THREE RIVERS COMMUNITY ACTION, INC.
Board of Director’s Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, November 18, 2020
Three Rivers Community Action, Inc.
Remote Meeting via Zoom
9:00 to 10:00

Members Participating: Paul Drotos, Meredith Erickson, Galen Malecha, Heather Robins, Mark Thein, ReJean Schulte, Julie Steberg, Jo Anne Krier, Ruth Boudet, Brian Goihl, Jodi Johnson, Abdullah Hared

Staff Participating:
Jenny Larson, Executive Director
Kindra Papenfus, Chief Financial Officer
Vicki McKay, Human Resources Director
Leah Hall, Community Development Director
Jane Adams Barber, Early Childhood Director
Rob Cooper, Transportation Director
Donna Stamschror, Administrative Support Manager
Krystal Dube, Administrative Assistant

Members Excused: Maritza Navarro, Erick Maki, Dave Windhorst

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

Determination of Quorum: Roll call was done. Quorum was met.

*Approval of the September 16, 2020 Meeting Minutes

Paul Drotos made a motion to approve the September 16, 2020 meeting minutes, Ruth Boudet seconded, motion unanimously approved.

*Approval of the November 18, 2020 Meeting Agenda

Mark Thein made a motion to approve the November 18, 2020 meeting agenda, ReJean Schulte seconded, motion unanimously approved.

Case of the Month – Laurie Secrist, Early Head Start Home Visitor

Maria and Ricardo came to Three Rivers Community Action for their daughter to attend Head Start, and when Maria was pregnant with their second child, they started participating in the Early Head Start Home Visiting program. When the pandemic struck, Ricardo’s work hours were reduced significantly. Through the hard times, Maria says the support from their Home Visitor, Laurie, came in many forms, “Laurie guided me through the process to get all of the help available. How we get assistance, helping me find a way to put my grandma in a nursing home, where to get flu shots, and where food shelves are available. Without her help I really don’t know what we would do.” Home Visitors connect
families to financial and mental health resources, offer emotional support, and encourage the child’s learning. Despite setbacks, Maria and Ricardo are optimistic about their future, in part because of the support they have received through Three Rivers Community Action.

**Director’s Report**

*Director’s Report emailed to board on October 19, 2020 was entered into the record.*

Our next meeting will be on Wednesday, November 18. Until then, here is an update on what is happening at Three Rivers Community Action:

1. **COVID-19 Housing Assistance Program (CHAP)** - Staff have been busily processing housing and utility requests from households affected by the coronavirus pandemic. We have received 1,265 applications for assistance, which is much higher than what we anticipated. We are working through the applications and will continue processing through December. Here is a breakdown of the applications received by county:
   - **GOODHUE COUNTY:** 213 Applications; 56 Approved; 19 Denied/Withdrawn; 7 No Response by applicant; 131 in process
   - **WABASHA COUNTY:** 84 Applications; 35 Approved; 1 Denied/Withdrawn; 12 No Response by applicant; 36 in process
   - **OLMSTED COUNTY:** 711 Applications; 129 Approved; 27 Denied/Withdrawn; 39 No Response by applicant; 516 in process
   - **RICE COUNTY:** 257 Applications; 51 Approved; 20 Denied/Withdrawn; 21 No Response by applicant; 165 in process

2. **Office Hours** - Due to one permanent departure and three staff out on temporary leave, we are experiencing staffing shortages at our front desks in Faribault and Rochester. Until we can adequately staff these locations, we are temporarily restricting the hours that these locations are open to walk-ins. Clients can continue to drop applications and paperwork at the on-site drop boxes, or they can call to schedule a time to meet with a staff person. As COVID-19 cases in the state and region increase, we are seeing more staff subject to quarantine and more need for parents to stay home with young school-age children who are distance learning. We anticipate that some locations and programs may continue to experience temporary disruptions throughout the pandemic as we work through the needs of our staff.

