

Washtenaw County  
**Community Action Board (CAB)**  
Meeting Minutes

**Meeting Date:** Monday, May 22, 2006 **Time:** 6:00 PM

**Location:** Michigan Works! Service Center, 304 Harriet Street, Ypsilanti, Michigan

**Members Present:** Christina Montague, Elette Collins, Shoshana DeMaria, Joseph Dulin, Mandy Grewal, Juanita House, Hurley Myers, Suzanne Shaw and Donn Wolf.

**Members Absent:** Mike DuRussel (excused), Cynthia Maritato (excused), Brenda McKinney and Rolland Sizemore.

**Liaison Presents:** Steve Gulick, Washtenaw County Workforce Development Board Deryl Beasley, Ypsilanti Gateway Community and Economic Development Corporation

**Guest Present:** Stephanie Gordon

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

**1. Call to Order**

Montague called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM.

**2. Welcome and Introductions**

Montague welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked that everyone present introduce him or herself.

**3. Oath of Office**

Commissioner Mandy Grewal was appointed to the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners (BOC). Commissioner Grewal took the place of her husband, Commissioner Brackenbury who recently resigned from the BOC.

Al-Igoe performed the oath of office for the newly appointed Commissioner Grewal who will serve on the Community Action Board (CAB) through the end of the year.

**4. Approval of the Agenda**

Myers moved to approve the meeting agenda. Berry supported. Meeting agenda approved.

**5. Approval of the Meeting Minutes**

Wolf moved to approve the minutes from the 03/20/06 meeting. House supported. Meeting minutes approved.

**6. Report of the Chair – (Montague)**

A. Bylaws Committee Update

- Montague recommended the following CAB members to serve on the Bylaws Committee:
  - Shoshana DeMaria

- Joe Dulin
- Suzanne Shaw
- Rolland Sizemore
- Donn Wolf
- Shaw asked when they could meet. Sizemore was unable to attend today's meeting; his presence at the meeting is important especially to report out to the BOC.
- Montague stressed the importance of expanding conference opportunities so that all Board members can be involved. She would like everyone to have the option to travel. Montague suggested a rotation so that all Board members have the option of attending conferences. At the same time, it is important to keep the amount of travel the same. Montague noted that some of the training would be national.
- Rusher added that some training opportunities would need to involve the Gateway Board. Rusher suggested that Al-Igoe poll a number of dates to determine when everyone is available. Rusher committed to setting a meeting date in the next two weeks. In the meantime, staff will begin to make some of the changes to the CAB Bylaws; these will be cosmetic changes so that Board members will be able to focus on the travel policy.

B. MCAAA Updates – (Berry)

- MCAAA members spent some time at the April Joint Quarterly Meeting planning for the Summer Conference. The Summer Conference is scheduled for July 23 – 26 in Thompsonville Michigan.

7. **Report of the BOC** – (Commissioner Grewal)

A. Updates

- The Sheriffs' issue is ongoing and has not been resolved. There is currently no contract, but the County is providing services. This issue has been tabled for a couple of months.

8. **Report of the Director** – (Rusher)

A. Updates

i. ETCS Branding

- Staff continues to work with our marketing firm on branding and other public relations projects. The firm, Renaissance Strategies, has come up with a new draft logo that was included in the meeting packets.

ii. Ministers Alliance of Ypsilanti, Ann Arbor and Vicinity Partnership

- Rusher noted that there were two huge items in the meeting packets that require some project management. Our mission is to make sure that we are meeting the needs of the community. One of our partners is the faith-based community. About a month ago, the County Administrator invited ETCS to meet with the local Ministers Alliance to talk about the need to have a closer relationship with the Community Action Agency (CAA). The Ministers want to have greater access to human services and what we do. They want to make sure that their parishioners and members are connected. The Ministers also want to feel that they are a part of what we are doing.
- It was agreed that everyone would work more closely together.
- The Ministers noted that they were willing to allow us to train their staff so that they could help.

