

**LEE COUNTY
COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY
AND
NEIGHBORHOOD DISTRICT COMMITTEE
VIRTUAL MEETING MINUTES
January 14, 2021**

Members Present: Lee Coleman
Kerry Constantine
Charles Garretson
Anne Gomez
Jah-Mau Lambert
Kari Lefort
Kirsten O'Donnell
Joseph Redmon
Keesha Wick

Others Present: None

Members Excused: None

Members Unexcused: Ian Connell
Amy McLaughlin

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

None.

2. Members Absent/Without Excuse

Ian Connell and Amy McLaughlin are absent without an excuse.

B. *Approval of September 10, 2020 and December 3, 2020 Minutes

Ms. Wick requested a motion to approve the September 10, 2020 and December 3, 2020 meeting minutes.

ACTION:

Mr. Lee Coleman made a motion to approve the September 10, 2020 and December 3, 2020 minutes and Mr. Charles Garretson seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

S:\Human Services\NB\CAA-NDC\Minutes\2021\01 14 2021 minutes.docx
Page 1 of 6

Ms. Kirsten O'Donnell requested the September 10, 2020 minutes be amended to reflect she was introduced as a new member, which she is not. The minutes should reflect that Kerry Constantine was introduced as a new member.

ACTION:

Mr. Lee Coleman made a motion to accept the amendment and Mr. Charles Garretson seconded the motion.

II. Public Comment

None.

III. Reports

A. Program Reports

1. COVID Response Update – Kim Hustad

Ms. Hustad mentioned the Department of Human and Veteran Services office is closed to the public and staff is prohibited face-to-face contact. Fifty percent are currently working remotely. We are strictly enforcing social distancing and wearing masks. The conference room has been converted to cubicles as additional staff was brought over from Lee Cares.

3. Homeless Prevention Report – Kim Hustad

Ms. Hustad mentioned since COVID started they received 2,024 applications, which does not include the backlog in the e-mail portal. They are moving to a different platform, which is easier to manage. So far, they assisted 424 household, 321 were denied as a result of not returning their documentation. Currently 150 are being reviewed and 450 are waiting to be reviewed.

4. CSBG Financial Report – Kim Hustad

Ms. Hustad said the report was not available at the time due to fiscal being overwhelmed.

ACTION:

Ms. Hustad said this CSBG Financial Report is tabled until the next meeting.

5. CoC Update – Mark Tesoro

Mark Tesoro introduced himself. He is the manager who oversees the Continuum of Care. They are currently working on the PIT Count. The PIT count is an annual activity they conduct at the end of January where they do an unsheltered and sheltered count. The unsheltered count is primarily done with volunteers and other staff that count individuals who are homeless. Due to COVID, things will have to be done differently with abbreviated interviews. They will be utilizing the HOT team and others to conduct the PIT count on January 27, 2021. The 100 by 100 project, which refers to housing 100 households in 100 days. Currently, they are in week 5 and were able to house 20 households. The Cold Weather Outreach program entails a coordinated effort with the Emergency Operations Center. When temperatures reach 40 degrees or colder, the outreach program is enacted. Information is pushed out to the individuals to let them know when and where they can obtain blankets and/or offer shelter.

Kerry Constantine said she understands the PIT Count is very important for funding for the county. She would like to know what the plan is to reach out to others besides downtown Fort Myers. She is referring to Cape Coral, Lehigh Acres, Bonita Springs and Fort Myers Beach. Mark Tesoro said due to COVID, it has been a challenge to get volunteers. The Department of Housing and Urban Development went from not allowing waivers and allowing waivers and recently saying if we did the PIT Count in 2020, you do not have to have a waiver at all. From the County's perspective, they will collect the information with an amended survey. Jeannie Sutton mentioned in the past they have gone to service locations at Fort Myers Beach, Lehigh Acres and Bonita Springs. Ms. Wick mentioned she has toiletries and asked would this be items she could give to Human and Veteran Services. Mark Tesoro stated yes they could use them. Discussion took place regarding Cold Weather Outreach. Mark Tesoro mentioned when they are on site they offer blankets, coffee, blankets and transportation to shelters or the Bob Janes Triage Center. Some homeless individuals do not want to leave their camp, or may have had a bad experience with the shelter or triage. Ms. Hustad stated the Salvation Army Resource Center is open to homeless individuals. They can utilize laundry, showering, mental health resources and much more. Question was asked about law enforcement being involved with the homeless. Jeannie Sutton said law enforcement have designated their own team. They are still bringing members onto their teams.

B. Neighborhood Reports

1. Charleston Park – Joseph Redmon

Mr. Redmond provided a report for Charleston Park.

- Job Fair will take place on Saturday, January 16, 2021 at 10:00 a.m.
- A Valentine's Day dance is being planned
- Annual Charleston Park Day will take place on April 24, 2021

2. Page Park - Lee Coleman

Mr. Coleman provided a report for Page Park.

- Food is being distributed on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday
- The community center is planning to open in February
- A new coordinator is training
- Midwest Food Bank will provide food commodities

3. Palmona Park – None

4. Pine Manor – Anne Gomez

Ms. Gomez provided a report for Pine Manor

- There are no events scheduled they are to be determined
- Ongoing programs continue
- The Adopt a Family for Christmas provided gifts for 243 children
- The Christmas Dinner was a drive thru event with 225 individuals drove through

5. Suncoast Estates – Charles Garretson

Mr. Garretson provided a report for Suncoast Estates

- Bread is distributed every day from 9:00 to 12:00
- Food Stamps and other programs continue
- The Adopt a Family for Christmas provided gifts for 175 children
- Not sure when they will reopen fully due to COVID

IV. New Business

A. CSBG Organizational Standards – Kim Hustad

Ms. Hustad mentioned every year they have to report on operations, personnel, etc. She thanked Clare Dennehy for her assistance. The Department of Economic Opportunity developed an electronic platform which made it much easier. It was due on January 4, 2021 and have already been reviewed by the monitor. There are a few items that have to be cured. Conflict of Interest forms need to be completed every 2 years and operational changes are to be reported at every meeting.