3. **Bonding Bill Passed** - Last week, the Minnesota legislature passed a bonding bill that included $100 million in housing infrastructure bonds for affordable housing. Three Rivers has several projects pending at Minnesota Housing, and we are hopeful that this funding will increase our chances for funds available to these projects. The bonding bill also included $1,750,000 for a transit hub in the City of Northfield. Three Rivers will be working closely with city staff on the Northfield project, as the new hub will serve as a transfer station for Hiawathaland Transit buses in the city. For those interested, I’ve attached a full list of the projects in the bonding bill.

4. **Faribault Office Improvements** - The Faribault work is complete. We have added a secure entrance and added additional work cubicles and meeting space. (photos were included in email)
5. **Zumbrota Addition** - The Zumbrota Addition is now complete. Jenny included photos and a video.

6. **Altra Federal Credit Union donation** - Altra Federal Credit Union presented Three Rivers with a $25,000 donation to our Three Rivers Cares Fund. We will use the funds to help households in need in Olmsted County. Staff members Pamela Barrientos and Larry More joined me at the check presentation.

7. **School Supplies in Faribault** - Student volunteers at Faribault Public Schools packed 1,300 backpacks filled with supplies donated by Three Rivers Community Action. We used some of our Community Services Block Grant funding to fill this local need and help kids have a great school year. Here are a few photos, and there are more on our Facebook page. If you know of families in the Faribault public schools who need supplies, parents should contact their child’s teacher.

Please let me know if you have any questions or would like any additional information prior to the November meeting.

*Jenny presented her Director’s Report for November 18, 2020*

1. **COVID Operations** – As we see more cases of COVID-19 in southeastern Minnesota, we are starting to experience some staffing disruptions as staff are required to quarantine due to illness or exposure, or are needing to stay home to care for children who are doing distance or hybrid learning. Currently the Faribault office is open by appointment only, and the Rochester office is operating on slightly reduced hours, 9:00 - 4:00 pm M-TH. The Zumbrota office is operating normal hours. At all locations, we are keeping visitors to one at a time, with masks and social distancing required. We continue to assign many staff to work from home.

2. **Head Start Operations** – Many school districts in our area are starting to pull back on classroom learning. As an independently licensed program, Head Start does not need to follow the school districts and can make our own decisions on programming. At the same time, we know that it is important to coordinate closely with our school districts. Knowing that in-person learning is valuable for preschool child development and that many families with low incomes rely on Head Start as part of their childcare plan, we are working hard to keep as many of our classrooms open as we can. Currently Zumbrota and Wabasha classrooms are open. Our Red Wing classroom is located at the school district’s Colville Center, so we will follow their lead and switch to distance learning starting November 16, with the hope that early childhood programs will be back in December. Both Northfield and Faribault districts are moving to distance learning next week, but we are hoping to be able to keep our Head Start classrooms open in those communities pending the availability of staff, many of whom have children in the public schools. In all locations, staff are ready to move to distance learning if needed.

3. **CHAP** – We have experienced high demand for the state’s temporary COVID-19 Housing Assistance Program (CHAP), with over 1,200 applications received (we were expecting 750), requesting $2 million in assistance. Due to the high volume of applicants that reach the $ threshold we were funded for, we have temporarily paused accepting new applications in order to focus on the current applicants. Other statewide providers are able to assist new applicants in our region through the
online application at www.housinghelpmn.org. To date, we have distributed over $880,000 in funding for the CHAP program:
   a. Goodhue County: $178,045
   b. Olmsted County: $452,207
   c. Rice County: $164,318 (plus $42,251 in City of Faribault CARES program)
   d. Wabasha County: $86,898
We will continue to operate the program through December 2020.

4. **Energy Assistance** – Three Rivers is again processing Energy Assistance applications and the federal funding for the program has been released so we are able to process payments. We have already received 3,127 applications in our four counties, about half of which have been processed.

