

APPROVED JANUARY 23, 2024

Montgomery County Community Action Board
Zoom Meeting
November 28, 2023

MINUTES

CAB Members in Attendance: Elaine Carballo, Valerie Chatfield-Smith, Lisa Conlon, Denise Fredericks, Jeffery Johnson, Will Kenlaw, Pamela Luckett, Lisette Orellana Engel, Myriam Paul, Timothy Robinson, Claudia Simmons, Mike Subin, and Zelda Wafer-Jones

CAB Members Absent: Erika Conner, Danette Lawrence, and Evelyn Okutu

CAA Staff: Charlene Muhammad and Leah Goldfine

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 6:04 pm.

Consent Agenda

Mike moved to approve the consent agenda. Lisette seconded the motion and all present voted in favor. The consent agenda included the October 24, 2023 meeting minutes and meeting evaluations summary; Head Start Report; Contracts Report; Staff Liaison's Report; Budget report and P Card update; TESS and Navigation reports; VITA report; CAB testimony – Joint Delegation Priorities Hearing; CAB Advocacy Plan; November CAI Workshop evaluation results; Self-Sufficiency Standard press release; Self-Sufficiency Standard handout; Bill 42-23: Health and Sanitation – Menstrual Products in Public Restrooms – Required; Information about period poverty; and Boston Globe article about period poverty.

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 that the next CAI workshop would take place on December 9th and would feature issue experts covering a wide range of topics. All board members were invited to attend.

Board members were invited to attend the Self-Sufficiency Standard briefing session for County Councilmembers on December 5th. Zelda would lead a presentation about the SSS and Katie Medina from CountyStat would lead a demonstration of the new Interactive SSS.

Board members were reminded of the County's weather cancellation policy for Board, Committee, and Commission meetings. Staff also shared an update on the County's guidance regarding Zoom meetings for BCCs. The County's recommendation was that the chat function on Zoom be disabled. The concern is that people may not be able to see/read the chat and would therefore miss out on the discussion occurring there. Board members felt strongly that the chat was a helpful tool to share information during meetings. It was recommended that some parameters should be set that would ensure

transparency, though, and these parameters could be shared with County Executive’s liaison for BCCs. Additionally, the recommendation that the chat feature allowing people to send personal messages to each other could be turned off to reduce side conversations.

Staff shared that Dr. Johnson had testified at the Joint Delegation hearing on November 13th. The testimony was included in the meeting materials. Staff also shared a new CAB advocacy plan, which was reviewed by the Executive Committee earlier in the month. The plan entails forming an Advocacy Committee that would take the lead on writing testimony for state level bills. The Committee will initially meet weekly to check in and determine who will take the lead on drafting testimony for different bills. Mike, Evelyn, and Zelda volunteered to serve on the Committee and Lisa and Myriam also expressed interest. Evelyn moved to approve the advocacy plan and Valerie seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

The board reviewed an action item regarding County Council Bill 42-23: Health and Sanitation – Menstrual Products in Public Restrooms – Required. This bill would require menstrual hygiene products in public restrooms. Board members received the text of the bill and information about period poverty with their meeting materials. Board members discussed this bill, expressing various opinions. Many board members recognized the significance of this issue, noting that SNAP and other programs do not cover the cost of menstrual hygiene products. It was also noted that the CAB had previously supported legislation aimed at reducing period poverty. Other board members expressed concern that this bill may place a strain on businesses and wondered about other opportunities to ensure that residents have access to these products. Lisette moved to support the bill and Zelda seconded the motion. Mike voted against the motion and all other board members voted in favor.

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 program-specific reports. Charlene noted that seven bridge contracts remained outstanding at the time of the meeting. Charlene thanked the several board members who participated in a thoughtful discussion about VITA eligibility and potential exceptions to the eligibility requirements.

Charlene shared that the monitoring report for the CLASS review conducted the previous month indicated above average scores. The agency had not received the Focus Area-2 monitoring report at the time of the meeting.

Contracts

CAB members received a detailed written report with updates on the agency’s contract partners.

Adjournment: The meeting ended at 7:03 pm.