- The County Administrator, Bob Guenzel, asked that the Governor's office be brought in for funding.
- The real focus will be on ETCS as the organization to spearhead this partnership.
- Staff worked on a draft agreement, which was included in today's meeting packet for Board members to review. The agreement provides a basic background and the focus for the partnership. Rusher noted that this is a working draft and the focus will be on the City of Ypsilanti.
- The Ministers Alliance approached us and we are bringing in the work we do with housing and the work we do with the Gateway Board.
- The agreement also lists out the items that each partner will bring to the table.
- Staff went over the draft today. Everyone involved is very excited. An evaluation component will be added to track the process. A contract staff will be hired as a project manager with this project and the other huge item we are working on. The vision is to have a kick off and invite the WDB, CAB, Foster Grandparents (FGs), Ministers, and elected officials. Everyone will sign the agreement demonstrating that this is a faith-based driven initiative. This kick off in Washtenaw County will be used as the model for the State and hopefully for the entire Country.
- Rusher received a call from the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth (DLEG) stating that they wanted to have meeting to talk about how workforce development can help faith-based organizations. Rusher replied that she was meeting on Monday morning to discuss this project. DLEG has expressed interest in replicating this partnership in other County's and use this as the model.
- Wolf noted that we have the authority to designate where the dollars go as the County's CAA. He asked whether this partnership would cause us to turn over this authority to another body. Montague replied that this will be a partnership and the Boards will continue to decide where dollars are spent. Montague felt that the County would add money to the pot. Rusher added that this partnership falls under the CAA purview. Wolf wanted to make sure that we did not lose our ability to determine where money is spent. Montague added that this would allow ETCS to pursue federal dollars through grants in partnership with the Ministers Alliance. Rusher noted that we would want to make sure that Washtenaw County has the fiduciary responsibility in the partnership. Some CAA dollars will be put in, but the CAB will need to decide the amount.
- Wolf noted that he would be attending a faith-based conference (on his own). He asked what kind of problems we would face by taking on the political issues around faith-based organizations. Rusher noted that she attended meetings last week with David Bradley to discuss the issue. David Bradley is moving towards the middle with the understanding that faith-based issues are going to be in politics.
- The next step is to find out how the Governor feels about this initiative. Rusher noted that it is not supposed to be a political issue, but it sometimes is.
- Grewal asked when the evaluations will be conducted and how will it be decided whether the project is successful and ready for repetition. Rusher replied that these issues would be fine-tuned. Rusher and Bivens will be meeting with the contractor over the next few weeks to discuss the work plan.
- Grewal asked what the time-frame would be. Rusher replied that she would like to work on this for six months and take a snap shot then to evaluate its success.

- Shaw expressed concern that last fall the Board discussed a plan for distributing money. Shaw wanted to make sure that we continue to be able to determine where money will be spent. Rusher replied that the request for proposals (RFP) that was discussed last fall was put on hold when the County reduced our general fund allocation without notification. Rusher noted that Frank Cambria assured us that funds would be restored in the next budget. Rusher added that she respected Shaw’s concern but that the issues were different. At this point, the agreement with the Ministers is a non-financial agreement. The agreement is for the Ministers Alliance to tap into the services that are already offered to the community.
- House asked how we were going to reach those who do not want to go through churches to receive services. Montague replied that the project started by the Ministers Alliance asking how they could better train their staff to help answer questions and direct their parishioners to the right place. This is an outreach effort. DeMaria added that this is a partnership where everyone will be working together.
- Rusher noted that it was suggested at the meeting this morning that the agreement be called the “Commitment to Change” partnership.
- Montague noted that one of the things that she wants to do is to send the Ministers to DC to explore funding opportunities. She clarified that this does not necessarily mean that the CAB or ETCS is going to pay for it.
- Montague asked for a motion so that we could be move forward with the agreement.

Berry moved to support the document as a starting point, with up to a one-year commitment and an evaluation in six months at the latest. Dulin supported. Motion passes.

#### DISCUSSION

- Commissioner Grewal suggested that an evaluation be done in three months.
- Collins wanted to make sure that the purpose of the agreement is outreach and that ETCS would still be the agency that delivers services.
- Rusher asked if there were any interested board members who would like to serve on an ad hoc committee to monitor the agreement. Berry, Dulin, House, DeMaria and Grewal volunteered to serve on the ad hoc committee to help with the execution of the agreement.
- Gulick noted that the concern and discussion at the National level is that the churches will weed out those who they wish to serve. Staff clarified that we are not giving money out to the churches for them to deliver services. We will still be agency that delivers the services.

#### iii. CAP-Facts

- The latest issue of CAP-Facts was included in the meeting packet for Board members to review.

#### B. Ypsilanti Gateway Community and Economic Development Corporation Update (YGCEDC) – (Beasley)

##### i. Partnerships

- The YGCEDC is very excited about the partnership with the CAB. They are limited by their capacity and the partnership will help them maximize their abilities.
- They have collaborated with LISC and the University of Michigan in the past.
- The YGCEDC is also involved in the Healthy Food Initiative. The goal of this initiative is to end up with a grocery store that sells produce and provides healthy food options for residents on the south side of Ypsilanti.
- They are working on Vision 2020 aimed at economic development in the County.

ii. Updates

- The workers are finishing the homes on Orchard and Worden Streets.
- An empty lot was sold to Habitat for Humanity.
- The Board is working on updating their membership. Board members are actively recruiting new members.

C. Resolutions

- i. Ratification of the County Administrator's signature on the Fiscal Year (FY) 2006 Weatherization Assistance Program Plan to the Michigan Department of Human Services (DHS) for a total amount of \$343,814 for the program period of April 1, 2006 to March 31, 2007
  - This program allows us to go in and weatherize homes for winter. Work includes replacing furnaces and reroofing homes. The money is used to assist households whose income is at or below 150% of the poverty level.
  - This is just one of the fundings received for the weatherization program. Funds are pooled together from money received from MCAA and LIHEAP. All together ETCS weatherizes about 150 homes. These are mostly single family units. Every year, we use all of the money and have a waiting list.
  
