



THREE RIVERS COMMUNITY ACTION, INC.
Board of Director's Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, November 17, 2021
Three Rivers Community Action, Inc.
1414 Northstar Drive, Zumbrota MN, and Remote via Zoom
9:00 to 10:15

Members Participating: Meredith Erickson, Galen Malecha, Heather Robins, ReJean Schulte, Erick Maki, Abdullah Hared, Jo Anne Krier

Staff Participating:

Jenny Larson, Executive Director
Clara Krause, Associate Executive Director
Kindra Papenfus, Chief Financial Officer
Vicki McKay, Human Resources Director
Leah Hall, Community Development Director
Jane Adams Barber, Early Childhood Director
Peter Schepers, Transportation Director
Donna Stamschror, Administrative Support Manager
Krystal Dube, Client Support / Human Resources Specialist

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Wabasha Office
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Members Excused: Maritza Navarro, Brian Goihl, Jodi Johnson, Paul Drotos, Julie Steberg, Gregg Wright, Ruth Boudet, Dave Windhorst

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

Determination of Quorum: Quorum was not met. The group met as a Committee of the Whole.

***Approval of the September 15, 2021 Meeting Minutes**

Meredith Erickson made a motion to approve the September 15, 2021 meeting minutes, Abdullah Hared seconded, motion unanimously approved.

***Approval of the November 17, 2021 Meeting Agenda**

Erick Maki made a motion to approve the November 17, 2021 meeting agenda, Jo Anne Krier seconded, motion unanimously approved.

Case of the Month – James Packard, Homework Start with Home Navigator

James shared a story about a family at risk of losing their home due to several circumstances. Homework Start with Home (HSWH) funding was pivotal in helping the family. He was also able to connect them with several resources in the community such as The Salvation Army and a local church. He then helped the family with budgeting, guiding them on being good tenants, assisting with landlord disputes, and car repairs. He continues to

work with them on their goal to increase their credit score so they can purchase a home. The family later contracted Covid and James helped them apply for RentHelpMN. Their success would not have been possible without the help of HSWH, RentHelpMN, and numerous local resources.

Director's Report

Jenny gave the executive director's report.

1. **Energy Assistance** – As part of the federal American Rescue Plan Act, the Energy Assistance program received over double the amount of funding it receives in a typical year. As we hear on the news, heating costs are expected to be 30-50% higher this winter, and we know that the clients we serve are likely to be hit hard. Program eligibility has increased, and we are pleased that the grant amounts to families will also be higher this year, with assistance up to \$3,200. We have added several additional staff to prepare for the larger program year, including welcoming Pauline Ndichu in a new assistant coordinator role. Here is a quick update from our team lead, Lynette Engelhardt Stott:
 - As of 11/11/2021 we have received 3,373 applications. This is 236 more applications than we'd received on this same date in 2020.
 - All priority crisis applications are processed on the day we receive them, but applications without crisis are worked up in the order received. We are currently working on non-crisis applications received on 10/8/2021. Roughly 25% of our applications are crisis applications.
 - We have approved 1,506 applications and \$1,328,370 in primary heat payments. An additional \$35,400 has been paid in crisis funding. As anticipated, with higher primary heat benefits this season, our crisis payments are currently lower, but will increase over the winter and spike in the spring when more vendors begin disconnecting again.
 - New this year is the Water Assistance Program. To date we have paid \$41,345 to water vendors on behalf of households with past due or shut off water.
 - We have repaired or replaced 40 heating systems through our Emergency Repair or Replacement (ERR) program and have another 16 ERRs in progress. With colder weather now upon us, we are seeing an increase in ERR requests and expect that number to continue to rise in the colder months to come. Supply chain issues are beginning to impact the availability and cost of heating system parts and replacements. Contractors have fewer and fewer units in stock and delivery times for new systems are getting longer.
2. **Zumbrota bus garage** – After a delay with the building permit, construction on our 4-stall bus garage in Zumbrota has finally begun. We look forward to having the project done in the next few months.

3. **Red Wing bus garage** – The City of Red Wing has finished work on our new, larger bus garage in Red Wing, located at 320 Bluff Street. We moved our buses over in mid-October.
4. **Red Wing outreach office** – We have recently rented a small office in Red Wing that will provide office space to a Housing Advocate as well as an extra office space for any staff needed to work or meet with clients in Red Wing. The office is located on the second floor of 1755 Old West Main. This is the same building as the United Way and the Red Wing Food Shelf.
5. **Head Start** – Three Rivers received our notice that our federal Head Start review will be happening this school year. They will give us a 45-day notice before the review and will be looking at many areas, including governance. They typically ask for board and policy council representation during the review, so please be aware that we may be asking for some board members to attend a meeting. It is still uncertain whether this review will be virtual or in person.
6. **Site Visit** – On November 10, we were pleased to host Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra and Congresswoman Angie Craig at our Northfield location. Congresswoman Craig has created a Rural Health Care advisory team that I have been serving on, and she asked us to host that group while the Secretary was visiting Minnesota. Our staff did a great job showing our work, and the highlight was a stop in one of our Head Start classrooms.