5. **Election Results** – Congratulations to our County Commissioner board members Mark Thein (Olmsted), Galen Malecha (Rice) and Paul Drotos (Goodhue) who all won re-election. We saw very little change in the Minnesota Senate and House delegation in our 4 counties, with the exception of new 25B representative Liz Boldon (DFL) who won an open seat vacated by the retirement of Duane Sauke. I am in the process of reaching out to all of our delegation between now and the start of the legislative session to congratulate them on their re-election. Our federal members of Congress also remain the same, with both Rep. Angie Craig and Rep. Jim Hagedorn winning re-election. We have a virtual meeting set up for next week with Rep. Angie Craig and her staff, and are working on setting up a meeting with Rep. Hagedorn. Jenny will send the board the Angie Craig meeting information.

6. **Food Delivery** – Our Hiawathaland Transit buses continue to support food delivery initiatives during the pandemic. We have supported local food shelf delivery in Wabasha, Northfield, and Faribault, and delivered emergency food kits in all of our Meals on Wheels communities (Cannon Falls, Goodhue, Zumbrota, Mazeppa, Wabasha, Pine Island, Wanamingo, and Faribault). To date, our transit staff have delivered over 18,200 meals through these community partnerships.

7. **Board documents** – Each year board members are asked to complete various documents, including the related-party questionnaire for our audit. Given COVID, Donna will be sending board documents out to you for an electronic signature using DocuSign. If you would prefer a different format, please let her know.

8. **Annual Review** – We typically do the Executive Director’s annual review in December. As I have in past years, I will prepare and distribute a self-assessment prior to that board meeting.

**Policy Action Items**

**Consent Agenda Items**
- September & October Financial Reports
- Mutual of America – September & October Statement
- September Head Start Credit Card Expenses Summary
- October Head Start Credit Card Expenses Summary
Contracts, Awards & Contributions

Received
- Southeast Minnesota Area Agency on Aging (SEMAAA) – $90,000 - 2020 Cares expansion for Meals on Wheels program for Goodhue, Rice and Wabasha counties.
- Southeast Minnesota Area Agency on Aging (SEMAAA) – $130,572 – Meals on Wheels program for Goodhue, Rice and Wabasha counties.
- Minnesota Department of Human Services - $51,993 - SNAP outreach and application assistance renewal

Not Received
- None

Grants & Requests Submitted or to be Submitted
- 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.
- Enterprise - $40,000 - HUD section 4 funding to support staffing costs associated with the planning of a potential new multifamily project in Lake City

Monitoring Reports & Responses
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development – Letter dated September 9, 2020 – results of desk review performed September 8, 2020

Approved Purchases between $10,000 and $150,000
- Hiller Stores - $22,466.18 – Replacement of flooring in Faribault classrooms (HS Covid funds)

Jenny reviewed the consent agenda items.

Abdullah Hared made a motion to approve the consent agenda, Mark Thein seconded, motion unanimously approved.

*Individual Action Items

a) Approval of Ridgely Park Apartments Preservation Project in Kasota, MN, Exhibit A Resolution #2020-7 and Exhibit B Resolution #2020-8.

Leah Hall reviewed the project background, update, and reviewed the resolutions.

Heather Robins made a motion to approve Resolution #2020-7, Paul Drotos seconded, motion unanimously approved.

Paul Drotos made a motion to approve Resolution #2020-8, Jo Anne Krier seconded, motion unanimously approved.

Leah Hall reviewed the project background, update, and the resolution.

Mark Thein made a motion to approve Resolution #2020-9, Meredith Erickson seconded, motion unanimously approved.

c) Spring Creek II Project in Northfield, MN Project Update

1. Approve the attached Spring Creek II GP LLC Resolution #2020-10 of the Sole Member and the attached Operating Agreement (referenced as Exhibit A)

2. Authorize Jennifer Larson and Leah Hall Leraas to execute all documents required to form the Spring Creek II GP LLC and the Spring Creek II Townhomes LP

Leah Hall reviewed the project background, update, organizational summary, and resolution #2020-10.

