



THREE RIVERS COMMUNITY ACTION, INC.
Board of Director's Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, April 15, 2020
Three Rivers Community Action, Inc.
Remote Meeting via Zoom
9:00 to 9:45

Members Participating: Paul Drotos, Meredith Erickson, Jodi Johnson, Erick Maki, Galen Malecha, Maritza Navarro, Heather Robins, Mark Thein, ReJean Schulte, Jo Anne Krier, Dave Windhorst

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611 Broadway Avenue
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Staff Participating:

Jenny Larson, Executive Director
Kindra Papenfus, Chief Financial Officer
Vicki McKay, Human Resources Director
Jane Adams Barber, Head Start Director
Donna Stamschror, Administrative Support Manager
Krystal Dube, Administrative Assistant

Members Excused: Abdullah Hared, Brian Goihl, Julie Steberg, Ruth Boudet

Call to Order: Meeting was called to order at 9:00 am by Chair Galen Malecha.

Determination of Quorum: Quorum was met

***Approval of the March 18, 2020 Meeting Minutes**

Paul Drotos made a motion to approve the March 18, 2020 meeting minutes, ReJean Schulte seconded, motion unanimously approved.

***Approval of the April 15, 2020 Meeting Agenda**

Meredith Erickson made a motion to approve the April 15, 2020 meeting agenda, Mark Thein seconded, motion unanimously approved.

Director's Report

Jenny gave the director's report.

1. Operating in a COVID-19 World – A lot has changed in the month since we last met. With a few exceptions, we are fully operational, having pivoted quickly to operate differently. We remain open for business while being closed to public visitors for the rest of April. We have a limited number of administrative staff in each office to answer phones, process mail, and provide fiscal services. Most program staff are now working from home, including all of our Head Start, Housing, Family Advocacy, Energy, and Senior Programs staff. Hiawathaland Transit is operating, but we have temporarily decided to operate as a dial-a-ride only system in order to protect passengers and staff. Meals on Wheels is continuing to

be fully operational with a daily hot meal, and staff are filling in the volunteer gaps. The Volunteer Transportation program is scheduling essential rides only – primarily for things like dialysis or cancer treatments. The Energy Assistance program has modified income qualification requirements to be more responsive to the current crisis and the program has been extended to July 1. The Childcare Center in Northfield is currently closed, and we continue to monitor the needs of our enrolled families as we evaluate the length of the closure. Overall, our call volume is up, and many people are calling our agency for the first time.

2. Funding Updates – Three Rivers remains in a strong financial position during this crisis. The majority of our funding partners have provided guidance that allows us to shift our operating models and keep our staff on the payroll. Head Start is allowing us to pay all staff to work remotely and connect with children and parents daily even when classrooms are closed. FTA and MnDOT allowed service modifications without any funding decrease, which has allowed us to keep a full staff so we can quickly ramp back up once businesses and community services re-open. Additionally, we anticipate new revenue sources to come to our agency in the next few months. In the federal relief packages, several of the programs we operate were funded to respond to COVID-19 emergencies, and we can expect to see new resources from:
 - a. Community Services Block Grant - \$1 billion nationally, \$12 million to MN – flexible resources given to Community Action Agencies to respond to local needs
 - b. Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program - \$900 million nationally, will go to states and then administrating agencies via formula
 - c. Head Start - \$750 million nationally, competitive and formula funding
 - d. Emergency Solutions Grant - \$1 billion to HUD for multiple homeless assistance and rapid rehousing programs. To be distributed to states and providers via formula, \$15.7 million to MN (\$7.5 million to greater MN)
 - e. Rural Transit (FTA) - \$2.1 billion nationally, \$54 million in MN, to cover expenses and lost revenue during the emergency
 - f. Senior Nutrition Programs - \$500 million nationally, includes home delivered mealsAdditionally, many of the provisions in the state and federal relief bills will provide assistance to affected households through SNAP, unemployment, workers compensation, paid sick and family medical leave, and economic impact (stimulus) payments.
3. Rental Income – As the owners of 492 rental housing units, we are concerned about our tenants who have lost income due and may have a difficult time making their rent payment, and the effect that will have on the financial strength of our portfolio. April rents look fairly good, with approximately 5% of our renters still owing their April rent. We expect that May will likely be higher as the economic conditions worsen. To mitigate, we are working closely with our management companies to track revenues and contact households who have late payments to help connect them with the resources they may need. We are also exploring all options of assistance available as owners. Many of the state and federal funders of our rental housing are offering, or planning to offer, mortgage deferral options to assist cash flow in the event of lower rent collections.

