

**LEE COUNTY
COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY
AND
NEIGHBORHOOD DISTRICT COMMITTEE
VIRTUAL MEETING MINUTES
March 11, 2021**

Members Present: Lee Coleman
Kerry Constantine
Charles Garretson
Anne Gomez
Kari Lefort
Kirsten O'Donnell
Aimce McLaughlin
Joseph Redmon
Keesha Wick

Others Present: None

Members Excused: Ian Connell

Members Unexcused: Jah-Mau Lambert

Staff Present: Clare Dennehy
Kim Hustad
Jeannie Sutton
Mark Tesoro

ITEM

I. Call To Order and Establish Quorum

The meeting was called to order at approximately 5:32 p.m. Quorum present.

A. Members Present

1. Members Absent/With Excuse

Mr. Ian Connell is absent with an excuse.

2. Members Absent/Without Excuse

Mr. Jah-Mau Lambert is absent without an excuse.

B. *Approval January 14, 2021 Minutes

Ms. Wick requested a motion to approve the January 14, 2021 meeting minutes.

ACTION:

Ms. Kirsten O'Donnell made a motion to approve the January 14, 2021 minutes and Mr. Charles Garretson seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

II. Public Comment

Ms. Clare Dennehy presented the Annual (HUD) Housing and Urban Development allocations, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME and Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG) entitlement amounts for FY 2021 program year. The money will be allocated this fall. The total a CDBG allocation amount is \$3.2 million, HOME is \$1 million and ESG is \$275,000. Some project possibilities:

- Acquisition of real property
- Public facilities and improvements
- Clearance
- Public services
- Privately owned utility installation
- Housing construction by CBDO
- Code Enforcement
- Special economic activities
- Down payment Assistance
- Program Administration

Activities currently that are run through CDBG are public facilities and improvements, public services, rehabilitation and admin. Previously discussed at the meetings were economic development, job training in the community, mentorship youth program, affordable housing needs and transportation.

Ms. Kirsten O'Donnell mentioned affordable housing, work force housing would be a valuable investment either for construction or down payment assistance.

Activities with HOME funding can be utilized for new construction, owner or renter occupied housing, rehabilitation, down payment assistance, tenant based rental assistance and program administration.

Some eligible activities for ESG are street outreach, homelessness prevention, homeless shelter renovations and rapid rehousing.

Mr. Garretson said that he thought that was a pretty good plan.

Ms. Dennehy stated should anyone have additional comments, please let her know.

III. Reports

A. Program Reports

1. Continuum of Care (CoC) Update) – Mark Tesoro

Mr. Tesoro stated he is the manager for the Homeless Impact Program. On December 1, 2020 the CoC took on the challenge of housing 100 households in 100 days. Rapid rehousing has exceed the goal with 115 households housed. This translates to 186 individuals with 60 of those who were children. The NOFA was submitted for approximately \$700,000 for street outreach and non-congregate shelter. They are in the process of reviewing application received. The Performance Evaluation and Ranking Committee (PERC) is reviewing the criteria for projects to be funded. The Rapid Transition Collaborative plan was submitted to the City of Fort Myers Council for review.

It was not previously approved by the council. It is on their agenda for reconsideration. The outreach team from our office, the HOT teams and Centerstone are out in the field daily to see what the needs are and try to provide housing for them.

Ms. Hustad introduced Ms. Nicole Turner with the Procurement Department for Lee County. Their department is assisting households facing homelessness or housing instability due to the inability to pay rent or utilities as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

2. Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) – Nicole Turner

Ms. Nicole Turner gave an overview of the program. The program is specifically for households that are renting and have an active lease, impacted by COVID-19 and at or below the medium income. The parameters, although strict, they have flexibility with working with individuals. They are assisting with up to 6 months of past due rent and prospective rental. They have received 2,000 applications and have arrearages paying March, April and May. The client has to recertify every 3 months with another full application. Once they recertify they can assist with another 3 months with a maximum of 12 months. The client can receive assistance with rent, water and electric. The client can apply online at <https://leeifcares.com/> website. The website has a tool for clients to determine if their property is located within city limits. The City of Fort Myers has their own program, so the client must apply with them.

Ms. Kerry Constantine would like to know how many individuals are on the list and is there a waiting list. Ms. Turner said there are many applications are in the process, which is approximately 2,800. Approximately 2,000 have been fully completed and 500 to 600 have started being reviewed. Cases have been prioritized based on a number of factors. Households with the lowest income under 50% area medium income regardless of chronological order. Also, households that has COVID related unemployment for the past 90 days or more are prioritized. It is a point based system. Ms. Constantine asked how many individuals may not be served and when will the funding run out. Ms. Turner stated they have \$20 million and wants to help as many individuals as they can and not concerned about running out of money.