Jenny reminded the Board of her previous update to the board emailed on October 19, 2021, as the board did not have an October meeting. That update included: Knollwood Apartments update (Pine Island), introduction of Peter Schepers as new Transportation Director, update on the regional Continuum of Care, child care planning, and a visit from Congresswoman Craig to our Riverwood housing project in Cannon Falls.

Action Item: Consent Agenda
Financials

- October Financial Reports
- October Head Start Credit Card Expenses Summary

Grants & Requests Submitted or to be Submitted

- Associated Bank - \$5,000 - Support for Achieve Homeownership & down payment Assistance Programs
- Minnesota Department of Transportation - \$379,000- Capital Request for 3 Replacement Buses plus local match for 2022
- Minnesota Department of Transportation - \$100,000 - Capital Request to upgrade bus camera systems
- Minnesota Department of Transportation - \$70,000 - Capital Request to purchase electric support vehicle and two charging stations
- Minnesota Department of Transportation - \$40,000 - Capital Request to purchase mechanic's van
- MESH - \$25,000 - Funding to provide technical assistance for program implementation of Housing Stabilization Services

Contracts, Awards & Contributions Received

- Minnesota Housing Finance Agency - up to \$300,000 - Funding to provide financial empowerment coaching as part of Three Rivers' Achieve Homeownership program for 2 years
- Minnesota Department of Transportation - \$190,000 - Capital Request for 2 Replacement Buses plus local match for 2021
- Minnesota Department of Commerce - \$TBD - Renewal of Federal / State Funds to provide energy assistant & crisis funding to households in Olmsted, Wabasha, Goodhue & Rice Counties
- Minnesota Department of Transportation - \$4,354,500 - Funding for Hiawathaland Transit Operations for 2022
- Wabasha Area Community Resource Center - \$5,000 - Funds for basic emergent needs such as rent, utilities and car repairs, for clients in the Wabasha-Kellog area
- South East Minnesota Area Agency on Aging (SEMAAA) - \$58,443 – Renewal of Caregiver Advocate program for Goodhue, Rice, and Wabasha counties.
- South East Minnesota Area Agency on Aging (SEMAAA) - \$31,293 - Renewal of Senior Volunteer Transportation program for Goodhue, Rice, and Wabasha counties.
- Minnesota Department of Human Services - \$51,999 - SNAP outreach and application assistance renewal
- City of Rochester - \$2,500 - down payment assistance processing for 5 qualifying households to be awarded \$9,500 each

Not Received

- None

Monitoring Reports & Responses

- None

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

- Marco Technologies – \$14,673.72 - 3 Firewalls, licensing & hardware

Abdullah Hared made a motion to approve the consent agenda, ReJean Schulte seconded, motion unanimously approved.

***Individual Action Items**

- a) Personnel Policies – Changes for Review/Approval by the Board of Directors

The Board reviews and approves to our Employee Handbook and Personnel Policies. The Board was provided with a summary of the recommended changes, and the full version was available on the board page of the website. Jenny reviewed the proposed changes to the personnel policies.

Erick Maki made a motion to approve all the proposed changes to the personnel policies, Meredith Erickson seconded, motion unanimously approved.

b) Vaccination Policy Draft

Jenny reviewed the proposed vaccination policy, with an effective date of January 2, 2022. This policy follows the published OSHA guidelines, which requires vaccination or weekly testing. Some staff will be required to follow any future requirements if/when announced by other programs/funders. We anticipate the Office of Head Start will have a more strict policy than OSHA, and this document allows us to make specific policy for program staff if that happens.

Heather Robins made a motion to approve the vaccination policy, ReJean Schule seconded, motion unanimously approved.

c) Hiawathaland Transit Vehicle Procurement for 2020

Before the bus order is placed, MnDOT needs to see board resolutions. Jenny reviewed the three resolutions for Hiawathaland Transit vehicle procurement.

1. Resolution 2021-14 – two class 400 vehicles from North Central Sales for placement in Faribault and Pine Island.

Abdullah Hared made a motion to approve resolution 2021-14, Erick Maki seconded, motion unanimously approved.