4. **Audit Season** – The 2019 Audit is being conducted remotely this week. Kindra and her staff, as well as the staff of the programs selected for audit, have all been doing an amazing job providing all of required documentation remotely. We anticipate the audit will be ready for Board review next month.
5. **Policy work** – At her invitation, I participated in two virtual round tables with Congresswoman Angie Craig – one on nonprofits and one on rural communities – to assist her in identifying local needs that she can bring back to Congress as part of COVID-19 relief funding. At the state level, I have been speaking with many of our state representatives and senators about the needs we are seeing from those who have lost income. In particular, I have been highlighting the needs of people who are concerned about their ability to make their rent or mortgage payments due to a loss of income. Currently the MN Legislature is focused exclusively on COVID-19 response, and I don't expect much else will happen this session, with the possible exception of a bonding bill.
6. **Zumbrota Addition** – The contractor is working on applying for the building permit and would like to start construction in May. The bank is doing an environmental review, primarily because of the dairy plant across the street. With the current public health emergency, we anticipate there may be some delays in getting the final financing and building permit reviews complete, which could possibly delay the start of construction.

Heather asked if there is any concern about the investment portfolio. Kindra said compared to the overall market they are performing very well. The fund is at the direction of the board.

***Policy Action Items**

Jenny reviewed the items on the consent agenda.

Consent Agenda Items

- March Financial Reports
- Final December 2019 Operating Report
- Mutual of America - March Statement
- Head Start Credit Card Expenses Summary

Contracts, Awards & Contributions

Received

- Goodhue County Family Service Collaborative - \$5,000 - Funds to prevent or end homelessness for families with young children in Goodhue County
- Minnesota Department of Health - \$148,768 - 2 1/2 year Expansion of Evidence Based Home Visiting program
- Minnesota Housing Finance Agency - \$200,000 - Gap loans for qualified homebuyers
- Minnesota Department of Commerce - \$19,346 Energy Assistance Proactive Funds to encourage households to reduce energy needs

Not Received

- None

Grants & Requests Submitted or to be Submitted

- Blue Cross and Blue Shield of MN Foundation - \$25,000 - to address immediate needs due to the COVID-19 Pandemic

Monitoring Reports & Responses

- Minnesota Department of Commerce letters dated March 27, 2020 – January 8-9, 2020 Energy Assistance program audit.
- Minnesota Housing Finance Agency Letter dated January 30, 2020 and associated emails – January 9, 2020 site visit.

Approved Purchases between \$10,000 and \$150,000

- None

Paul Drotos made a motion to approve the consent agenda, Jo Anne Krier seconded, motion unanimously approved.

***Individual Action Items**

- a) Minnesota Department of Education - \$368,167.00 – This will fund 10 Early Head Start Home Visiting families and 22 Head Start children.

Staff are asking for approval to apply for these funds.

Mark Thein made a motion for staff to apply for the funds from Minnesota Department of Education, \$368,167.00, Maritza Navarro seconded, motion unanimously approved.

- b) Transportation Waiver - yearly waiver request to the national Head Start office that allows us to use sophisticated technology instead of staff aides to ride the bus while transporting Head Start children to and from school

Head Start has a rule that we have to have someone ride the bus with the children. It is difficult to find volunteers who can ride the bus. For the last several years we have received a waiver because of the technology available on our buses, such as cameras and GPS tracking.

