevin Parton
Councilwoman Gwen McKenzie
Mr. Orris Nero
Ms. Judy Poulson
Judge John Rosson
Dr. Ragan Schriver
Dr. Sandra Twardosz
Ms. Lula Williams
Mr. Charles Wright

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

Mr. Doug Burton – representing Ms. Amy Brooks
Ms. Anna Compton
Commissioner Kim Frazier
Ms. Ashley Ogle – representing Mr. Ben Bentley
Ms. Martha Olson
Mr. Terrell Patrick
Ms. Kenyadah Sullivan
Mr. Derek Tate
Ms. Melissa Vanderburg

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 September 28, 2023, board meeting. There being none, the minutes were approved as distributed.

2. ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mr. Buz Johnson presented the Administrative Committee Report from Wednesday, October 18, 2023, and made the following report:

The committee approved the personnel actions on the attached sheet. The committee reviewed the Report of Investments. The committee recommends that staff be authorized to invest Mobile Meals funds in the amount of \$100,000 in a certificate of deposit at the best available rate. These funds will be moved from the Regions Online Donations and Fund-Raising account. Full board approval is recommended. The committee was advised that FY22 audit is still under way with the report to be released on or before December 31, 2023. The committee was advised that the contract for the FY23 audit has not been executed and filed with the Comptroller's Office as required. Officials in the Comptroller's Office have been advised of the FY23 audit status. The Homeless Services report for September was reviewed. The Head Start/Early Head Start financial report and program report for the month of September 2023 were reviewed. No action is required. The Head Start/Early Head Start Staff Retention Proposal on the attached sheet was reviewed by the committee. Full board approval is recommended. This will be a separate agenda item. Conflict of Interest forms are due to be completed in October 2023. These will be included in the board package. Members will be asked to mail, scan, or email the forms back if not in attendance at the board meeting. The committee reviewed the holiday schedule and the board meeting schedule for 2024. Full board approval is recommended. The committee recommends the acceptance of the Community Needs Assessment. Full board approval is recommended. This will be a separate agenda item. The committee recommends the approval of the Strategic Plan for 2023-2026. Full board approval is recommended. This will be a separate agenda item. The committee reviewed and approved the Funding Summary for October 2023. Full board approval is recommended. This will be a separate agenda item. Plans are being made for the October 26, 2023 board meeting held at the Ross Building.

Mr. Johnson moved to accept the Administrative Committee Report for October 18, 2023. Mr. Orris Nero seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Ms. Virginia Anagnost moved to authorize staff to invest the Mobile Meals proceeds in the amount of \$100,000 in a certificate of deposit at the best available rate. Mr. Johnson seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Dr. Sandy Twardosz moved to accept the 2024 Holiday and 2024 Board Meeting schedules. Dr. Ragan Schriver seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

3. CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURE FORM

Ms. Doka requested that all board members fill out their Conflict of Interest form and return to Ms. Cathy Gonzalez via drop off, mail, or email.

4. HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START STAFF RETENTION PAY SUPPLEMENT

Ms. Renee Hauge, Head Start/Early Head Start director, informed the board members that the carryover request made in April 2023 has been approved. Ms. Hauge reviewed the Staff Retention Proposal – Hybrid Bonus Structure found in the board packet.

Reverend Sam Brown asked when the bonuses will be distributed. Ms. Hauge informed the board that bonuses are expected to be provided in early December. Ms. Ann Jefferson commented that the hybrid bonus structure was a creative and just way to distribute the funds.

Mr. Johnson moved to approve the one-time Head Start/Early Head Start Pay Supplement. Mr. Nero seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

5. TECH SMART PRESENTATION

Ms. Deisha Finley, associate director for Volunteer Management and Special Projects, presented information about the Tech Smart initiative from the Office on Aging. In 2022 the Tech Smart Knox Seniors surpassed its goals and expectations. The overall plan was to provide: 1) digital literacy classes designed for older adults, 2) affordable laptop devices for participants, 3) internet counseling for in-home connectivity, and 4) connections to mobile telehealth stations and resources. Some highlights from the report:

- 444 people have been served
- 45 classes have been taught
- 20 different class locations
- 14 volunteers received training to teach seniors
- 432 Chromebooks have been distributed
- 260 participants received assistance with digital connectivity
- 87.6% achieved internet connectivity at home
- 97% completion rate among participants
 - 88% reported increased socialization and/or independence
- Collaboration with many partners
- Provided older adults with resources and education to utilize mobile Telehealth Stations/Resources

All original goals were met or succeeded and the project has been a huge success. Future funding has been secured for the Tech Smart program as it has been awarded Phase II of the Trinity Health Foundation of East Tennessee Grant.

6. RETIRED & SENIOR VOLUNTEER PROGRAM (RSVP) UPDATE

Mr. Jared Peer, lead RSVP coordinator with AmeriCorps Seniors, presented the 2022-2023 Impact Report for the RSVP program. The RSVP program is a national service program that connects Americans age 55+ with meaningful service activities. Here are some highlights from the report.

RSVP Served

- Seniors & community centers: 7,792 hours of service
- CAC programs: 3,353 hours of service
- Local non-profits: 2,829 hours of service
- Office on Aging programs: 3,540 hours of service

RSVP volunteers do what they enjoy with a focus on helping others. Following are some programs volunteers were engaged in:

Senior Care Calls

RSVP developed Senior Care Calls in 2020 to help seniors facing isolation during the pandemic. The program made such a positive impact that it has been made a permanent program.

- 42 volunteers currently participate in the program
- 89 seniors are called weekly
- 27 minutes is the average length per call

Senior Angel Tree

Senior Angel Tree serves seniors in need who are referred by CAC caseworkers and program managers.