2. Resolution 2021-15 – two class 400 vehicles from United Bus Sales and two class 400 vehicles from North Central Sales for placement in Northfield, Faribault, Kenyon, and Red Wing.

Heather Robins made a motion to approve resolution 2021-15, ReJean Schulte seconded, motion unanimously approved.

3. Resolution 2021-16 – one class 400 vehicle from Telin Transportation and three class 400 vehicles from North Central Sales for placement in Northfield, Faribault, Cannon Falls and Red Wing.

Erick Maki made a motion to approve resolution 2021-16, Abdullah Hared seconded, motion unanimously approved.

d) Continuum of Care (CoC) – Transfer of Operating Grant

Jenny reviewed the CoC transfer of operating grants, as Three Rivers will no longer be the fiscal host for the CoC. The CoC Advisory Board issued an RFP and selected the Institute for Community Alliances to be the next fiscal host.

1. Authorize Three Rivers Community Action staff to give notice to the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and Minnesota Housing Finance Agency (MHFA) to end CoC fiscal and administrative services effective December 31, 2021.

Meredith Erickson made a motion to authorize Three Rivers Community Action staff to give notice to HUD and MHFA to end CoC fiscal and administrative services effective December 31, 2021, Erick Maki seconded, motion unanimously approved.

2. Authorize the transfer of the existing HUD and MHFA grants to Institute for Community Alliances starting on January 1, 2022, including transferring any remaining grant fund balances.

Jo Anne Krier made a motion to authorize the transfer of the existing HUD and MHFA grants to the Institute for Community Alliances starting on January 1, 2022, including transferring any remaining grand fund balances, Heather Robins seconded, motion unanimously approved.

e) Northfield Child Care Partnership

Jenny reviewed the Northfield Child Care Partnership document that included background, current challenges, opportunities for a new child care model, partner roles, and board action requested.

Heather Robins made a motion for board to approve Three Rivers close our center-based child care and convert the space to classrooms that would be leased to private child care providers, that Three Rivers lease an additional vacant classroom at the NCRC, giving us up to three spaces that could be available providers, and that Three Rivers provide the child care classrooms at no rent for 12 months, and at reduced rent for the following 24 months, to licensed child care providers who are selected through an application process. Erick Maki seconded, motion unanimously approved.

f) Temporary action for staff who have reached PTO maximum

Jenny reviewed the challenges of operating during the second year of a pandemic. We have taken on new programs, have been short staffed due to short and long-term vacancies, and dealing with a tight labor market. As our staff have gone above and beyond to fill the gaps, we again have a small group of staff who have been unable to use their accrued PTO during the pandemic this year and are approaching the maximum "use it or lose it".

Meredith Erickson made a motion to offer staff who are affected by the pandemic, and are approaching the maximum PTO an opportunity to receive a one-time payout for up to 80 hours of their PTO, Erick Maki seconded, motion unanimously approved.

Policy Discussion Item

a) Knollwood Apartment Update

Jenny thanked the board for being very responsive when we needed to do an emergency action of the board last month for the Knollwood Apartment closing. This action item was unanimously approved by email on October 21, 2021. Leah provided an update to the board. The closing on the financing for this project will be in January 2022.

b) 2022 Draft Operating Budget

Kindra reviewed the 2022 draft operating budget and answered questions. Galen said members should review the budget and call Kindra before the next meeting if they have questions. The budget will be on the December agenda as an action item.

c) Nominations Committee

January is our annual meeting where we have election of board officers. The nominations committee will meet prior to the January meeting and provide a slate of officers.

Committee will be ReJean Schulte, Jo Anne Krier, Erick Maki, and Heather Robins.

d) Executive Director Evaluation

The board decided to do the Executive Director's evaluation the same way as last year via survey monkey. Galen requested that the evaluation form from last year be sent to the Executive Committee ahead of time to review. Donna will email to evaluation form to the board, give a deadline, and follow up with those who do not respond.

Advisory Committee

a) Head Start Policy Council minutes from October 19, 2021 were provided to the board. November meeting is on the 18th.

b) Hiawathaland Transit Advisory Committee will meet November 18, 2021.

Comments from the public: None

Date, Time, and Location of Next Meeting: 9:00 a.m., December 15, 2021, by Zoom, Three Rivers Community Action Board Room, 1414 Northstar Drive, Zumbrota MN, or Three Rivers Community Action Conference Room, Faribo Town Square, 201 South Lyndale Avenue, Faribault.

Adjournment

ReJean Schulte made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Erick Maki seconded, motion unanimously approved.


Chair

December 15, 2021
Date