3. Homeless Prevention Report – Kim Hustad

Ms. Hustad mentioned since COVID started, 1,227 applications were received. Since January 2021, 116 were served. They still have 772 applications. Of the 772, 47 have eviction notices and 35 are homeless. If someone indicates they are homeless have income and identified housing they are assigned to a processor every morning to house them. There are 26 on the list that have a lease that are not being renewed, there are 123 with past due mortgage, 331 with past due rent that do not have a direct COVID loss of income. There are 82 with past due water and 165 are being process and 85 have been referred to the ERA program. Ms. Hustad mentioned they converted from an excel spreadsheet to a new electronic platform. When a client applies on line, it automatically is placed on the electronic Smartsheet.

4. Community Services Block Grant Financial Report (CSBG) – Kim Hustad

Ms. Hustad reviewed the Community Services Block Grant Financial report. The report reflects the month of January 2021 with \$43,188.83 being spent. Ms. Hustad said there are 3 CSBG budgets and there is an allocation specifically for COVID.

She will check with fiscal to obtain a more accurate report.

Ms. Hustad reported the Department of Economic Development has put an umbrella agreement for CSBG and LIHEAP (Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program). This agreement goes before the Board of County Commissioners on Tuesday, March 16, 2021.

Ms. Keesha Wick mentioned the calls United Way receives, the client is applying for electric assistance utilizing the Homeless Prevention Application. Ms. Wick will redirect them to the appropriate program.

B. Neighborhood Reports

1. Charleston Park – Joseph Redmon

Mr. Redmond provided a report for Charleston Park.

- Care outreach program which is held on Thursdays
- Senior breakfast is held once a month will be delivered until further notice due to COVID
- Goodwill Joblinks is held on Monday and Thursdays 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. and Friday's 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
- March 6, 2021 was Keep Lee County Beautiful
- COVID-19 Vaccine Testing on March 19, 2021
- Charleston Park Day will be held in April

2. Page Park - Lee Coleman

Mr. Coleman provided a report for Page Park.

- Coordinator on board with Page Park
- Access is available on an appointment basis
- Food distribution on Mondays and Thursdays
- Clothes distribution available
- Keep America Beautiful
- Volunteers to assist with garden
- Goodwill working on a grant for a well
- Easter will be a drive through, candy and eggs will be distributed

3. Palmona Park – None

4. Pine Manor – Anne Gomez

Ms. Gomez provided a report for Pine Manor

- Mobile Food Pantry on March 16, 2021 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
- Easter Egg Hunt at Hunters Park on April 3, 2021 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
- Crafting club, gardening, Children's Advocacy Center afterschool programs continue
- Food bank is distributed once a month
- Assist with Lee Cares applications
- Assist with tax preparation
- On March 6, 2021 Keep Lee County Beautiful had 15 participants
- February was Beautification of the Community Center

- On February 11, 2021 Extension Services provided nutrition overview
- Community Cooperative mobile food pantry was in Pine Manor on February 16, 2021

5. Suncoast Estates – Charles Garretson

Mr. Garretson provided a report for Suncoast Estates

- Extended hours for the community center are 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
- Teen programs continue, although attendance is down
- Pet food distributed either monthly or every other month
- (inaudible)
- Bread is distributed all week
- Assist with Access
- AARP representative is back
- Food distribution is every other week

IV. New Business

**A. Community Action Agency/Neighborhood District Committee (CAA/NDC)
Vacancies and Elections in Neighborhoods – Kim Hustad**

Ms. Hustad said this will be deferred and will meet with the director due to program areas being merged within the department.

Ms. Aimee McLaughlin mentioned she is working at Florida Gulf Coast University as assist director of community relations. She would like to remain on the board.

Ms. Hustad said she would be an asset to the board especially regarding the education relationship.

Ms. Kerry Constantine joined in the meeting at this time.


V. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned.

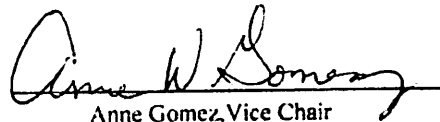
Adjournment

The next CAA/NDC virtual meeting is June 10, 2021.

Meeting adjourned.



Keesha Wick, Chair



Anne Gomez, Vice Chair

- C:** Lee County Board of County Commissioners, District #1, #2, #3, #4, and #5
 Marc Mora, Assistant County Manager
 Roger Mercado, Director, Human & Veteran Services
 Andrea Fraser, Deputy County Attorney
 Dorothea Austin, Department of Economic Opportunity