

**LEE COUNTY  
COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY  
AND  
NEIGHBORHOOD DISTRICT COMMITTEE  
VIRTUAL MEETING MINUTES  
October 28, 2021**

**Members Present:** Katelyn Bradford  
Kerry Constantine  
Anne Gomez  
Carolyn Johnson – Joined meeting late  
Jah-Mau Lambert  
Aimee McLaughlin – Joined Meeting late  
Kirsten O'Donnell

**Others Present:**

**Members Excused:** Lee Coleman  
Keesha Wick  
Joseph Redmon

**Members Unexcused:**

**Staff Present:** Kim Hustad  
Clare Molloy  
Jeannie Sutton  
Mark Tesoro

**ITEM**

**I. Call To Order – Roll Call – Establish Quorum**

The meeting was called to order at approximately 5:35 p.m. Quorum not established. Roll call taken. Ms. Hustad stated; Ian Connell, Charles Garretson and Kari Lefort have resigned. She also mentioned Charleston Park is no longer a targeted neighborhood and a decision will need to be made regarding representation for this location.

**1. Members Present**

1. Members Absent/With Excuse  
Lee Coleman and Keesha Wick are excused.
2. Members Absent/Without Excuse

**B. \*Approval of June 10, 2021**

Due to Quorum not being established, the June 10, 2021 minutes will be tabled.

## II. Public Comment

### A. Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) – CV2 - Clare Molloy

Ms. Clare Molloy stated Lee County is submitting an application for \$1,006,927 thru Department of Economic Development (DEO) in cares act funding. All the information is in packet provided. Activities funded need to prevent, prepare for, or respond to the Covid-19 Pandemic can be demonstrated as direct or indirect affect.

- Building improvements include public facilities.
- Assistance to businesses – include special economic development assistance.
- Public services – delivering meals, provide Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), testing, job training for healthcare workers and planning expenses.

Clare Molloy asked for input on what is needed in community related to covid.

- Kerry Constantine suggested help with house subsidy. Rentals have increased tremendously. It is difficult for renters to find affordable housing and we do not have available units.
- Carolyn Johnson also stated that we need housing/rental assistance, also aide with digital literacy. People need additional training to upscale them for jobs opportunities.
- Shortage of Nursing assistance in area.
- Mr. Lambert (inaudible)

### B. HOME American Rescue Plan Allocation Plan – Jeannie Sutton

Ms. Jeannie Sutton stated we have received an allocation of \$3.8 million from HUD as a result of the American Rescue plan through HOME funding. This funding is specifically prioritized to address homelessness. Which means that rental subsidy, new construction, acquisition rehab that was mentioned before, are all eligible activities. Proposed allocation plan is published on our website- available for comment.

- About \$2 million for rental assistance.
  - Should assist 160 individuals over the course of the next 2 years
  - Long term rental assistance (up to 24 months) for those experiencing homelessness.
  - For individuals who do not have the opportunity to increase their income this funding will assist as a bridge to get help from housing authority whenever possible.
- About \$1.5 million allocated toward affordable housing development (rental housing).
  - A notice of funding availability will be put out about this and any other Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding left over from other

allocations to support housing development.

- \$300,000 allocated for administration to cover staffing and contracting costs.

A question was asked will an outside agency administer the program? Jeannie responded housing development will be done by outside agencies and tenant base rental assistance programs will be administered by the Department of Human and Veteran Services.

### **III. Reports**

#### **A. Program Reports**

##### **1. CoC Update – Mark Tesoro**

Mr. Mark Tesoro stated a notice of funding availability was released on September 2021. October 1, 2021 the Performance Evaluation and Ranking Committee (PERC) reviewed applications. On October 6, 2021 the CoC governing board voted on Performance Evaluation Ranking Committee (PERC) recommendations. It was recommended that 9 projects and 3 bonus projects move forward. Bonus projects focus on trying to house individuals experiencing Domestic Violence. Currently waiting on approval. It is a total \$2.6 million in funds to drive forward the Rapid Rehousing process. The challenging is finding affordable units. We have received tentative agreements to get more outreach people in place to locate units available and communicate with landlords willing to participate in Rapid Rehousing Program.

- Kerry Constantine asked if the Rapid Rehousing funded home inspections. Kim Hustad responded that every unit funded by Housing and Urban Development (HUD) programs will be inspected to make sure they meet habitability standards.
- Kerry mentioned inspection process was not good and backups would cause landlords to lose a month worth of rent. She asked if there was a way to make the process faster? Kim clarified that is the City of Fort Myers Housing Authority, not Rapid Rehousing.
- Kerry asked if Rapid Rehousing uses the same inspectors? Kim responded no. We have two Housing Resources coordinators that try to respond to requests for inspection within 24 to 48 hours.
- Kerry also asked if there is a guideline to what the inspection entails? Jeannie Sutton informed Kerry the inspection form and check list is on our website and she will send it to her.

##### **2. Department of Human and Veteran Staffing – Kim Hustad**

Ms. Kim Hustad stated there is \$2.3 million for low-income home energy assistance in the next 6 months. We have 6 processors that have accepted offers and in the hiring process. We want to make sure Lee County residents get funding. Low Income Home Energy Program (LIHEAP) staff did a phenomenal job getting \$1.3 million out to Lee County residents in little over 30 days. There are 800 applications waiting on Homeless Prevention. We are onboarding 2 more processors to get applications processed in a timely manner. Lee County Board of County Commissioners approved additional funding for non-profits. We are hiring some additional contract staff to manage contracts that are going

out to non-profits.

