

APPROVED FEBRUARY 26, 2019

Montgomery County Community Action Board Meeting
January 22, 2019
1401 Rockville Pike, Room 3603

MINUTES

CAB Members Present: Isaac Osei Asare, Mary Bennett, Valerie Chatfield-Smith, Lisa Conlon, Lisette Engel, Janice Freeman, Gail Gunod-Green, Laura Irwin, Ron Jennings, Tiffany Jones, Will Kenlaw, Pamela Lockett, Steve Ruffin, and Zelda Wafer-Alonge

CAB Members Absent: Jackie Dennard, Agnes Leshner, Myriam Paul, and Mike Subin

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

Guest: Beverly Coleman

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm.

Consent Agenda

The consent agenda included the following documents: minutes from the November 27, 2018 CAB meeting, meeting evaluations summary from the November 27, 2018 CAB meeting (email only), Executive Director's report, Head Start report, P card statements and grant update (email only), Contracts report, Food Council report, Staff Liaison's report (email only), Council Grants Advisory Committee demographic information report (email only), Council Grants Advisory Committee membership list with CAB and CAI participants noted (email only), CAB testimony for the Board of Education budget hearing (email only), CAI workshop evaluations summary (email only), and Advisory Committee on Consumer Protection report (email only).

A mistake on page 2 was noted in the November minutes. Gail moved to approve the consent agenda with the updated minutes. Mary seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

CAB Updates

The Board established an Awards Committee to help plan the event and select the winner of the Henry Dixon Award, which honors an innovative program at a Community Action partner organization. Lisette, Gail, Lisa, and Valerie volunteered to serve on the Committee. Staff offered to reach out to Isaac as well, who served on the Committee in 2018.

Board members reviewed the CASH Campaign of Maryland's 2019 Legislative Agenda. The agenda includes state and federal issues, along with Baltimore City priorities (where the CASH Campaign is based). Many of the issues listed are historic priorities for the CAB, including EITC expansion, limiting payday lending, ending discrimination in auto insurance, and establishing tax refund savings plans. Pam asked about whether there might be opportunities for CAB to support legislation to help furloughed workers, including contractors, affected by the government

shutdown. Additionally, how will furloughed workers be impacted when they need to file their taxes? CAB may want to explore policies that could protect furloughed workers from predatory lending. Staff offered to share this feedback with the CASH Campaign. Gail moved to support the state and federal legislation on the CASH Campaign of Maryland's Legislative Agenda. Ron seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

Board members received a recruitment plan, which included updates on how the Board and staff were working to fill six current vacancies on the Board. The state is now requiring all CAB vacancies to be reported with a plan to fill the positions. Lisette moved to approve the recruitment plan as presented. Gail seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

Staff updated the Board on meetings that had been scheduled with County Councilmembers. All Board members are invited to participate in these meetings. The goal of the meetings are to familiarize officials with the work of the agency, and for Board members to share CAB's priorities while identifying areas of mutual interest for collaboration with Councilmembers and their staff.

Contracts and Food Council Updates

Board members received a written update on the CAA contracts and the Food Council. Aizat provided an overview of the FY19 contracts. All of the Community Action Agency's contracts, except for one are non-competitive grants, meaning that they are contracts that are funded without being open to competition, some of these contracts have funded for many years. Monitoring visits ensure that the organizations are in compliance with their Contract requirements. Aizat explained that letter contracts are less than \$30,000. These contracts only go through the Department and do not go through Procurement. Aizat and Melissa receive monthly reports and invoices, which must be cross-checked with the entire budget. Summaries of the monthly reports go to Sharon and Betty for review and the CAB receives an Contract partners update each month. Aizat explained that if an organization wants to make a change amounting to more than 10% of its budget, they must complete a budget modification process. Aizat explained that there are many levels of review for contracts and a lot of oversight. Invoices must be tracked to see how much has been spent during the year and to ensure expenditure is in line with the original budget submitted at the beginning of the fiscal year.

Aizat noted that this year included some changes to the grant application process. There is one application for Council and County Executive grants.

Aizat reported that she is working with the Weekend Bags program to see if the two expansion contracts can be merged into one contract. Manna Food Center has six contracts and they would like to reduce this number. Previously, merging only base budget contracts were being considered, but in view of the Office of Legislative Oversight's Report on Community Grants, other contracts may be considered.

Aizat noted that due to the Government shutdown, contract monitors have been asked to process invoices immediately so that organizations can provide services for furloughed workers.

A question was raised about one of the contracts that provide “wrap around” services. It was explained that this refers to addressing the overall needs of individuals and the entire family.

Aizat reported that she attended the Pathways to Excellence training program for ROMA trainers. Agencies have been asked to select two of the Organizational Standards and evaluate what their agency is doing to meet these standards. Staff will put together a packet by April and will receive feedback. Staff welcomes the Board’s input as well.

Board members reviewed the National Impact Report that NCAP has developed. Agencies will have an editable version that they can use to highlight their outcomes.

Head Start Updates

Board members received a written report and a copy of the FY20 funding letter. CAB members also received a presentation via email about the MSDE Preschool Development Grants. Charlene reported that the funding letter indicates a \$5.1 million budget for FY20, which includes a COLA for staff. Charlene explained that this is year five of the five-year grant cycle. Staff and Board members will need to start thinking about what the next five-year cycle will look like. There may be some mandated changes to incorporate. Charlene noted that many states have gone to a birth through five model. The Community Needs Assessment will drive what the program must do in the years to come.

Executive Director’s Updates

Board members received a written report with updates on personnel, TESS, the VITA program, and other agency efforts. Sharon reported that the Executive Committee meeting included a discussion with Maureen Larenes, Manager of the TESS Community Action Center, and Long Branch partners from CHEER and the Judy Center. Several organizations in the Long Branch neighborhood have voiced concerns about changes affecting the community. Additionally, there are longstanding facility issues at TESS regarding ADA compliance. The building lease ends in 2020 and new facilities are being explored.

Sharon reported that staff worked with facilities staff to create a program of requirements. This list outlined what is needed to continue current TESS services and what would be ideal to enhance service delivery. The list was submitted to General Services and they will use this list to identify a new space for TESS. Sharon noted that there are limited options within a one-mile radius of TESS. Staff explored several venues but none fit the requirements perfectly. A question was raised about adding space to a current venue such as a library or community center. Adding to the CIP budget traditionally requires a longer period of time. Members felt that bringing this issue to Councilmembers and the new CE could expedite potential solutions. It was noted that TESS facility can also be highlighted within CAB’s priorities during the upcoming meetings with County Councilmembers. As part of CSBG requirement (Community Needs Assessment), staff will be gathering information from partners at the next Long Branch partners meeting and plans to conduct a survey to better understand community needs and opportunities.

Sharon reported that the VITA press release announcing the 2018 tax season was issued that day. The CASHBACK website is up-to-date with appointment schedules. Ride On bus advertisements

have been installed and are now circulating throughout the County. She noted that several snowdates will reduce participation, as the program follows the MCPS calendar to assure adequate volunteer staffing.

Announcements

Gail reported that the Department of Recreation was hosting a summer camp fair on January 26 at the Nancy Dacek Community Center. Families can apply for financial aid and assistance is available for furloughed federal workers. It was noted that a second event would also take place on January 26 for furloughed federal workers, which would connect these workers with resources. Information would be shared via email.

Head Start/PreK registration for the 2019-2020 school year starts on March 1. Lisa reported that as part of a pilot program, two schools, Roscoe Nix and Acrola Elementary Schools, will begin the school year in July.

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