

**APPROVED NOVEMBER 29, 2022**

Montgomery County Community Action Board  
Zoom Meeting  
October 25, 2022

**MINUTES**

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

**CAB Members Absent:** Mike Subin

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

**Guests:** Gabriella Alfano, Stacey, Stacie A., Olivia Chickering, Camille Fabiyi, Tracy Farfan, Cecelia Hough, Yasmin Kedir Hussen, Feras Ismail, Stephanie Kologrivov, Caylee Song Larios, Lindsay Elizabeth Moynihan, Professor Robyn Muncy, Jordanna Palmer, Lauren Pierce, Holland Schmitz, Gabriella Tomasi, Korina Faye Vlahos, and Megan Walters

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 6:02 pm. The board welcomed guests from Professor Robyn Muncy's University of Maryland History class, which is studying the Economic Opportunity Act and programs like Community Action that were started at that time.

**Consent Agenda**

Timothy moved to approve the consent agenda. Zelda seconded the motion and all voted in favor. The consent agenda included the minutes from the June 28, 2022 and September 20, 2022 meetings; meeting evaluations summaries from June 28, 2022 and September 20, 2022; the Executive Director's Report; Head Start Report; Contracts Report; Staff Liaison's Report; Draft annual report for FY20 and FY21; TESS report; VITA report; Budget update; CAB Priorities: Council HHS Committee Meeting with BCCs; CAB Testimony: Special Appropriation for Food Staples Program; CAB Strategic Planning letter from October 11, 2022; Strategic Plan Discussion Document from October 11, 2022; and CAB Priorities for FY23 – EC Recommendations.

**CAB Updates**

Ahead of the meeting, Board members received the text of the joint FY20 and FY21 Community Action Annual report for their review. The report includes highlights from all of the agency's programs and the Board's work for both years. Zelda moved to approve the report and Claudia seconded the motion. Lisette abstained from the vote and all other board members voted to approve the report. The report will be sent to a graphic artist for formatting.

Board members were updated on the recent County Council HHS Committee meeting for Boards, Committees, and Commissions. Dr. Johnson participated in the meeting on behalf of the CAB. Much of the Board's testimony focused on staffing needs within the agency, which the Councilmembers noted and asked to have flagged in preparation for developing the FY24 budget.

Board members reviewed the EC's recommended policy priorities for FY23: Economic opportunity and increasing wages and training, Affordable housing, Responsive Human Services, Increasing food security, and Early Childhood Education. Board members agreed that these were all important priorities but wanted to know how the CAB would address them. All historic priorities, but the CAB can have a special focus on these topics for the year. It was noted that the board views these and all issues through an equity lens and this should be stated in listing the priorities. The CAB will also work on developing SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Time-Board) goals for the year.

Staff shared an update on the CAI program. The orientation session, led by Dr. Johnson, went very well. Following a few participants having to leave the program early on, three new applicants from the "priority" list were added to the program. The program now includes 26 participants, 10 of whom are utilizing the interpretation feature for workshops. The first workshop, Advocacy 101, would be held on November 12 and would feature elected officials, Council staff, and CAI graduates.

### **Executive Director's Report**

Board members received a detailed written report with updates on the agency's programs. Sharon noted that she had been working to close out the agency's grants but was still waiting on some final invoices from Athena. CARES funds still needed to be spent. This funding would cover JGR, which helped to develop the Community Needs Assessment, and the CASH Campaign of MD, which provided strategic planning support to the VITA program.

Sharon reported that the VITA program is working to recruit more volunteers this tax season. At TESS, new signs were installed at the new office.

Sharon noted that the updated Interactive Self-Sufficiency Standard was being reviewed and would be available to the public soon. The Maryland SSS report is being developed now and should be ready by December. The Montgomery County SSS report will come later. A recent meeting with the Capital Area Food Bank included a discussion of how the SSS can be used in their work. Sharon would like CAB support to help plan the rollout. Denise and Pam volunteered to serve on a SSS Committee. Sharon reported that she would be presenting on the SSS to the League of Women Voters on November 17.

### **Head Start**

Board members received a detailed written report with updates on the County's Head Start program. Charlene provided an overview of Head Start for the meeting guests. She reported that a new program called the Pyramid model was being piloted at New Hampshire Estates Elementary School. The program will promote family and caregiver well-being.

Charlene reported that the Head Start Party in the Park would return this year and will focus on fathers. The Head Start Providers' Meeting would be held on October 28 and all board members were invited to participate. Lisa noted that there were very few HS spots left and most full-day PreK spots were filled. Space was still available for part-day PreK spots.

It was noted that this year the program is seeing more children with behavioral and learning needs. Many children have not been in child care or a formal setting where they would interact with other children. It was noted that HS/PreK staff were receiving training on trauma-informed care. This is in coordination with the Blueprint Plan.

### **Contracts**

Board members received a detailed written report with updates on the agency's contract partners. Aizat shared an overview of the agency's partner organizations. She reminded CAB members that the annual CAA Contract Partners' Meeting would be held on November 15 and all board members are invited to attend. Aizat reported that she is focusing on the additional funding that food providers received this year. She noted that Manna Food Center participated in the White House Hunger Conference where universal school meals was a big issue. Aizat reported that there is proposed funding for the Food Staples Program to support dozens of food providers in the County.

### **Meeting Evaluation**

Dr. Johnson checked in with board members to see how the meeting went. Board members noted that the meeting went well and there was enough time for all of the agenda items.

**Adjournment:** The meeting ended at 7:04 pm.