

## APPROVED MARCH 27, 2018

Montgomery County Community Action Board Meeting  
February 27, 2018  
1401 Rockville Pike, Room 3603

### MINUTES

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

**CAB Members Absent:** Alejandro Becerra, Stacy Coletta, Lisette Engel, and Juliette Traore

**Guests:** Beverly Coleman, Montgomery College; Erica Jackson, MCPS/MCEA; and Lauren Moskowitz, MCPS/MCEA

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

**Meeting with MCPS Administrators:** Prior to the start of the CAB meeting, Board members met with MCPS Administrators Dr. Deann Collins, Dr. Erick Lang, and Nikki Hazel. The meeting allowed Board members the opportunity to discuss their concerns regarding the elimination of a supervisor position within the Head Start/PreK program. The next steps include presenting the selected candidate for the supervisor position to the Head Start Policy Council for approval and to the CAB. Both governing bodies will review the candidate's resume and have an opportunity to ask questions. The new supervisor is scheduled to start on July 1, 2018, which allows some time for staff and the governing bodies to discuss the transition plan. MCPS is committed to continuing to work closely with the Policy Council and CAB to ensure adequate oversight of the Head Start program.

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 7:23 pm.

**Consent Agenda:** Mary moved to accept the consent agenda and Agnes seconded the motion. All voted in favor. The consent agenda included the January 23, 2018 CAB meeting minutes; Executive Director's report; Head Start report; Head Start grant update (email only); Head Start P Card statement (email only); CAA contracts report; CAB testimony for HB 519 – Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit (email only), HB 659 – Community Action Agencies – Continuity of Funds (email only), HB 547 – Head Start funding (email only), HB 191 – Marriage age (email only), HB 856 – EITC expansion (email only); CAB Letter to BOE re: Proposed MCPS budget; CAI report and workshop evaluations summary (email only); Advisory Committee on Consumer Protection report (email only); and Parks and Recreation Advisory Board report (email only).

**Executive Director's Report:** Sharon reported that the agency was closing out the FY17 CSBG and moving into the FY18 grant. The proposed federal budget calls for an elimination of the CSBG. The Community Action network is advocating for full funding and working to share the

“Community Action story” with the public and elected officials. A proposed bill in Maryland would ensure funding for Community Action Agencies across the state if federal funds are eliminated or reduced. CAB submitted testimony in support of this bill. Birtucan Assres joined with Community Action partners and clients at a hearing in Annapolis to testify in support of the legislation, emphasizing the critical role TESS Center in responding to the Flower Branch Apartment fire and helping community members in its aftermath. The House bill received a favorable report from the Committee and will now go to the full House. A companion Senate bill is being sponsored by Sen. Richard Madaleno.

Sharon reported that there is a great deal of attention on two-generational approaches to ending poverty. The approach includes incorporating blended/braided funding and giving people enough income to be self-sufficient. Pam noted that Councilmember Berliner’s workgroup is also focusing on the two-generational model and is utilizing the Self-Sufficiency Standard in its efforts. Sharon highlighted the East County Opportunity Zone and Community Action’s role in bringing VITA and financial education services to East County, as well as working with colleagues to align outcomes and data reporting. She noted that Community Action signed a Memorandum of Understanding with WorkSource Montgomery (WSM) which is required by the federal government through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and as part of the Resource Sharing Agreement, has been offering financial education workshops and VITA in collaboration with WSM, and support of its two-gen pilot.

The VITA program is planning a Super VITA Day in East County, as well as in Gaithersburg. Sharon reported that interviews for the vacancy in the VITA program have been completed and the agency has submitted its recommendation to Human Resources. VITA has some new sites this tax season, including the Gilchrist Center’s new location behind Wheaton Mall. There are 60 certified volunteers preparing taxes this year, along with additional volunteers supporting the program in other ways. Food resources outreach volunteers are being trained and will serve at VITA sites throughout the County. These volunteers provide information and referrals for food and nutrition programs available in the County. Lisa asked if these volunteers might be able to help at Head Start sites and at the annual Head Start Health Fair. Staff will look into this opportunity.

Head Start Report: Charlene reported that the Head Start Federal review went well. Although staff received little feedback from the reviewers at the time of the visit, the agency will receive a detailed report within six weeks. The reviewers did note the commitment and passion of the staff. Charlene reported that the CLASS assessment, which involves reviewers observing Head Start classes, also went well. The agency should receive the results of the assessment within two weeks.

Charlene reported that the FY19 grant application is due April 1. The format is different this year and staff has been asked to submit a cost allocation plan.

