

APPROVED JUNE 28, 2022

Montgomery County Community Action Board
Virtual Meeting
April 2022 Board Meeting Held on May 10, 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, Danette Lawrence, Pamela Lockett, Myriam Paul, Timothy Robinson, Claudia Simmons, Mike Subin, and Zelda Wafer-Jones

CAB Member Absent: Eneshal Miller

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

Guest: Francisca Moraga Lopez

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 5:35 pm.

Consent Agenda

Jeffery moved to approve the consent agenda and Myriam seconded the motion. All voted in favor. The consent agenda included the March 22, 2022 meeting minutes; March 22, 2022 meeting evaluations summary; Executive Director's Report; Head Start Report; Federal Monitoring Review Notification; OHS COLA and Quality Improvement Funding Guidance; Contracts Report; FY23 Contracts and NDAs; Staff Liaison's Report; TESS reports (stats and narrative); VITA stats; Budget update; CSBG Annual Report documents; CAB quarterly report form for meeting with Dr. Crowel; Letter of Support for the City of Gaithersburg; CAB advocacy tracking spreadsheet; CAB meeting format survey results; DHHS End of Session Summary and Montgomery County End of Session Summary; County Council Budget Hearings – ECE and OCA; and CAB Testimony: HB29 - Vehicle Laws - Failure to Pay Video Toll – Penalties; HB588 - Local Health Departments and Community Action Agencies - Feminine Hygiene Products; and County Council FY23 Budget Hearing.

CAB Updates

Tiffany, who participated in the CAB Nominating Committee, presented the EC slate for FY23. There were no nominations from the floor. The slate includes Jeffery Johnson, Chair; Zelda Wafer-Jones, Vice Chair; Myriam Paul, Secretary; and at-large members: Lisa Conlon, Erika Conner, Pamela Lockett, and Mike Subin. Board members will submit their ballots electronically via the Survey Monkey website.

Board members discussed the format of board meetings for FY23. Staff shared the results of a survey that was conducted to determine board members' preferences. Of the 13 board members who took the survey, seven preferred to keep most meetings virtual with a couple in-person meetings each year,

two preferred to keep the meetings all-virtual, two preferred to keep the meetings all-virtual but have a couple social gatherings each year, one preferred to have all in-person meetings, and one preferred to have mostly in-person meetings with a couple virtual meetings each year. The board members discussed next steps and decided to keep most meetings virtual and hold two in-person meetings this year. The likely in-person meetings will be the September CAB meeting and the May CAI graduation, which takes the place of a formal meeting that month. Staff will look into a larger venue (or an outside venue) for the September meeting so that there will be more space to spread out. There was also discussion about allowing members to join in-person meetings via Zoom. Staff will look into the technology needed to make this happen.

Board members were reminded about the CAI graduation on May 24 at Bohrer Park. The graduation will take the place of the full CAB meeting for the month. Lisette noted that the outdoor networking event held for CAI participants went very well. She also reported that one of her CAI mentees had a very successful testimony before the County Council that included a follow-up comment from Council President Albornoz. He was very concerned about her issue, which related to recreation services for children with special needs and offered to connect her with the right people at the Department of Recreation.

Head Start

Board members received a detailed written Head Start report. Charlene noted that the main topic is the upcoming Federal Monitoring Review, which she would discuss in detail at the EC meeting immediately following the CAB meeting.

Contracts

Board members received a detailed written contracts report, along with lists of the agency's FY23 contracts and NDAs. Aizat reported that all County contracts are receiving a 6% inflationary adjustment in the FY23 County budget. Manna Food Center and Women Who Care Ministries have requested additional funding.

Aizat reported that she completed the ROMA audit for the agency. The agency has done well but needs to outline the family, agency, and community work we are engaged in. More information about TESS clients and their progress moving towards self-sufficiency is also needed.

Executive Director's Report

Board members received a detailed written report from the Executive Director with updates on the agency. Sharon noted that at the Council HHS Committee budget hearing that included CAA, the Councilmembers asked no questions and made no comments about the proposed budget, including the VITA budget and stats. Lisette suggested that a meeting with Councilmembers after the VITA season might be helpful. Pam also suggested starting with the HHS Committee members, possibly with quarterly meetings or meetings twice a year. She recommended taking extra steps to make sure our "ask" is known. We need to ensure that the specific information, including budget requests, are included in the hearing packet. If they aren't it's unlikely that the Council will consider these requests. We need to work with Council staff to include the necessary information in the hearing packet. This discussion will continue as the board decides whether or not a different approach is needed.

Sharon noted that the VITA program served a lot of people during the tax season despite several barriers. Our agency's EITC/CTC outreach campaign was also very successful. The campaign reached community members through text messaging, interviews in local media, a Facebook Live event, special presentations, RideOn bus signs, and digital signs in County buildings and libraries.

Sharon reported that TESS had just received its building permit and would therefore be able to start moving into the new location.

A question was asked about coaching VITA clients about how to use their refunds, especially in light of the rent relief programs/protections coming to an end. Sharon suggested that the agency work with partners on this effort.

Announcements

Staff reported that the board was offered four tickets to the Montgomery Moving Forward 10th Anniversary event on June 2. Interested board members should contact staff.

Lisa reported that she, Sharon, and several HS staff members attended the National Head Start Conference. One highlight was CAB member Jeffery Johnson's presentation about engaging fathers.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 6:24 pm.