B. CAA/NDC Vacancies and Elections in Neighborhoods – Kim Hustad

Ms. Hustad mentioned Fred Richards resigned from the CAA/NDC board. He did find a replacement, but she must complete an application and be submitted to the Board of County Commissioners.

Ms. Hustad asked what neighborhoods are meeting as their term expired October 2020. Suncoast is meeting, Pine Manor is meeting, no other responses. Ms. Hustad said they have to have a democratic election. Within the next couple of months this has to be cleared up. The neighborhood members need to consider whether they want to be reelected or if their local association wants to elect someone else.

C. *Community Action Agency (CAA/NDC) Meeting Dates FY 2021, January 14, 2021, March 11, 2021, June 10, 2021, September 9, 2021 and November 18, 2021 – Kim Hustad

Ms. Hustad reviewed the dates for the upcoming dates for FY 2021 CAA/NDC meetings. Ms. Hustad stated she needed a motion of approval.

ACTION:

Mr. Charles Garretson made a motion to approve the FY 2021 CAA/NDC meeting dates and Joseph Redmond seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

V. Public Hearing

A. Program Year 2021 HUD Grant Annual Plan Development : Accepting input for the Development of the 2021 Annual Plan – Clare Dennehy

Ms. Clare Dennehy is asking for input for forming the Annual Action Plan for FY 2021. The plan is for CDBG, HOME and ESG grants. She shared the handout on the screen. She gave an overview about the funding and what the eligibility activities are. The total CDBG entitlement is around \$3.2 million and some of the eligible programs include:

- Acquisition of real property
- Public facilities and improvements
- Demolitions

- Afterschool programs
- Community center operations
- Homeless services
- Connecting privately owned utilities
- Rehabilitation of streets or businesses
- Economic development with small businesses
- Down payment assistance and program administration.

Ms. Dennehey asked does the committee have input or ideas where CDBG funding should be spent. Someone asked about a timeline. Clare Dennehey said this will be submitted in the early fall of 2021 and will go into place effective October 2021. Kerry Constantine suggested the need to focus on affordable and transition housing. All comments will be summarized and submitted with the plan for consideration. Suggestion was made for emergency transitional housing. Ms. Sutton said the Bob Janes Triage Center has respite unit beds for those that are medically needy and individuals in wheelchairs are able to go as long as they can self-transfer. Suggestion to have additional respite unit beds available at the Triage Center.

Ms. Dennehey inquired about infrastructure, job training or youth programs. She wanted to know what aspects are important in the community such as job training, education, such as afterschool programs. Suggestion was made for assistance with addictions and drug prevention. Ms. Dennehey stated assistance with addictions and drug prevention is not an eligible expense. Ms. Sutton said the expense for public services is approximately 15% maximum, which can be utilized for public services. She did elaborate the County funds behavioral services through general fund dollars in the amount of \$4 million.

Ms. Keesha Wick mentioned child care is needed especially with COVID. Question was asked could additional funding for additional housing units be utilized. The funding is expended very quickly and the formula is allocated by the State. It was mentioned by a committee member that the funding is not enough to meet the needs of the community. Ms. Dennehey asked what approach would help to obtain housing. Committee member mentioned when a client has an eviction notice, it is too late to ask for rental assistance and possibly revamp??? the program. Ms. Sutton stated the regulations stipulate they have to have an eviction notice especially with the COVID relief package.

Mr. Charles Garretson asked why property could not be purchased to build tiny houses before they individuals are evicted. Ms. Dennehey will look into it further.

B. CDBG CARES Act 2 Application – Clare Dennehey

Ms. Dennehey there has been funding for CDBG CARES Act, Lee County received funding for CARES Act 1 and CARES Act 3 and the total is 4.5 million. There is an opportunity to apply for CARES Act 2. The County is applying for CARES Act 2 which is approximately \$1,006,972.00. This set of money has different rules. All the programs and projects have to be in response to prevent or prepare for COVID. Some eligible activities include:

- Building activities
- Assistance to businesses
- Job Training
- Delivering meals on wheels
- Installation of wiring for internet access
- Planning
- Foreclosure and eviction prevention

Ms. Dennehey is looking for suggestions if the County should be awarded the funding. What community needs are unmet or need attention.

Mr. Charles Garrison said there is problems with transportation in his community, as there are no bus routes in their area.

Ms. Dennehey mentioned with CARES Act 1 & 3 they have funded program for homeless outreach, housing placement and foreclosure and eviction prevention services. Keri Lefort said she agrees with all those items that were previously funded and continue with that. She also suggested with job training. Kirsten O'Donnell mentioned those who live in communities without transportation need access to obtain the vaccine.

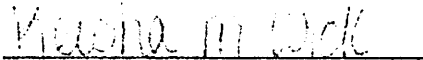
VI. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned

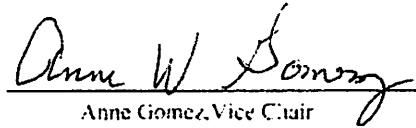
Adjournment

The next CAA/NDC virtual meeting is March 11, 2021.

Meeting adjourned.



Keesha Wick, Chair



Anne Gomez, Vice Chair

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