**Contracts:** Aizat reported that she and Melissa are completing their monitoring visits. Renewals are due by mid-March. Budget modifications are due now and there are two contracts requesting modifications this year. Aizat noted that the Employment and Training Request for Proposals closes on March 19. Four applicants attended the RFP pre-submission meeting.

A question was raised regarding the corrective action plan for CAA partner Legal Aid Bureau. Aizat explained that the organization was originally supposed to assist clients with health care enrollment. Due to federal restrictions on some of the funding Legal Aid receives, they were unable to offer this service to undocumented residents and this caused their numbers to be lower than expected. Part of the corrective action plan is to redirect clients to other organizations that can assist them.

**CAB Updates:** At the January CAB meeting, Board members were presented with updated bylaws for their review. CAB discussed the proposed changes, which included editing the language regarding the democratic election and appointment process for low-income representatives, the conflict of interest policy regarding CAB members voting on a matter connected to an organization they represent or work for, and the responsibilities of the CAB secretary. Isaac noted a typo in the new section about the secretary's responsibilities [add the word "for"] but also asked about language regarding the interview process for low-income representatives on the Board. The proposed language stated that CAB members and/or staff would interview applicants. Isaac recommended editing the language so that both CAB members and staff would participate in the interviews. The Board discussed this. Agnes moved to accept both of Isaac's recommended changes, including fixing the typo under Article IV Section 2 and dropping the word "or" from Article III, section 2(a)(1). Mike seconded the motion. Upon further discussion, some Board members expressed concern that there may be times when both staff and CAB members are not available to interview applicants, although it is best practice. Changing the bylaws to require this may pose a challenge. Some Board members felt that the current wording allows for more flexibility. Gail moved to amend the first motion so that it would entail keeping the proposed wording in Article III, section 2(a)(1) and adding the word "for" in the section regarding the secretary's responsibilities. Pam seconded the motion. Eleven Board members voted in favor and three opposed. Laura moved to approve the bylaws with the proposed change. Agnes seconded the motion. Thirteen voted in favor and one opposed.

Board members discussed the roll-out of the Interactive Self-Sufficiency Standard and how to share this tool with the community, including service providers. Sharon noted that many partners have expressed their interest in using the tool in various ways. The tool can be used in clinical work with families in strategizing for a budget, preparing for the "cliff effect", for organizations determining eligibility for services, and much more. Sharon noted that some Community Action Agencies incorporate a matrix into their client work, which tracks clients from "crisis" to "thriving." Clients could be tracked using the Self-Sufficiency Standard. Several Board members are interested in being trained on the Interactive SSS. Staff will schedule a training for CAB members who want to learn more about the tool and how to present the tool to community organizations.

Board members received an update on the Community Action Awards Celebration on May 22. The program will include the CAI gradation, a CAA 50th anniversary video, presentation of three awards to CAA volunteers and partner organizations, and a Proclamation honoring Community Action month. This year's Marcia Plater Award will honor an exceptional VITA volunteer or VITA initiative. The Gerald Roper, Sr. Award will honor an exceptional TESS volunteer or TESS initiative.

These awards will be selected by the staff of the respective programs. It was recommended that the staff be provided with some guidelines for selecting the winners. The Awards Planning Committee will select the winner of the Henry Dixon Award, which will honor an innovative program at one of the agency's partner organizations. All CAA partners have received the online nomination form for the Dixon Award and have been asked to submit nominations by March 15.

Board members discussed the proposed CAI Consortium plan. The idea for the Consortium is that organizations reaching out to the CAB to use the CAI curriculum or request that a Board member facilitate one of their workshops, must join the Consortium. The organization would then become a CAI partner. The CAB would be acknowledged if any of its materials are used in the organization's programs. If an organization wishes to implement its own CAI, they would need to send a representative to the full CAI program in a "train the trainer" model. Board members reviewed a draft letter, CAI Consortium overview, and agreement form. These documents will need to be reviewed and approved by the County Attorney. In the meantime, Montgomery Housing Partnership has reached out to CAB to request that a Board member facilitate a workshop about political advocacy during their leadership training program. It was recommended that MHP could review the draft CAI Consortium agreement and indicate whether or not they would agree to it upon approval by the County Attorney. Gail moved to proceed with the partnership with MHP, allowing them to use CAI materials and have a CAB member facilitate a workshop, while submitting the draft CAI Consortium agreement to the County Attorney for approval. Laura seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

**Announcements:** The Single Parent Conference will take place on August 11, 9 am – 2 pm, at Montgomery College.

Head Start registration begins March 15 at the Head Start office and at multiple sites throughout the County. All CAB members received electronic and printed outreach flyers to share with their networks.

**Adjourn:** The meeting was adjourned at 8:39 pm.