

**APPROVED JUNE 26, 2018**

Montgomery County Community Action Board Meeting  
April 24, 2018  
1401 Rockville Pike, Room 3603

## **MINUTES**

**CAB Members Present:** Isaac Osei Asare, Mary Bennett, Lisa Conlon, Jackie Dennard, Lisette Engel, Gail Gunod-Green, Laura Irwin, Ron Jennings, Tiffany Jones, Agnes Leshner, Pamela Lockett, Steve Ruffin, Mike Subin, and Zelda Wafer-Alonge

**CAB Members Absent:** Alejandro Becerra, Valerie Chatfield-Smith, Stacy Coletta, and Juliette Traore

**Guests:** Blaise Brennan (University of Maryland student), Beverly Coleman (Montgomery College EOC), Maggie Loughlin (University of Maryland student), Robyn Muncy (University of Maryland Professor), and Michael Soucane (University of Maryland student)

**Staff:** Sharon Strauss, Charlene Muhammad, Aizat Oladapo, Erica Bentley, and Leah Goldfine

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 7:10 pm.

The meeting started with introductions of Board members, staff, and guests. The Board was joined by Professor Robyn Muncy and students from her course on The Great Society. Some students had volunteered with the VITA program while others had volunteered at the Head Start office.

**Consent Agenda:** Mike moved to approve the consent agenda and Mary seconded the motion. All voted in favor. The consent agenda included the March 27, 2018 CAB meeting minutes, meeting evaluations summary from the March meeting, Head Start report, Head Start P Card statement and grant updates (email only), contracts report, CAI report and workshop evaluation summary (email only), Community Action Awards Report (email only), Advisory Committee on Consumer Protection Report (email only), and Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Report (email only).

**Executive Director's Update:** Sharon provided a written report with updates on VITA, TESS, HR matters, and agency operations. Sharon reported that the new VITA Program Specialist Abiola Abodunrin has started with the agency as a County employee. The vacancy at the TESS Community Action Center has not been filled due to a hiring freeze in the County.

Sharon reported that the CAFE Montgomery Financial Capability Symposium and the Interactive Self-Sufficiency Standard focus group went well. For the focus group, participants broke-up into small groups to discuss how the tool can be used by their agencies and other service providers. There have been several presentations on the SSS since its release. Through the CASH Campaign of

Maryland, we have co-presented at four events focusing on data, with a panel of presenters describing the SSS, United Way's ALICE Report, and Prosperity Now's Scorecard. Most recently, CAB members Laura and Lisette presented at the launch of the Annapolis/Anne Arundel County Financial Education Coalition.

The annual Maryland Community Action Partnership (MCAP) Human Services Conference takes place during the first week of May. The event will include a forum with the Maryland gubernatorial candidates.

Sharon reported that Community Action has been involved in the County Council's work to finalize the FY19 budget. In addition to Pam's testimony on the CAB's priorities, CAA staff have attended various worksessions about early childhood services and VITA.

Sharon reported that the VITA program's numbers are down this year. There are several possible reasons for the drop in numbers, including the tax refund delay causing residents to go to paid preparers to receive their refunds immediately; immigration concerns; and structural changes in the VITA Partnership this year, which included leaving the popular Wheaton site, changing the Gaithersburg site and losing hours there. VITA's off-season appointments will begin in June and continue through October. Appointments will be available at TESS (Tuesdays) and Rockville (Wednesdays and Thursdays). Sharon explained the VITA statistics and offered to forward the trends report that was submitted to the County Council.

Sharon reported that the WorkSource Montgomery (WSM) Resource Sharing Agreement has been updated and requested that the draft be approved by the Board. This agreement is part of the requirements of the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) with costs assigned to each of the required partners according to a formula created by WSM. Sharon described the agency's plan to commit in-kind resources (training, tax preparation sessions, flyers, presentations, and consultation). Board members recommended adding language to the agreement stating that it was contingent on CSBG funding in FY19. Mary moved to approve the agreement after language was added regarding the contingency on CSBG funding. Lisette seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

Head Start Update: Board members reviewed Charlene's monitoring visits report and the CLASS results. Charlene explained that the County is fully-compliant with the Head Start requirements.

Tiffany reported that Dr. Deann Collins met with the Head Start Parents Policy Council's Executive Committee. The Committee members shared their feedback and concerns with the selection process for the new Head Start supervisor position. Deann said she would share their concerns with Dr. Maria Navarro and Dr. Erick Lang at MCPS. Tiffany and Pam were scheduled to meet with DHHS Director Uma Ahluwalia and Dr. Maria Navarro on May 4.

Pam expressed the Board's concerns regarding the supervisor position during testimony given at a County Council Budget Hearing. There has been some follow-up from Councilmembers and DHHS Director Uma Ahluwalia called Pam to express her support. Pam reported that she also met with Council President Hans Riemer with Sharon and Monica Ortiz, Policy Officer for Early Care and

Education. Mr. Riemer is considering budget options to expand early care and education and to improve access to WPA. Charlene noted that MCPS has presented several proposals to the Council to expand Head Start/PreK next year, including one option to expand part-day Head Start classes to full-day programs at seven schools.

With regard to the Supervisor position, the Policy Council had not voted yet so it is unknown if they will go to impasse.

**Contracts:** Board members received a written update on the agency's contracts. The Community Review for YMCA has been finalized. One major concern involved concerns regarding the program location. The program has moved to different venues multiple times in the past few years. Staff will share the final report with CAB members.

**CAB Updates:** CAB members received updated bylaws at the March meeting. The bylaws included language requiring that interviews be conducted with staff and Board members present for nonprofit representatives, not just low-income representatives. Gail moved to accept the revised bylaws. Mike seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

Board members submitted ballots for the FY19 Executive Committee. Ballots were counted by staff and guest Beverly Coleman. There were no write-ins. The new EC members are:

Chair: Laura Irwin

Vice Chair: Tiffany Jones

Secretary: Gail Gunod-Green

At Large: Isaac Osei Asare, Mary Bennett, Lisette Engel, and Mike Subin

Board members received the CAB's testimony from the public hearing for Bill 14-18, which would require the development of a strategic plan to reduce poverty and increase economic opportunity in the County. The CAA was not mentioned in the text of the bill but the CAB's testimony emphasized the mission of Community Action, its enabling legislation, and the agency's required role in developing such a plan. Pam noted that there will be follow-up with A Wider Circle and Interfaith Works, both of which testified in support of this bill.

**Announcements:** Lisa shared that the Head Start/PreK telephone number was recently changed. The old number will remain in service until July 1. The new number is 240-740-4530.

Pam asked the guests if they had any questions. There were questions about agreement on action items and groups that the Board members represent.

**Adjourn:** The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 pm.