Paul Drotos made a motion for staff to apply for the transportation waiver, Maritza Navarro seconded, motion unanimously approved.

- c) Approval of updated 403B plan document and adoption agreement

The entire plan is in the board agenda packet. Kindra said there is no change to eligibility or how the plan operates. This is simply IRS required language that needed to change.

Erick Maki made a motion to approve the 403B plan document and adoption agreement, Heather Robins seconded, motion unanimously approved.

d) Employee Handbook Revisions and COVID-19 Leave of Absence

The board was given the handbook revisions and the COVID-19 Leave of Absence in the agenda packet.

Changes to Three Rivers Community Action's Employee Handbook which is part of the Agency's Personnel Policies (Board of Directors to review/approve 4/15/2020)

Items highlighted blue are new/changed since the March Board Meeting, and will be incorporated into the next full edition of the Employee Handbook.

ADD THIS TO EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK . . .

Emergency Shutdown

The Agency may, at its discretion, continue to pay employees if a catastrophic emergency, disaster, public health concern, or similar event results in the Agency's temporary shutdown of operations during which the employee is unable to perform work elsewhere including another Agency location or his/her home. For example, this may occur if tornado, flood or fire damage forces the shutdown of operations at one location, or if the Agency suspends a specific program/service/location in response to a public health emergency. In such a situation, the employee will be compensated through the relevant program funding entity(ies); through any government payment or reimbursement programs that may be available; or, if no such funding is available (or after such funding has been exhausted), through the Agency's Short-Term Income Continuation Policy (see Section 7.8 of Employee Handbook).

UPDATE THIS SECTION OF EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK . . .

Emergency Exception(s) to the Short-term Income Continuation for Disability Policy:

The Agency has the discretion to temporarily decrease or waive requirements for Short-term Income Continuation for Disability such as longevity of employment, hours worked in previous 12 months and/or the 2-day/8-day waiting periods if a catastrophic emergency, disaster, public health concern, or similar event occurs. This emergency exception is called Emergency Income Continuation (EIC) for Disability. Certain restrictions may apply such as requiring the use of available Paid Time Off (PTO) before receiving EIC, limiting the amount/length of EIC, etc. The Agency's Executive Director or Human Resources Director will notify staff of the temporary changes.

Short-term Emergency Income Continuation (EIC) for Shutdown

The Agency, at its discretion, may offer Short-term Emergency Income Continuation (EIC) to employees who have 24 or less hours of available accrued Paid Time Off (PTO) if a catastrophic emergency, disaster, public health concern, or similar event results in the Agency's temporary shutdown of operations/locations(s) during which the employee is available to work but the Agency is unable to offer the employee productive work at another Agency location or the employee's home. For example, this may occur if tornado, flood or fire damage forces the shutdown of operations at one location, or if the Agency*

cannot offer work to an employee during the time of a public health emergency. In such a situation, the employee's income may be continued at a rate of 67% of the employee's normal income beginning on the first day of shutdown or the first day the employee exhausts PTO, whichever occurs later. For part-time employees, the average hours worked per week over the previous 26-week period will be used for calculating EIC. EIC is available for a maximum of three (3) weeks, and will end sooner if the employee is allowed to return to work. If the shutdown extends longer, the employee may apply for unemployment compensation for which the State determines eligibility.

The Agency will recover any Short term Income Continuation payments made to employees due to a shutdown from the relevant program funding entity(ies) or government program if such reimbursement is or becomes available.

An employee may opt to use remaining accrued Paid Time Off (PTO) instead of receiving EIC on a day- to-day basis.

Board approved policy changes last month. We are taking those changes and making a few small tweaks to them. We are asking to add language that allows us to seek reimbursement from government programs and there is a small change in the emergency income continuation.

We propose a Covid-19 specific Leave of Absence policy that allows us to tap into the emergency policies you approved last month. The policy defines the Covid-19 situation and outlines all of the different leave options we now have available through our own policies and through new federal leave policies for this crisis. It also includes the procedure for staff to request leave, and for us to grant and track the leave. Vicki created a flow chart for staff to see what leave they would be eligible based on their situation. If you would like to see any more information let Jenny know.