- 1,602 total gifts were distributed in 2022
- 241 were served

Blount County Senior Miles (Smiles) Program

Volunteer drivers provide transportation to doctor appointments, grocery shopping, or other necessary errands. In the past year, RSVP eliminated Smiles' wait list so new riders could be served immediately.

- 2,388 hours drive time
- 3,361 rides were provided
 - \$57,312 in cost savings
- 29,480 miles were driven by volunteers

7. NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Ms. Lisa Higginbotham, Special Projects director, reviewed the Executive Summary: 2023 Knoxville-Knox County Needs Assessment sheet which is appended to these minutes. Key findings are summarized below.

- Knox County's population is growing more quickly than its housing stock; housing is becoming unaffordable for many residents;
- High inflation and rising housing costs create financial insecurity for families above the federal poverty level;
- 12.7% of Knox County residents and 21.3% of Knoxville residents live below the poverty line;
- 44.6% of people living in poverty live in an area of concentrated poverty;

- Knox County is aging;
- Many seniors struggle financially;
- Unemployment rates increased during the pandemic but have returned to pre-pandemic levels
- Food prices increased 20.4% from 2018 to 2022;
- Many parents struggle to find and afford high-quality childcare;
- In 2022, the Knox County graduation rate was 89.7%. The pandemic worsened educational disparities;
- Extreme weather creates health hazards;
- Access to mental health and substance misuse treatment worsened during the Covid-19 pandemic and continues to grow worse post pandemic

Mr. Johnson moved to accept the 2023 Knoxville Knox County Community Needs Assessment. Councilwomen Gwen McKenzie seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

8. STRATEGIC PLAN

Ms. Higginbotham reviewed the Strategic Plan completed by the sub-committee during a 9-month process. A timeline of board involvement was shown to the members. The full Strategic Plan was distributed at the September board meeting. A number of board members attended an in-depth meeting on Thursday, October 5, 2023, to further review the plan.

Reverend Brown moved to approve the Strategic Plan. Mr. Nero seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

9. GRANTS, CONTRACTS, AND APPLICATIONS

Ms. Barbara Kelly informed the board members that at the October 18, 2023, Administrative Committee meeting members were informed that a contract for the 2023 Annual Audit was not filed with the Comptroller's office because PYA had not renewed the contract with CAC. Since that time, arrangements have been made with PYA to conduct the FY23 Audit.

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

Beardsley Farm

Beardsley Farm General Operations. Received \$1,800 from the Knoxville City Council 202 Improvement Funds. This will be used for general farm operations including supplies, programming, and staff salaries.

Social Services

Project LIVE. Received \$4,000 from the Robert Lee Weiss Foundation to purchase home repair supplies and provide professional services for low-income seniors.

LIHEAP. Received the following additional FY23 funds that will be used for direct assistance and staff support:

- FY23 Regular Funds. Received an additional \$548,991.08 for a total of \$4,049,388.08 to provide low-income families with energy assistance.
- FY23 Supplemental LIHEAP Funds. Received an additional \$2,044,647.83 to provide direct assistance and staff support.
- FY23 Infrastructure LIHEAP Funds. Received \$102,232.44 to provide direct assistance.

Office on Aging

Tech Smart. Received \$150,000 from Trinity Health Foundation of East Tennessee to support telehealth training classes for 160 older adults from October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024.

Proposal/Application Summaries

CAC Transit

CAC Transit. Applied for \$5,000 from Public Entity Partners (PEP) to provide driver safety activities, training, and materials for CAC Transit, Volunteer Assisted Transportation (VAT), and Head Start/Early Head Start for FY23-24.

Nutrition Services

Mobile Meals. Applied for \$35,000 from the Casnelli Foundation to provide meals for seniors.

Mobile Meals. Applied for \$15,000 from the Walmac Fund to provide meals for seniors.

Social Services

Youth WINS. Applied for \$8,000 from Empower Knox to purchase incentive gift cards for Youth Action Board participates and winter-care supplies for youth experiencing homelessness.

Dr. Schriver moved to accept the grants, contracts, and applications as presented. Ms. Lula Williams seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

10. PROGRAM UPDATES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ms. Jefferson announced that this was her last CAC board meeting and she has enjoyed serving on the board and learning about the many programs CAC offers. Ms. Doka thanked Ms. Jefferson for her service on the CAC board.

Ms. Monica Brown, Knox PAWS coordinator, informed the board members that the CAC Knox PAWS pets were featured in the book *Magical Dogs 3* by Patti Kerr. Books may be purchased on Amazon, and a percentage of the sales will benefit Knox PAWS. In addition, Backyard Projects donated a new shed to CAC’s Feed-A-Pet program for pet food storage. Lowes associates have assembled the shed in the Major Avenue parking lot.

The following announcements were found in the board packet:

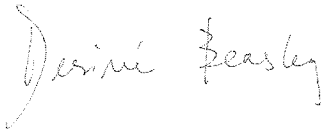
Harvest Festival. Saturday, October 28, 2023, 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm, at Beardsley Farm.

Aging: A Family Affair. Thursday, November 9, 2023, at Rothchild Conference Center from 8:00 am to 3:45 pm. Event cost is \$25 through October 27; after this date the cost will be \$30. You may register online @ knoxseniors.org or call 865-524-2786.

Empty Stocking Fund (ESF) Application. Applications will be taken from Monday, November 13 – Friday, December 1, 2023. ESF provides groceries to prepare a holiday meal and includes a ham. To apply, please call 865-293-4761, or apply online at esfknox.org.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Desiree Beasley".

Desiree Beasley, board secretary