

Washtenaw County
Community Action Board
Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: Monday, November 28, 2005 **Time:** 6:00 pm

Members Present: Michael DuRussel, Cyril Berry, Robert Brackenbury, Shoshana DeMaria, Joseph Dulin, Juanita House, Cynthia Maritato, Christina Montague, Brenda McKinney, Hurley Myers, Suzanne Shaw, Rolland Sizemore Jr. and Donn Wolf.

Member Absent: Elette Collins

WDB Liaison Present: Steven Gulick

Staff Present: Trenda Rusher, Jenny Bivens, Susan Sweet Scott and Rana Al-Igoe

1. Call to Order

DuRussel called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

2. Approval of the Agenda

Gulick and Brackenbury had other meetings to attend; thus the agenda was amended moving the Report of the WDB, Swearing in of Board members and the Elections of the Officers to the beginning of the meeting. Shaw moved to approve the agenda with the noted changes. Maritato supported. Meeting agenda approved with the noted changes.

3. Approval of the Minutes

Shaw moved to approve the minutes from the 09/26/05 meeting. Wolf supported. Minutes approved.

4. Report of the Committees / Liaisons

A. Workforce Development Board (WDB)

- Gulick reported that Wolf decided not to seek reelection as Chair of the WDB. The WDB had elections at their last meeting and elected Keith Peters as the new Chair. Gulick listed the Vice Chairs that were also elected at the last WDB meeting.
- Gulick was invited to attend the Community Action Partnership Conference that was canceled due to Hurricane Katrina. One of the workshops was based on how labor unions and CABs can work more closely together.
- Gulick would like to invite Rick Banks to the March CAB meeting to give a presentation (upon board approval).
- Staff is in the planning stages for the Joint Annual Meeting held with the WDB and the CAB. Rusher noted that staff is planning to have a mini-retreat prior to the Joint Annual Meeting.

5. Report of the Chair – DuRussel

A. Swearing in of Board Members

Maritato and Montague took the oath of office for their membership on the CAB.

B. Report of the Nominating Committee – Dulin

- Dulin reported that the Nominating Committee met earlier in the day via conference call. It was decided that a ballot would be put forth for the office of Chair. The ballot was presented with the following nominations:
 - For the Office of Chair – Michael DuRussel and Christina Montague
 - For the Office of Vice Chair of Housing – Cyril Berry
 - For the Office of Vice Chair of Workforce Development – Donn Wolf and Shoshana DeMaria
 - For the Office of Vice Chair, At-Large – Hurley Myers, Brenda McKinney and Suzanne Shaw
- Should there be any nominations from the floor for any of the offices, then that person would be placed on the ballot as a write in.
- Dulin asked if there were any nominations from the floor for the office of Vice Chair of Housing. Brenda McKinney was nominated from the floor by Christina Montague.
- Dulin asked if there were any nominations from the floor for the office of Vice Chair of Workforce Development three times. There was none.
- Dulin asked if there were any nominations from the floor for the office of Vice Chair At-Large. Shaw asked that her nomination be withdrawn from the ballot for the office of Vice Chair At-Large and asked that the CAB open another slot for an officer for the consumer sector. Dulin asked that we take this up with the Bylaw Committee at a later date. Shaw agreed. Wolf, DeMaria, and Shaw volunteered to serve on the Bylaws committee.
- McKinney asked that her nomination be withdrawn from the ballot for the office of Vice Chair At-Large.
- Ballots were distributed to all voting members on the Board and the names of those nominated from the floor were written in. Tellers collected the ballots and tallied them.

6. Report of the Board of Commissioners (BOC)

A. Announcements

- The Commissioners have been working on the development of the agenda for 2006 to align with the goals of the BOC.
- Sizemore noted issues with the BOC and road patrol.

7. Report of the Chair – DuRussel (Continued)

These items were moved due to the change in the agenda

A. Announcements

- DuRussel asked for a moment of silence for the passing of Commissioner Peterson's mother. Flowers were sent to the funeral on behalf of the board and staff.
- Montague noted that Vickie Page, who was a Foster Grandparent for a long time, passed away recently. A moment of silence was taken for her as well.