ReJean Schulte made a motion to approve the changes to the Employee Handbook and approve the Covid-19 Leave of Absence Policy, Erick Maki seconded.

Discussion: Members discussed the last line in the proposed Covid-19 Leave of Absence Policy:

Return to Work Following Leave

Employees are required to follow guidelines established by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as it relates to ceasing home isolation practices.

The group discussed how and where to add "State of Minnesota Department of Health" to acknowledge that the state may have different recommendations than the CDC. Galen Malecha made a friendly amendment to the motion to change the last line of the Covid-19 Leave of Absence Policy to

Employees are required to follow appropriate guidelines established by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention/State of Minnesota Department of Health as it relates to ceasing home isolation practices,

Heather Robins seconded. The motion as amended was unanimously approved.

Policy Discussion Item

- a) Local needs due to COVID-19 – Three Rivers will be getting an allocation of flexible Community Services Block Grant funds to respond to the current crisis. As we plan for the best use of this money, we would like to hear from board members about the needs you are seeing in your communities, particularly the needs of those with the lowest incomes.

Paul is concerned about homelessness in Goodhue County. The county, volunteers, organizations, and churches are working on this. We should make sure we focus on the needs of the community, but also the danger of homelessness being a serious vector for Covid-19.

ReJean said families without income or decreased income may have trouble providing nutrition to their family. We need to find out where they are and how to help them in some way.

Maritz asked about community members who are unable to provide verifications for programs. Jenny said some of our programs such as a Family Homeless Prevention and Assistance Program, Economic Bridging and Head Start allow us more flexibility than some of the others.

Paul said there was some legislation recently introduced concerning farm workers and cutting off overtime. We understand the farming crisis, but we also understand some farm workers are the lowest paid in society.

Heather said many people who have a shaky financial situation are employed in the service sector. When the antibody test, which is being developed by Mayo and the University of Minnesota, is ready for use is there a way to help people get connected to those tests. A positive test could be someone's ticket to get back to work.

Jenny said once we know how much money we will receive and what the parameters are staff will put a plan together and bring back to the board for further discussion and approval.

Advisory Committee

- a) Head Start Policy Council – Meeting was scheduled for March 17, 2020. Next meeting is May 19, 2020.

Jane said the Policy Council meeting was done remotely. All action items were approved. Jane said the policy Council does not usually meet in April, but they did get together on Zoom last Friday to talk and answer any questions.

Other Comments:

Jenny said the Head Start staff have been doing a great job of pitching in on other programs as well. They have been helping Senior Programs by making wellness calls and delivering Home Delivered Meals. Some of our teachers are making face masks for our volunteers and transit drivers. All of this is in addition to all the work they are doing with

their families, including connecting them to the resources they need if they have experienced a loss of income. We are very proud of the Head Start team, who have been very willing to step up and do what is needed.

We also have transit staff delivering meals and bilingual staff are translating and interpreting for other programs. Everyone is really separate right now, but the entire Three Rivers teams is strong and very much working together. Getting through this will be challenging, but Jenny is proud of all the work everyone is doing and looks forward to getting more resources to help more people.


Paul said he was impressed with the agenda today and how positive and forward thinking the organization is. He added that he thinks it is uplifting to see this many people focusing on not letting people fall through the cracks. He sees a tremendous momentum here. He goes to a lot of meeting and this one is really focused. ReJean agrees and added that the content and detail is very clear for new members. She said Three Rivers does an exceptional job to pull the details together.

Comments from the public: None

Date, Time and Location of Next Meeting: 9:00 a.m., May 20, 2020, Three Rivers Community Action Conference Room, 1414 North Star Drive, Zumbrota MN and Zoom.

Adjournment

Mark Thein made a motion to adjourn, Paul Drotos seconded, motion unanimously approved.



1st Vice Chair

May 20, 2020
Date