

**APPROVED APRIL 24, 2018**

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

**MINUTES**

**CAB Members Present:** Isaac Osei Asare, Mary Bennett, Valerie Chatfield-Smith, 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, Stacy Coletta, and Juliette Traore

**Guests:** Beverly Coleman (Montgomery College), Deann Collins (MCPS), Dr. Erick Lang (MCPS); Alison Skees (Head Start Parents Policy Council) and Verna Washington (MCPS)

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

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 7:06 pm.

**Consent Agenda:** Mike moved to accept the consent agenda and Mary seconded the motion. All voted in favor. The consent agenda included the February 27, 2018 CAB meeting minutes; summary of meeting evaluations from the February 27, 2018 CAB meeting; Executive Director's report; Head Start report; Head Start grant update (email only); Head Start P Card statement (email only); CAA contracts report; Women Who Care Ministries Satisfaction Survey (email only); CAB Testimony – HB 1224 – Ending Youth Homelessness Act of 2018 (email only); CAB Report for Quarterly Meeting with Uma Ahluwalia for B/C/C Leadership (email only); CAI Report and workshop evaluation summary (email only); Advisory Committee on Consumer Protection Committee Report; and Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Report.

**Head Start Update:** CAB's Policy Council shared that Deann Collins had attended the Head Start Parents Policy Council meeting earlier in the month to present Verna Washington as the selected candidate for the Head Start Supervisor position. At the PC meeting, Verna shared a presentation about herself and her qualifications and a Q & A session was held. Following the presentation, staff left the room and the members of the Policy Council continued their discussion. The Policy Council determined that they could not vote to approve Verna for this position because they did not have enough information. It was unclear from the organizational chart presented how many Supervisor positions would exist. The chart indicated that there were two supervisors but the Policy Council had previously been informed that there would only be one supervisor. If there are still two positions, why was there a personnel change? The Policy Council held a follow-up conference call and determined that they could not vote on the position, as they were still unclear how the final candidate was selected, and why this change was made.

Following the update, the Board discussed the need for a written agreement explaining the Board's position and confirming the role of MCPS, the Policy Council, and CAB.

**Discussion with MCPS Administrators:** Deann Collins, Erick Lang, and Verna Washington led a discussion about the Head Start Supervisor position and Verna's selection for this position. Verna shared a presentation about herself that highlighted her qualifications.

The Board members engaged in a Question and Answer session with MCPS staff. Pam explained the federal grant requirements that mandate approval by the Policy Council and CAB before a supervisor or other leadership position in Head Start may be filled. Moving forward, the governing bodies need better communication and more clarity from MCPS as decisions are being considered by the Delegate that affect the grant.

Verna was asked about her knowledge of Head Start regulations and need for training. Verna explained that she currently works closely with the Head Start Manager and there is a lot of overlap between her position and the Head Start Supervisor position. She explained that she has been studying the Head Start Performance Standards and will continue to study these regulations through the ECLCK website and other resources. She emphasized that she can call on other staff for guidance and collaboration. Deann reported that there are training needs among staff members and she intends to assess these needs. Pam stated that there are conferences throughout the year in which MCPS staff members can participate.

Zelda asked about the organizational chart and whether or not there was a ever the possibility of just one supervisor position. Erick explained that there are currently three supervisors: Nechelle is the Title I Supervisor, Verna is the Pre-K Supervisor, and Claudia is the Head Start Supervisor. Merging the Pre-K and Head Start supervisor positions into one will increase efficiency and address MCPS budget concerns.

Zelda asked if anyone at MCPS knew about the approval requirements for the Head Start Supervisor position. Erick reported that they did not know. They believed that including a Head Start parent in the interview process would fulfill the requirements. Pam clarified that the main concern was the lack of participation for the Policy Council and CAB in the decision-making process. Erick described MCPS' process of selecting administrators, and it was noted that participants do not vote or score candidates. Pam explained that moving forward, the Board and Policy Council need a commitment that they would be included in the decision-making process. Erick confirmed that yes, Community Action, CAB, the Policy Council, MCPS, DHHS, and other involved parties would be included.