B. Michigan Community Action Agency Association (MCAAA) Updates

- Berry reported that the MCAAA is receiving funds for deliverable fuels and walk-for-warmth.
- Tom Mathieu is stepping down as the Executive Director of MCAAA. Doreen Woodward is the person who they are looking at to replace him. She comes to the association from Michigan State University. Shaw asked for some more background information on Woodward. There will be a luncheon for Mathieu on December 19 at noon in Lansing.

There was a break in the meeting agenda so that the results of the vote could be announced. Dulin announced that Christina Montague was elected as Chair of the Board for 2006. Berry was elected to serve as Vice Chair of Housing; Wolf was elected as Vice Chair of Workforce Development and Myers was elected as Vice Chair At-Large. Montague noted that she appreciated working on the CAB under DuRussel.

8. Report of the Director – Rusher

A. Announcements

- Rusher talked about the upcoming Mini-Retreat. The idea is to talk about how people, even those working full time, cannot make ends meet. We hope to deal with the impact of employment and poverty. Afterwards, we will move into the Joint Annual Meeting to highlight the discussions from the Mini-Retreat. There will be networking with the community and success stories will be highlighted. Rusher expects it will be a really dynamic day.

B. Federal / State / Local

Federal

- Another continuing resolution will probably be passed for the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG). Funding is looking pretty good per David Bradley in DC.

State

- The State Commission met recently and set forth their agenda. They are not looking at local agencies, but are looking at the State as a whole. Locals asked that the State post on their website, the commissions minutes so that members can review the work and keep up to date.
- Rusher is the State president of the Michigan Community Action Agency Association (MCAAA) Director's Association. They are working very closely with Dwayne Haywood, Director of the Michigan Department of Human Services – Bureau of Community Action and Economic Opportunity.

Local

- ETCS is doing lots locally. The CAB has been inundated with requests for funds again this year. In response, a resolution was distributed for board members to consider. Per the request of the CAB, ETCS recommends setting aside approximately \$100,000 in CSBG money to provide funding for community projects. Goal C of the updated Report Card addresses community action issues and we expect organizations requesting funds to support the goals in our Report Card. ETCS would set up the parameters of the funding and the outcomes. Sizemore noted that the BOC is approached and asked for funds as well. He asked if funds were being duplicated and asked that communications be made to ensure that funding is not being duplicated. Rusher replied that most of the bids that are received from ETCS request information on the other organizations the bidder is requesting funds from. Sizemore asked if board members could see the parameters of the request for proposals (RFP). And Dulin asked about the RFP process. Staff noted that the CAB would make the final decision as to which organizations receive funding. A committee might be formed to discuss the proposals received or this charge might be given to the CAB Executive Committee. It was decided that this issue be discussed at a later meeting, as there will be a new Chair next year.

Shaw moved the resolution allowing staff to initiate the request for proposals. Dulin supported. Motion passes. Staff has an RFP process and will come back to the Board with the proposals received.

C. Resolutions

- i. Request for ratification of the ETCS fiscal year (FY) 2006 Community Services Block Grant application to the Michigan Department of Human Services (DHS) in the amount of \$889,553 for the period of October 1, 2005 through September 30, 2006.
 - o These funds are necessary for the continuation of services through the various community action programs and will be used for programmatic and administrative delivery of services.
 - o Funds are to be used for families whose income is at or below 125% of the poverty level.
 - o CSBG funds support overall ETCS services including programs such as Employment Services, Summer Food Service, Senior Nutrition, Foster Grandparents, Emergency Services, Surplus Food Distribution, Home Weatherization and Home Rehabilitation.

- ii. Request for ratification of the ETCS FY 2006 Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program agreement to the Michigan DHS in the amount of \$70,920 for the period of October 1, 2005 through September 30, 2006.
 - o TANF is part of the Emergency Services Program administered by ETCS. The focus of this program is on removing barriers to help people move towards self sufficiency.
 - o Funds are to be used for families whose income is at or below 200% of the poverty level.