- ii. Approval of the County Administrator's signature on the LIHEAP Crisis Assistance (LCA): Deliverable Fuel Agreement with the Michigan Department of Human Services, in the amount of \$20,171 for the period of February 10, 2006 through September 30, 2006
  - These funds are allocated to CAAs to enable us to respond to emergency needs of low-income households.
  - This year's funding allocation is \$20,171. This is the second group of funding for this service.
  - ETCS plans on providing assistance to twenty (20) eligible households. It is hard to spend these funds in our county since it is mostly urban. Stipulations are strict and we do our best to spend all of the money.
  - The 2005 funding level was \$20,171 enabling us to serve 20 households.
  
- iii. Ratification of the County Administrator's signature on the Fiscal Year (FY) 2006 Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) Application in the amount of \$64,500 to the Michigan Department of Human Services for the period of April 1, 2006 through March 31, 2007
  - The LIHEAP Program is an annual program. This year's funding allocation is \$64,500. The money is used to assist households whose income is at or below 150% of the poverty level.

- Staff plans on serving thirty (30) single-family units. It was noted that the 2005 funding level was \$129,000 enabling ETCS to serve approximately 55 units.
- This is the same type of work as the Weatherization Program. Work may be done for the same unit from different funds to make sure that work is done.
- Dulin asked what the process was for receiving this service. Staff replied that Sharon Henderson would be the first person to contact at ETCS. Henderson begins the application process and checks to ensure that the applicant qualifies. Staff outlined the next steps for application for this project. Rusher added that ideally, staff would like to make the application process accessible online. Rusher noted that staff is meeting with the County's Web Content Manager later in the week to discuss the ETCS website.

Shaw moved to approve all three resolutions. House supported. Resolutions pass.

#### D. Program Updates

##### i. Emergency Services – (Bivens)

- ETCS organized The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) quarterly distribution last week. It was another successful period. The next distribution will be in August. Unfortunately, Food Gatherers was unable to attend due to a lack of donations made to their organization during the last quarter.
- The Energy Assistance Program is run from money received from MCAAA. All of the money, \$73,000, was spent. Another \$36,000 is coming that staff will be able to use to continue to serve people.
- We need to get the word out about Deliverable Fuels funds.
- Planning for the Summer Food Service Program is underway. Staff will have more data by the next meeting on this program. It was decided that a little more money will be spent to get a better variety of food items this year.

##### ii. Housing and Energy Program – (Scott for Kraft)

- Kraft is currently at a national conference in Texas.
- A lot the report information was covered earlier in the meeting under the resolutions.
- Staff is looking for applicants that are of moderate income who can have work done on their homes. We are looking at servicing specific townships due to program stipulations. This work includes major work on roofs and furnaces as well as smaller jobs.
- ETCS just finished the Energy program fiscal year with maximum capacity of units served.
- We have organized a number of energy efficiency classes this year. Kits have been distributed to those who attended that include ideas and tools for energy saving.

##### iii. Senior Services – (Scott)

- Scott distributed photos of the recent Foster Grandparent Program Annual Recognition Luncheon. She pointed out that some CAB members were able to attend. Commissioner Sizemore received an award for his work with donating the computers to the FGs. Staff is currently getting ready for the summer turn over. Staff is organizing a picnic for 500 people at on Saturday, June 24.

iv. Michigan Enrolls

- o ETCS continues to meet and exceed the goals that the program sets for us.

**9. Report of the Officers, Committees & Liaisons**

A. Workforce Development Board (WDB) – (Gulick and Wolf)

- A copy of the MEGA-P was included in the meeting packets for Board members to review. This is an innovative partnership agreement with workforce development and economic development in the community.
- The WDB met last on Thursday, May 5. There was a lot of discussion at the meeting to expand the agreement to include more organizations. The partners want to develop more jobs and better jobs for citizens in the County.
- As usual, Washtenaw County is the model in the Country. We are the first in the State and probably in the Country to execute such an agreement. Representatives from the Governor's office attended the last WDB meeting to witness the signing of the MEGA P.
- We are very fortunate in the County to have such diverse partners that come together to make things happen. We are able to do many things by coordinating and bringing all of the partners together.
- Wolf noted that the MEGA P is a WDB project, but it will have a positive impact on the CAB. It will have a very positive impact on the community. Secondly, it will make what ETCS does as the CAA much broader.

B. Head Start – (Collins)

- A WIC office has opened at the Head Start office, which is very convenient.
- The Family Nutrition Program meets once a week with MSU Extension Services.
- The Head Start Annual Training Conference was in Detroit this year. All of the Head Start staff in the County attended the conference on May 9 and 10.

**10. Other Announcements and Business**

- Berry announced that Patsy Chandler was honored this past weekend along with McCoy and Truman. He brought in an article from today's Ann Arbor News. Board members were pleased that she was honored; Chandler served on the CAB for a number of years. Wolf thanked Rusher and staff for their work on the Patsy Chandler Fountain that was dedicated.

**11. Adjourn**

Dulin moved to adjourn the meeting. Shaw supported. Montague adjourned the meeting at 7:33 PM.