Steve asked where MCPS was in the process. Erick explained that the interviews have been completed, a candidate selected, and the Board of Education had already approved the selected candidate for this position, effective July 1st. Erick apologized for the mistake in the initial process of not including CAB and the Policy Council. CAB would like to develop a memo explaining the process to be used moving forward when positions must be filled in Head Start. Following this discussion, Erick, Deann, and Verna left the meeting.

**Head Start Update Continued:** Zelda reiterated the PC's concern that the program is out of compliance with the Head Start grant requirements, which could jeopardize the grant. The issue in this situation is that the CAB and Policy Council were not asked to approve the position before the candidate was appointed. Pam stated to ensure this does not happen again, CAB and the Policy Council would give MCPS further guidance, and asked for Charlene to review the Head Start impasse procedures, utilized if the Policy Council does not approve the selected candidate for the Supervisor position. Charlene noted that both parties must select arbitrators who will determine the resolution. In general, the only reason to not approve a position is if the selected candidate is not qualified. CAB and Policy Council members repeated their concerns about the level of selected candidate's Head Start experience, given the size and complexity of the program.

Since MCPS was informed by the grantee of the need to obtain Policy Council and CAB approval prior to selecting and appointing the candidate, members discussed an option of requesting that MCPS re-start the process to remain in compliance with the federal regulations. While this step presents challenges, the Board expressed concerns that otherwise, a precedent is set, and MCPS may continue to make decisions without consulting the CAB and Policy Council, including in its hiring of key positions.

Charlene reported that as the Regional Office is aware of the current situation, and CAA has received an extension until May 1 to submit the grant application, there is time to work toward a resolution.

Charlene then provided an overview of the Head Start grant application and proposed budget for FY19. Charlene highlighted the grant and changes in this year's application. CAB members reviewed the proposed budget. Agnes moved to approve the Head Start budget and grant application for FY19 as presented. Ron seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

**Executive Director's Report:** Sharon provided a written report to the CAB members with various updates on the agency's work. She invited all Board members to attend the Interactive Self-Sufficiency Standard focus group session on April 11 at Bohrer Park. Participants will share feedback about how they would recommend using the Interactive SSS in working with clients.

**Contracts:** In addition to a written report, Aizat shared some updates on the contracts. Renewals for base budget contracts are due. Most site visits have been completed, except for Empowered Women International's visit, which was due to it being an off-cycle contract.

**CAB Updates:** CAB members were presented with updated bylaws. It was brought to the staff's attention that applicants for the low-income sector must be interviewed by both staff and Board members. This language was added to the proposed bylaws. Additionally, staff discovered that the section of the bylaws pertaining to applicants for the private organization sector of the Board did not include language about interviews at all. It is considered a best practice to interview these applicants. The same language included in the low-income section was added to the private organization section of the proposed bylaws. Board members will vote to approve the edited bylaws at the April meeting.

Board members received the FY19 Executive Committee slate. Ballots will be submitted at the April meeting.

Board members discussed contacting those running for office to teach them about CAB's role and its priorities. CAB will contact the candidates following the primary elections in June. Staff will contact the County Executive's office first to determine the rules surrounding communication with candidates.

Councilmember Berliner has proposed legislation to develop a strategic plan to reduce poverty and increase economic security. Community Action was not specifically referenced in the plan, despite the agency's mission and enabling County legislation to reduce poverty. Pam has followed-up with Uma about this.

Laura provided an update on the CAB Awards. The Awards Committee met earlier in the evening to review the nominees and select the winner of the Henry Dixon Award for an innovative program at a CAA partner organization. Once the winning program has been notified, the full Board will be informed of the winner. CAB members will also be notified of the winner of the Gerald Roper, Sr. Award for a TESS volunteer or initiative and the Marcia Plater Award for a VITA volunteer or initiative. These two award winners were selected by TESS and VITA staff.

**Announcements:** Lisa reported that since Head Start/PreK registration opened on March 5, MCPS has received 500 applications.

Jackie informed the CAB that Action in Montgomery is hosting a candidates' forum at People's Community Baptist Church on May 31. Jackie will forward information about this forum via email.

**Adjourn:** The meeting was adjourned at 9:06 pm.