

APPROVED FEBRUARY 27, 2024

Montgomery County Community Action Board
Zoom Meeting
January 23, 2024

MINUTES

CAB Members in Attendance: Valerie Chatfield-Smith, Lisa Conlon, Erika Conner, Denise Fredericks, Jeffery Johnson, Will Kenlaw, Lisette Orellana Engel, Myriam Paul, Timothy Robinson, Mike Subin, and Zelda Wafer-Jones

CAB Members Absent: Elaine Carballo, Pamela Luckett, Evelyn Okutu, and Claudia Simmons

CAA Staff: Shantá Johnson, Charlene Muhammad, Aizat Oladapo, and Leah Goldfine

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 6:05 pm.

Consent Agenda

Mike moved to approve the consent agenda. Zelda seconded the motion and all present voted in favor. The consent agenda included the minutes from the November 28, 2023 meeting, meeting evaluations summary from the November 28, 2023 meeting; Acting Executive Director and Head Start Report; OHS Monitoring Review; FY23 Head Start Self-Assessment; HS background checks FAQs; HS background checks memo; Contracts Report; Staff Liaison's Report; Budget report and P Card update; TESS and Navigation reports; CAB testimony – Council Bill 42-23: Health and Sanitation - Menstrual Products in Public Restrooms – Required; CAB testimony – Board of Education Budget Hearing; December and January CAI workshop evaluation results; VITA flyers in English and Spanish; and FY25 Proposed Maryland Budget Highlights.

CAB Updates

Board members received a detailed written report from the staff liaison ahead of the meeting, which included updates on CAB activities.

Staff shared an update on the CAI. Pam would lead the fourth informational workshop on February 3rd. The workshop would focus on developing testimony. Staff noted that the testimony practice sessions would take place on March 2nd and March 23rd at the County Council Office Building. Volunteers were needed to serve on the mock County Council, providing feedback to participants on their original testimony.

Staff reported that the recruitment process for new board members was underway. The application deadline was January 19th. Volunteers would be needed to serve on the Recruitment Committee to interview applicants and select the applicants to recommend for appointment by the County Executive.

Staff reported that Dr. Johnson had gone above and beyond to participate in MCAP Advocacy Day the week before. Because the event came the day after a snowstorm, Dr. Johnson was the only person from Montgomery County Community Action who was able to attend. He met with several elected officials, highlighting MCAP's priorities for the legislative session.

The board's new Advocacy Committee is meeting weekly to check in about bills the CAB is tracking this session. Committee members will take the lead on drafting testimony.

Dr. Johnson was scheduled to testify before the Board of Education at their budget hearing later in the week. Staff also discussed the idea of scheduling meetings with members of the BOE to highlight the CAB's priorities related to MCPS.

Welcoming Shantá Johnson

Community Action's new Executive Director, Shantá Johnson, introduced herself and had a chance to meet all of the board members virtually.

Executive Director's/Head Start Report

Board members received a detailed written report with updates on Head Start and the agency's programs, along with the monitoring review, HS self-assessment, HS background checks FAQs, and the background checks memo. Charlene noted that HS/PreK registration for the 2024-2025 school year would begin on March 1st. The program was in the process of filling some staff vacancies. Charlene also reported that Head Start staff met with the Children's Opportunity Alliance earlier in the day to discuss opportunities for collaboration.

Contracts

CAB members received a detailed written report with updates on the agency's contract partners. Aizat reported that the contract monitors are working on merging five contracts for FY25 (IMPACT Silver Spring, Caribbean Help, Women Who Care Ministries, Manna Food Center, and Catholic Charities). It was also noted that some proposals were received for the employment and training RFP. Some of the agency's bridge grants did not receive DPO approval due to different signatory of the agreement and that of the extension. The partners will need to submit an authorization memo/email with reference to the new person signing. The Office of Grants Management is working on DPOs so that the extension payments can be issued by April for our partners with grant agreements. Aizat reported that the County allocated additional funding for Manna Food Center's Farm to Food program and main food distribution program, and staff are still working to get it to County Council to add the funding to the non-competitive list. Manna has updated their FY24 scope of work and budget.

Aizat, Marwan, and Leah were working together to complete the CSBG Organizational Standards report. The agency received an extension and would have the final report ready by the end of the week.

Open Forum

Board members discussed recent issues within MCPS leadership.

The board received an update on a prior discussion about potential exceptions to the eligibility requirements for the VITA program. Staff reported that VITA will require County residency in all cases but may allow for exceptions to the income limit in very special circumstances such as homelessness or a serious health issue. Such requests will be referred to VITA staff to determine if the program will provide services to the requesting individual.

Adjournment: The meeting ended at 6:53 pm.