- iii. Request for ratification of the ETCS submission of the Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) electronic application to the Michigan Department of Education in the amount of \$13,136 for the period of October 1, 2005 through September 30, 2006.
 - o TEFAP is a Federal program created in 1981 to help supplement the diets of low-income people by providing them with emergency food and nutrition assistance at no cost.
 - o Commodity foods are made available by the US Department of Agriculture.
 - o Eligibility requirements are based on household income levels. Allowable income is at or below 130% for persons under 60 years of age and 160% for persons aged 60 and over.
 - o The funding is used for moving the food down, as the distribution is conducted by staff and volunteers.

Berry moved to approve all three resolutions. Sizemore supported. Resolutions pass.

Discussion

- Bivens thanked board members who volunteered for TEFAP, including Berry, DeMaria and Shaw. Shaw noted that staff from Food Gatherers is usually on site delivering fresh produce and other food. Shaw asked why they were not at the last distribution. Bivens replied that Food Gatherers did not have enough fresh produce to participate.

D. Handouts

- ETCS is working on the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) program. Agencies must go out for bid this year to receive funds.
Shaw moved to support the ETCS application to the request for proposals (RFP) from the State for EITC funds. Wolf supported. Motion passes.

- Wolf and Rusher attended a meeting recently where Pathways to Excellence was discussed. This is a program that would help our agency move towards 21st century skills. The purpose is to make sure that all board members and staff adhere to excellent standards. There are ten slots open and the cost is \$1,000 to participate.

Berry moved to support the CAB's enrollment in the Pathways to Excellence program. DeMaria supported. Motion passes.

- Rusher noted that ETCS is a part of the Southeast Michigan Regional Skills Alliance (RSA) in Hospitality. Those involved in the alliance are working with Mary Kerr, President of the Ann Arbor Area Convention and Visitors Bureau. Area hotels participating in training through the Michigan Works! Association, receive a trophy.

E. Program Updates

- i. Emergency Services – Bivens
 - Planning for the Summer Food Service Program begins in April. Site staff noted that the pizza was great, but the children did not like the pitas. Dulin agreed and noted how well the program was conducted this year. Rusher added that this program will not be monitored due to the outstanding work that was done.
- ii. Housing and Energy Programs – Scott
 - Scott distributed energy saving calendars that ETCS is distributing to all of its customers. Sizemore asked how to get staff to conduct energy saving classes with neighborhood associations. Scott suggested that any interested parties contact Aaron Kraft to schedule classes.
- iii. Older Adult Programs – Scott
 - ETCS expects these programs to be monitored early next year. Staff noted that monitors may want to meet with board members.
 - Scott asked board members to mark their calendars for April 28 Foster Grandparent (FG) Program Volunteer Luncheon. ETCS is looking for more FGs to join the program. It was noted that income guidelines are stringent. Scott noted that ETCS does meet the program requirements for the number of volunteers, but would like to get up to about 80 FGs to cover vacations and sick time.
 - The Senior Advocacy of Washtenaw (SAW) is also working on raising money for the Ypsilanti Senior Center. They have funding for part time staff and are looking for more funding.
 - Scott distributed the results of a survey given to the FGs. 47 FGs responded to the survey.
 - Sizemore asked whether there was any feedback regarding the computers that were donated. Shaw said that the feedback was very positive. Sizemore noted that the County would like to donate six (6) more computers to the FG Program. Sizemore is donating the computers to the FG Program because it was one of the FGs that started this program.
 - McKinney asked who should be contacted about obtaining computers. Sizemore noted that he is the contact person. The computers are donated to the RCTC students who fix them. Board members thanked Sizemore for the kind donation.

9. Other Business

A. Hurricane Katrina Update – Montague

- Montague was deployed by the Washtenaw County Red Cross to Baton Rouge, Louisiana. She worked at a homeless shelter that housed about 300 people. Volunteers there worked one of two twelve hour shifts. On the last two days Montague took two vans full of people to their homes that had been destroyed. There was a lot going on and Montague noted that this was one of the most rewarding things she has done. She would like to encourage more African Americans to volunteer. There is still a need for volunteers and help in the New Orleans / Baton Rouge area.
- DuRussel noted that he helped host a picnic in Southfield for Katrina victims by donating food from his farm.

B. Other Business / News

- Wolf announced that DTE is giving out grants to interested organizations that are a 501c3. Wolf suggested that ETCS help the Gateway Board apply again.

10. Other Business

DuRussel adjourned the meeting at 7:30 pm.