

APPROVED APRIL 23, 2019

Montgomery County Community Action Board Meeting
March 26, 2019
Takoma East Silver Spring Center, 8513 Piney Branch Road, Silver Spring

MINUTES

CAB Members Present: Isaac Osei Asare, Mary Bennett, Lisa Conlon, Laura Irwin, Tiffany Jones, Will Kenlaw, Agnes Leshner, Myriam Paul, and Mike Subin

CAB Members Absent: Valerie Chatfield-Smith, Jackie Dennard, Lisette Engel, Janice Freeman, Gail Gunod-Green, Ron Jennings, Pamela Luckett, Steve Ruffin, and Zelda Wafer-Alonge

Staff: Sharon Strauss, Charlene Muhammad, and Maureen Larenas

Guest: Beverly Coleman

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 7:15 pm.

Consent Agenda

Approval of the consent agenda was moved and seconded. All voted in favor. The consent agenda included the following documents: minutes from the February 2019 CAB meeting, meeting evaluations summary from the February 2019 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), CAI workshop evaluations summary (email only), CAB Testimony: Council Bill 4-19 – Pay Equity (email only), CAB Testimony: Council Bill 6-19 – Landlord Tenant (email only), CAB Testimony: HB1411 - VITA Bill, and the Advisory Committee on Consumer Protection report (email only).

Overview of TESS

Maureen Larenas, manager of the Takoma-East Silver Spring (TESS) Center, provided an overview of the services offered at TESS. She explained how walk-in clients are triaged and provided services or referred to other agencies that can assist them. TESS is a Neighborhood Opportunity Network (NON) site and utilizes the EICM for tracking services provided to clients. Maureen explained how TESS partners with numerous organizations, including IMPACT Silver Spring, the Judy Center, Mary's Center, and MCPS to provide critical services to residents. TESS has been an integral part of the Long Branch community for over fifty years and participates in the Long Branch Partners group and the Long Branch Business League. Maureen explained how the Center integrates DHHS services.

Maureen then invited Board members to ask questions. Members asked about the size of the staff (four full-time employees). Lisa noted the important role TESS played following the Flower Branch Apartments fire, and other crisis situations in the County. Maureen answered questions about the

Center's hours of operation and how services are delivered, along with questions about funding (both County and federal CSBG funds support the Center).

Maureen led Board members on a tour of the Center. The Board discussed the facility challenges TESS continues to face, including ADA compliance. Members discussed that the Board has a role to play in advocating for the TESS facility, helping to ensure that the Center has adequate space for all of the services delivered and can remain in the community.

CAB Updates

Sharon provided an overview of the CSBG Annual Report. Mike moved to approve the summary with additional review to approve the final version. Mary seconded the motion and all voted in favor. Board members will have the opportunity to review the full CSBG Annual Report and ask additional questions.

Board members reviewed the Board's FY20 draft budget testimony, as recommended by the executive committee, which addressed the federal grant operating shortfall and the TESS facility. It was recommended that the testimony be reframed to clarify the negative impact of reduced funding through the CSBG grant for operating costs, and to make the case for the County to wholly fund the contract monitor position. Members said that the testimony should emphasize the negative impact of reducing the CSBG operating budget, which has paid for VITA and TESS to assure the delivery of critical services that community members rely upon, and which also has funded the Self-Sufficiency Standard and the CAI. CAB leaders agreed to work with the Board liaison to strengthen this aspect of the testimony.

Mike raised the issue of MCPS funding. He noted that the school system has been reducing funding for partnership programs, including those supported by DHHS, which effects the staff and partners who support these programs. Programs like Linkages to Learning no longer have full-time MCPS staff positions assigned to them. Members recalled that this was essentially the same concern of CAB and Policy Council that emerged last year when the FY19 MCPS budget eliminated a Head Start supervisor position. Members expressed concern about the impact of moving funding from these supportive programs which are designed to assist lower-income children and their families to other priorities of the school system. Mike noted that the Board has an obligation to vulnerable children and needs to work with other advocates to address this trend. It was recommended that the CAB Executive Committee look at the school system budget to understand trends. The chair asked Mike to bring this issue to the EC for further discussion.

The Board formed a Nominating Committee to develop the slate for the FY20 Executive Committee. Mike and Agnes volunteered to serve on the committee. Pam Luckett was also suggested but was not present to confirm. Tiffany offered to serve if needed. The nominating committee will present the Slate to the Board before the April meeting so that ballots may be submitted at that meeting and the new EC installed at the June meeting.

Head Start Updates

Charlene reported that the Head Start program has an opportunity to apply for health and safety funding to build shades at Head Start playgrounds. Isaac moved to approve the application for health and safety funding. Agnes seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

Charlene reported that the Executive Committee approved the grant application at its March 12 meeting. The program does not need to re-compete this year due to high CLASS scores. The program has therefore been invited to submit its five-year grant for FY2021 – 2026. Board members reviewed the CLASS scores comparison between 2018 and 2012.

Executive Director's Updates

Sharon shared an update on the agency's programs and discussed the Community Needs Assessment, which the agency will conduct in the next few months. The Board will have a role to play in this process as well.

The Awards Committee reported that the Board received eight nominations for the Dixon Award. The winner was selected by the Committee at a meeting held prior to the CAB meeting. The winner will be announced to the Board after the winning organization, and the nominees, have been notified.

Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 pm.