ReJean Schulte made a motion to approve Resolution #2020-10, Paul Drotos seconded, motion unanimously approved.

Ruth Boudet made a motion to authorize Jennifer Larson and Leah Hall Leraas to execute all documents required to form the Spring Creek II GP LLC and the Spring Creek II Townhomes LP, Abdullah Hared seconded, motion unanimously approved.

d) Approval of Federal Head Start grant of $1,840,939 for 2021-22 school year

Jane Adams Barber explained that this is our regular request to apply for and accept the federal Head Start grant.

Julie Steberg made a motion to approve the Federal Head Start grant of $1,840,939 for 2021-22 school year, Abdullah Hared seconded, motion unanimously approved.

e) Approval of the Risk Assessment Executive Summary

Jenny Larson presented the results of an agency-wide Risk Assessment. She reminded the board that we assess the risks of our agency every two years. Since the last assessment, we made progress in the Human Resources area. Our HR Director, Vicki McKay, has spent a lot of time updating policies, procedures, and providing training to supervisors. We have also worked a lot on IT safety, security and training. Carrie Boelke, Technology Manager, and Kindra have done a fantastic job of getting systems in place. Jenny pointed out that a lot of recommendations say “continue to” which means we are already doing the right things and they do not want us to lose sight of that. The biggest area to work on is documenting disaster recovery procedures.
Ruth Boudet made a motion to approve the risk assessment, Mark Thein seconded, motion unanimously approved.

f) Personnel Policies – Changes for Review/Approval by the Board of Directors.

Each year we ask the Board to review and approved recommended changes to our Employee Handbook. The Board was provided with suggested changes and are able to review a full version of the Handbook on the board page of the website.

Jenny noted that there are very few changes this year. The Covid-19 related policies were already approved earlier this year. The remaining changes are all pretty minor and are on the summary provided by Vicki.

Ruth Boudet made a motion to approve the proposed changes to the personnel policies and approve the Employee Handbook, Heather Robins seconded, motion unanimously approved.

Policy Discussion Item

a) 2021 DRAFT Operating Budget

Kindra Papenfus reviewed the draft 2021 operating budget. COVID-19 has impacted the 2020 budget and will also likely impact 2021, so while we do the best we can to plan, we know that things can change. With travel restrictions in place, training and travel costs are down. We added a bus mechanic on staff resulting in a budgeted decrease in vehicle repairs and maintenance costs. We have made many improvements in our technology systems this year. Kindra asked for questions. Galen said members should review the budget and call Kindra or Jenny if there are questions before the next meeting. The 2021 budget will be on the December agenda as an action item.

b) Proposal to investigate banks for a new primary checking account.

Jenny and Kindra are proposing that we explore options for a new banking partner. We are seeking improvements in overall customer experience, cash management strategy & availability, as well as enhanced features including positive pay, remote deposit and multiple users/logins for online banking with variable access controls.

Kindra explained how we have outgrown the capabilities of our current bank. It would be nice to have internal controls in place that they do not have the technology to do. The board agreed that we should look at options that will meet the needs of the organization. The board asked Kindra to research other options and bring recommendations back to the board for action.
Advisory Committee

a) Head Start Policy Council Meeting October 20, 2020 Minutes were provided to the board.

b) Hiawathaland Transit Advisory Committee Meeting November 12, 2020 minutes were provided to the board.

Other Comments: None

Comments from the public: None

Date, Time and Location of Next Meeting: 9:00 a.m., December 16, 2020 by Zoom, Three Rivers Community Action Board Room, 1414 North Star Drive, Zumbrota MN, or Three Rivers Community Action Faribault Conference Room, Faribo Town Square, 201 South Lyndale Avenue, Faribult.

Adjournment

Mark Thein made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Ruth Boudet seconded, motion unanimously approved.

Chair

December 16, 2020
Date