### **3. Community Action Plan and Strategic Plan Updates – Kim Hustad**

Ms. Hustad stated strategic plan identified 4 goals for the next couple of years:

1. Maintain funding to prevent homelessness and rehouse those experiencing homelessness, and that was in response to the point in time, data, and community conversations. We housed 66 chronic homeless individuals and 56 are households for Rapid Rehousing. We Processed 1,041 Homeless Prevention applications.
2. Maintain financial literacy to improve employee retention for lower wage earners has been put on hold due to the pandemic. We are responding to Homeless Prevention and homelessness only.
3. Maintain employment coaching and soft skill training to improve employability of wage earners – put on hold due to the pandemic. We have Career Source and Goodwill that we can develop further our partnership.
4. Explore future endeavors to be supported by Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) – we are focusing on making sure people are stable as result of pandemic.

Kristen O'Donnell inquired is there a tentative time when goals on hold will be picked back up? Kim responded would depend upon when the number of applications coming in for Homeless Prevention and when we can start responding to those applications in real time. As for employment counseling and soft skills training, what we could do is partner with Workforce Development on how to do that. Financial Literacy coach left; we are talking with County Extension Office on what's the best arena format to offer those classes. We also didn't think we could get people to attend, and the classroom dynamics made it more effective. The County Extension Office is looking for sites to hold classes and to create an online format for people.

Carolyn Johnson informed Kim Hustad that they have several CRCs available to hold classes in and partners willing to come hold these classes. The people that are coming in, they are expressing that they want and need digital literacy. Carolyn stated this is something that can be worked out.

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

Kim Stated that there is one thing missing from the report, we have \$201,832 in Cares Money for Homeless Prevention and Rapid Rehousing that we're working on spending. People that need financial assistance to pay for mortgage payments, were also tapping into Community Development Block Grant funds to spread all funds to meet the needs of everybody that needs assistance.

### **5. Client Satisfaction Survey – Kim Hustad**

Kim stated that client satisfaction survey has been implemented digitally. The way it works when we engage with a client for Homeless Prevention, Low Income Home



Energy Program (LIHEAP) and Rapid Rehousing, we send a link to our website where they can complete a client satisfaction survey. In future meetings, a client satisfaction report will be provided.

## 2. Neighborhood Reports

1. Charleston Park – Joseph Redmon – None

2. Page Park - Lee Coleman – None

3. Palmona Park – None

4. Pine Manor – Anne Gomez

- Mobile food pantry - Community Cooperative: November and December from 10am -12 pm.
- Trunk or Treat October 31<sup>st</sup>, 5-7 pm at Hunters Park.
- Annual Turkey Box Distribution – November 22<sup>nd</sup>.
- Annual Thanksgiving dinner Drive-thru, November 23<sup>rd</sup> 4-6 p.m.
- Annual Christmas Dinner, December 11<sup>th</sup> 12 -2 p.m.
- Adopted families – need people to adopt have lots of kids.
- Garden is Growing - redoing boxes with concrete blocks.
- School program has 25 children.
- Access applications come in daily.
- Food bank once a month.
- Assisting with Lee Cares applications.
- 277 backpacks distributed last quarter.
- Community Cooperative comes every month averaging 75 families.
- 28 covid shots and 9 flu shots given.
- Back to school event - 200 attendees.
- Word of life event August - 75 attendees.
- FTC members came out October 23<sup>rd</sup> – assisting with garden boxes and cleaned community.

5. Suncoast Estates – Charles Garretson – None

## IV. New Business

### 1. Whistleblower Policy for Board Members – Kim Hustad

Ms. Hustad stated that Whistleblower policy will soon be done for Advisory board. This policy is to protect board members if they want to report something they see that is not lawful or not ethical, they can report it in good faith and won't have retaliation from the department.

### 2. 2021 Audit <https://www.leeclerk.org/Home/ShowDocument?id=10387>– Kim Hustad

Ms. Hustad stated that the 2021 Lee County Audit is available to view online, <https://www.leeclerk.org/Home/ShowDocument?id=10387>. Kim also reported there were no findings regarding our department. No findings regarding Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) or Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). We have a second party review process, every file approved by a processor gets reviewed by a

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supervisor to make sure everything is correct and meets regulations.

3. **\*Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Funding Budget Input – Kim Hustad**

Ms. Kim Hustad stated current Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) funding budget has a current balance of \$201,832 in Cares dedicated to people impacted by pandemic. Also \$75,964 in regular funding spent on Homeless Prevention, Rapid Rehousing and people impacted by pandemic. Kim asked members if they are comfortable with where funds are being dedicated?

Ms. Carolyn Johnson stated yes, would like to know if there is anything available for bus passes or transportation? Kim responded that there is not but will include for future funding.

Ms. Katie M. Bradford asked what are some things that have been funded in the past? Kim responded, the job training program for medical office skills ended. There were not enough applicants, and new programs started up in community just as effective. Also had a financial literacy coach which provided budget clinics and one-on-one financial coaching. An employment coach, coached on basic living skills, or basic soft skills. Kim asked if there is anything from Ms. Bradford's prospective that should be address? Katie Bradford asked if there's a way to advertise the funding? Kim Hustad responded advertising is a double-edge sword for us, we have 800 applications waiting for help. Lee Cares is also back lagged because of that huge need in our community.

Carolyn Johnson stated many employers are struggling with truck drivers. Is there any funding towards truck driver certification? We can talk offline about some people that are interested to help and be a partner and resource for that. Kim Hustad responded she will factor those in as soon as she can.

V. **Adjournment**



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