

APPROVED SEPTEMBER 22, 2020

Montgomery County Community Action Board Meeting

June 23, 2020

VIRTUAL MEETING

MINUTES

CAB Members Participating Online or Via Telephone: Meredith Bowers, Valerie Chatfield-Smith, Lisa Conlon, Candace Groudine, Laura E. Irwin, Lisette Engel, Ron Jennings, Jeffery Johnson, Tiffany Jones, Will Kenlaw, Danette Lawrence, Pamela Luckett, Myriam Paul, Samuel Sharper, Jr., and Zelda Wafer-Alonge

CAB Members Absent: Agnes Leshner and Mike Subin

Staff: Sharon Strauss, Betty Lam, Aizat Oladapo, and Leah Goldfine

Guest: Fatmata Barrie, Senior Legislative Aide for Councilmember Will Jawando

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm.

Consent Agenda

Lisette moved to approve the consent agenda. Ron seconded the motion and all voted in favor. The consent agenda included: minutes from the April 28, 2020 and May 19, 2020 CAB meetings, meeting evaluations summary from the April 28, 2020 CAB meeting, Executive Director's report, Head Start report, Contracts report, Food Council report, Food Council report, Staff Liaison's report, CAB and HSPPC Joint Statement re: racial equity and promoting social justice, CAB testimony: Council Resolution Declaring Racism a Public Health Crisis, CAB testimony: Council Special Appropriation for Early Care & Education Recovery Fund, P card statements, CAI post-program survey summary, VITA stats report and client survey summary, and TESS report – May 2020.

Installation of New Executive Committee

Sharon, Tiffany, and Leah thanked Laura for her exceptional leadership as CAB Chair. Laura was honored with a special plaque celebrating her service to the Board. The Board was joined by Betty Lam, Chief of the DHHS Office of Community Affairs, who installed the FY21 Executive Committee members:

Chair: Tiffany Jones

Vice Chair: Lisette Engel

Secretary: Myriam Paul

At-large EC members: Meredith Bowers, Jeffery Johnson, Mike Subin, and Zelda Wafer-Alonge

The new EC will serve until June 2021.

CAB Updates

Board members were joined by Fatmata Barrie, Senior Legislative Aide for Councilmember Will Jawando, who discussed County Council Bill 27-20: Police Use of Force. Ms. Barrie explained that the proposed bill defines “use of force” and requires the Montgomery County Police Department to create a policy codifying it. The policy would prohibit chokeholds, raise the necessary standard to what a “reasonable person” would use, require that officers intervene/stop another officer from violating these rules, and protect officers who speak out from retaliation. The proposed bill mirrors the Peace Act proposed by Congress. Board members discussed the bill and asked several questions about the inclusion of de-escalation training and diversity training. Ms. Barrie and Pam noted that other Council initiatives have explored adding more social workers/mental health professionals to the County’s crisis team. The County’s Equity Initiative is developing diversity training that will be required of officers and all County programs. Tiffany moved to support the bill and Ron seconded the motion. It was suggested that the Board’s testimony should support the bill but also recommend that the Council require diversity and anti-racism trainings for officers, along with additional mental health services for community members who require such interventions instead of criminal justice involvement. All voted in favor. Zelda volunteered to testify at the hearing.

The Board members reviewed the proposed FY21 meeting calendar. Sam moved to approve the calendar and Meredith seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Staff discussed the Poor People’s Campaign, a national movement to mobilize communities to address poverty. The Campaign grew out of the Civil Rights Movement, just as Community Action did. It was recommended that CAB participate in the local chapter of the Campaign. Ron and Valerie volunteered to participate in the local monthly meetings. Pam moved to have CAB representation on the Campaign and invite the CAI graduates to participate. Sam seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

Executive Director’s Updates

Sharon reported that the EC approved the CSBG CARES Supplemental Grant application. This funding addresses priority needs identified in the Limited Community Needs Assessment and will provide navigation services to connect residents effected by the pandemic with public benefits and private resources, strengthen the agency’s Whole Family Approach, and support the County’s COVID-19 Rent Relief Program.

Sharon shared a Kresge Foundation presentation that provided an overview of the Whole Family Approach, the racial equity component, and the County’s and agency’s response to COVID-19. Sharon shared additional details about how the CARES funding will enhance TESS services through with the inclusion of an opportunity coach and a mental health counselor at the Center and will sustain the navigator position based at TESS, as well as in the other four County hubs.

Sharon provided an overview of the CSBG Organizational Standards Self-Assessment, which is completed annually by the agency and must be submitted to Maryland's Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) following the Board's approval. The assessment addresses how the agency and Board are meeting the standards for public entities and identifies any areas

that may require improvement. Tiffany moved to approve the Self-Assessment and Ron seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Sharon reviewed the CSBG Annual Report, starting with an overview of the agency's Theory of Change. The Annual Report is part of ROMA Next Gen and CSBG Performance Management. The Annual report is submitted to Maryland's DHCD. After it has been reviewed, DHCD sends it to the National Association for State Community Services Programs (NASCSPP) and the federal Department of Health and Human Services to track CAAs' progress and then shares it with Congress, which funds CSBG. The four parts of the annual report include Module 1 (state level data), Module 2 (expenditures), Module 3 (community level indicators), and Module 4 (individual/family level indicators).

Aizat provided highlights from Module 3 for FY19, including food security indicators (our own reporting, FoodStat data, and Food Council advisory group information) and the County's Early Care and Education Initiative (partnerships and PreK expansion). Aizat reported that Module 4 focused on employment, education, housing, income, and other individual level indicators. We looked to our partners, Head Start, and the CAI for information included in this section. Demographic information for those served (including at TESS) was included here. Meredith moved to accept the CSBG Annual Report and Lisette seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Head Start Update

Lisa shared the story of a PreK student who died of cancer. TESS staff helped to navigate the DHHS services available to the family. She noted that community members trust TESS and this is one of the reasons why the Center is able to help people experiencing extreme adversity.

Lisa noted that Bev Brown retired after 50 years in education – mostly with Montgomery County Head Start. Bev spent her entire career advocating for parents. A virtual retirement party was held for Bev with numerous staff members, parents, and family members in attendance.

Contracts Update

Aizat reported that the County will give additional funds to the weekend bags program contracts due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which has increased demand for services to address food insecurity. The program is provided by three agencies with contracts she monitors. The additional funding will support the program through the summer months of July and August. Aizat is working to finalize approvals.

Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned at 9 pm.