

APPROVED SEPTEMBER 28, 2021

Montgomery County Community Action Board
Virtual Meeting
June 22, 2021, 6 pm

MINUTES

CAB Members in Attendance: Meredith Bowers, Valerie Chatfield-Smith, Lisa Conlon, Erika Conner, Lisette Engel, Will Kenlaw, Candace Groudine, Danette Lawrence, Agnes Leshner, Myriam Paul, Timothy Robinson, and Zelda Wafer-Alonge

CAB Members Absent: Ron Jennings, Jeffery Johnson, Pamela Lockett, and Michael Subin

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

Guest: Tiffany Jones

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 6:08 pm.

Consent Agenda

Meredith moved to approve the consent agenda. Myriam seconded the motion and all voted in favor. The consent agenda included the minutes from the April and May 2021 CAB meetings; April 2021 meeting evaluations summary; Executive Director's Report; TESS report; VITA report; Head Start report; Contracts report; Staff Liaison's report; NCAP Community of Practice Presentation: Overview of Montgomery County; NCAP Community of Practice Presentation: Community Advocacy Institute; CAI Program Evaluation Summary; Committee Packet for County Council Bill 14-21: WFIS; and VITA report for Montgomery County Delegation.

CAB Updates

Staff provided an update on a possible conflict of interest for CAB Chair Tiffany Jones. The issue came up following Tiffany's employment with the BASICS program, which is partially funded by Head Start. A request for a waiver will be submitted to the Ethics Commission so that Tiffany can remain in her role on the CAB. For the time being, the guidance the staff received indicated that Tiffany should not participate in board activities, although she can attend meetings as a guest. Meredith noted Tiffany's professionalism in her work with the BASICS program.

Betty Lam, the DHHS Office of Community Affairs Chief, installed the new CAB Executive Committee for FY22:

Lisette Engel – Vice Chair
Myriam Paul – Secretary

Meredith Bowers, Erika Conner, Jeffery Johnson, Mike Subin, and Zelda Wafer-Alonge – At-Large EC Members

CAB members reviewed the proposed CAB meeting calendar for FY22. One change was made so that the November meeting would take place on the fifth Tuesday of the month (November 30) in anticipation of board members traveling for Thanksgiving. Tim moved to approve the calendar with this change incorporated. Mike seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

Board members discussed the format for meetings starting in September: virtual vs. in-person. It was decided that a survey should be conducted to determine the board members' preference and comfort level. The EC would then review the results and notify the full board of its decision regarding meeting format.

Lisette, Meredith, Zelda, Mike, Myriam, and Erika volunteered to serve on the Recruitment Committee, which would develop a recruitment plan and interview applicants for the vacancies on the CAB.

Staff noted that the board would be collaborating with the Commission on Aging to host a one-time advocacy training workshop for the COA members.

A planning meeting for the CAI would be scheduled to discuss the 2021 – 2022 CAI. Recruitment would begin in July.

Executive Director's Report

Sharon reported that additional ARPA funding for VITA had not been approved by the County Council, as was noted in her written report.

There had been some recent discussions about weatherization. Sharon noted that many Community Action Agencies provide weatherization. Our agency does not provide this service but the Howard County CAA covers Montgomery County residents.

The County's Intergovernmental Relations Team had requested some information about VITA and two-gen/whole family programs on behalf of Delegate Pam Queen. Sharon provided a report, which was included with her written report to the CAB.

Sharon reported that the texting campaign for EITC outreach reached over 37,000 households. VITA appointments for the off-season will be hybrid with some appointments in-person and others held virtually.

Head Start

Charlene reported that the Head Start program received additional funding through the ARPA. The program received \$970,000 to be spent in two years by 2023.

In preparation for the Head Start federal monitoring visit, a survey of CAB members would be conducted on Survey Monkey. The questions would be open-ended and board members were advised to note when they did not know about a certain topic. This would help determine training needs.

Lisa noted that the Head Start/PreK Ride On bus signs are now up and helping to recruit children for the programs. At the time, 1,446 applications had been submitted for four-year-olds and 73 for three-year-olds. Lisa also noted that two special food distribution events for Head Start families were held on May 22 and June 12.

Contracts/Food Council

Aizat reported that all invoices had been submitted. She and Melissa were working on accruals so that funds could be carried over for the contracts into the next year. Partners submitted their budgets for the upcoming inflationary adjustment. Off-cycle budgets needed to be submitted as well. Aizat noted that Women Who Care Ministries received additional funds to support their weekend backpacks program.

The Montgomery County Food Council is still hosting two meetings each month to discuss important topics impacting food providers in the County. The Council's Racial Equity Committee, which Aizat is a part of, is continuing with its work.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 7:10 pm.