

APPROVED MAY 10, 2022

Montgomery County Community Action Board
Virtual Meeting
March 22, 2022

MINUTES

CAB Members in Attendance: Elaine Carballo, Valerie Chatfield-Smith, Lisa Conlon, Erika Conner, Lisette Orellana Engel, Denise Fredericks, Candace Groudine, Jeffery Johnson, Tiffany Jones, Will Kenlaw, Pamela Luckett, Eneshal Miller, Myriam Paul, Timothy Robinson, Claudia Simmons, Mike Subin, and Zelda Wafer-Jones

CAB Member Absent: Danette Lawrence

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

Guests: Francisca Moraga Lopez, Schai Schairer, and Rico Vest

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 6:09 pm.

Consent Agenda

Tim moved to approve the consent agenda and Erika seconded the motion. All voted in favor. The consent agenda included the minutes from the February 22, 2022 meeting; meeting evaluations summary from the February 22, 2022 meeting; Executive Director's Report; Head Start Report; Contracts Report; Staff Liaison's Report; TESS report; VITA stats; Budget update; CAI workshop evaluation results summary; Consumer Protection reports; CAB/HSPPC letter to Board of Education re: Blueprint funding request; Draft bylaws update; and CAB Testimony: HB992 - Income Tax - Earned Income Tax Credit - Alteration and Sunset Repeal, HB1027 - Food Supplement Benefits - Students - Eligibility (SNAP for Students), and SB805 - Income Tax - Child Tax Credit - Alterations and Sunset Extension.

CAB Updates

Jeffery reviewed the Bylaws Committee's revisions to the CAB bylaws. The Committee addressed questions regarding the addition of text referring to required ethics training and the new text regarding flexibility for those who encounter attendance issues. Mike moved to approve the revised bylaws and Tim seconded the motion. All voted in favor. The bylaws will be submitted to the County Attorney for review.

The board established a Nominating Committee to develop the Executive Committee slate for FY23. Mike, Lisette, Tim, and Tiffany all volunteered to serve on the Committee. The EC slate will be presented at the April CAB meeting and the new EC members will be installed in June.

Staff provided an update on the CAI. A survey of CAI participants, board members, and Ambassadors was conducted to determine the format for the rest of the program. The survey indicated that the preference was for a virtual testimony practice session on March 26 and an in-person, outdoor CAI graduation on May 24. All board members were invited to attend the testimony practice session and they were reminded that the CAI graduation takes the place of the CAB meeting in May.

Executive Director's Report

CAB members received a written report prior to the meeting. Sharon reported that TESS would be moving to a new office space that week. The new location is across the street from the current location. There may be an opportunity to do a ribbon-cutting ceremony in the coming months to celebrate the new office. Sharon also reported that several new Navigators started at TESS and all vacancies will be filled within two weeks. The new Navigators have been working with staff to support the emergency response efforts following the Friendly Garden Apartments fire.

VITA is now serving clients in-person three days per week, with virtual appointments available most days. Two pop-up events are being scheduled at WorkSource Montgomery. Sharon noted the challenges the program faced when switching to a hybrid model. Board members received an overview of the agency's EITC outreach efforts, which included multilingual flyers, digital monitor signs, radio and TV interviews, an article in the MCPS Quicknotes newsletter, a bilingual text messaging campaign, and a Facebook event cosponsored by the Latino Health Initiative that featured Council President Albornoz and Pablo Blank from CASA.

Head Start

In addition to Charlene's Head Start monthly report, CAB members received the Head Start grant application prior to the meeting. Charlene provided an overview. She explained that the proposal is to continue managing the program in the same way for the remaining two years in this grant cycle. Head Start continues to serve 648 students and HHS supports the wrap-around services that children and their families receive. The Finance Committee is exploring alternative options for service delivery for the next Head Start grant cycle.

Charlene reminded CAB members that the Head Start federal monitoring review will take place this year but we do not know when. The agency will receive 30 days' notice.

Lisa provided an update on Head Start/Pre-K registration. She reported that 686 children had been registered. This number is higher than the previous two years but below where the program was by this point in 2019 (pre-pandemic). MCPS is using a new parent portal for registration. As well, in-person registration is available at Rocking Horse Road Center and at satellite registration sites. So far, 927 parents have come in-person to inquire about Head Start/Pre-K.

Jeffery moved to approve the Head Start grant application. Claudia seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

Charlene highlighted two new initiatives for Head Start. One is a positive behavior intervention model at New Hampshire Estates Elementary School. The second is a pilot program for three-year-olds using

a community-based model to support children transitioning out of Early Head Start. The plan is to have 75 children in the pilot program.

Board members also learned about the County's plans to expand Pre-K by several hundred spots as part of the state's Blueprint plan. Board members received a letter that the CAB and Policy Council submitted to the BOE requesting additional funding for Head Start FSWs, nurses, and administrative staff as Pre-K expands.

Contracts

CAB members received a written contracts report prior to the meeting. Aizat noted that the County Executive's budget was released the previous week. All contracts received a 6% increase for FY23 and three contractors moved from NDAs to the base budget. This means that they no longer need to apply for funding from the County each year.

Aizat reported that Women Who Care Ministries has been approved for \$160,000 in additional funding. Kids in Need Distributors (KIND) will return to providing bulk food to schools instead of gift cards, which had been their model during the pandemic. Aizat explained that the County does not prefer gift cards because they are hard to track. A question was asked about this change since parents indicated that they preferred the gift cards. It was explained that the change to gift cards was out of necessity. KIND is a Weekend food service provider and their model involves providing food to students in MCPS, not gift cards. They agreed to move back to that original model, as the existing County resolution would need to be changed to provide gift cards only through the Department. KIND can still provide gift cards as incentives with their own funds though if they so choose to do so. The board members discussed the flexibility that gift cards allow and why many families prefer them.

Aizat noted that the CSBG Annual report was submitted. She reminded CAB members about the MCAP Human Services Conference in Ocean City May 10 – 13 and encouraged them to participate.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 7:07 pm.