

Macomb Community Action Advisory Board
Executive Committee Minutes
September 8, 2020

The Macomb Community Action Advisory Board Executive Committee held a virtual meeting by way of a conference call on Tuesday, September 8, 2020. Under CSPM 200 Policy Series effective April 14, 2020, during the Coronavirus Pandemic, virtual board meetings through conference calls are permitted regardless of inclusion in by-laws. Macomb Community Action, 21885 Dunham Road, Clinton Township, Michigan.

In accordance with the Open Meetings Act, virtual board meeting information is posted on the County website as well as displayed on the exterior Macomb Community Action office door

Roll call was taken. Members and staff present on the virtual meeting are indicated below.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Denise Amenta, Chair
John Bierbusse
Monica Bihar-Natzke
Michael Bruci
Tom Kalkofen
Matthew Micinski

MEMBERS EXCUSED:

Krista Willette

STAFF PRESENT:

Linda Azar
Ernest Cawvey
Joe Cooke
Sheila Cote'
Gary Cutler
Karen Frasard

OTHERS PRESENT:

1. Call to order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Amenta at 11:30 am.

2. Determination of a Quorum

A roll call of members was taken by Karen Frasard. It was determined that a quorum was established with six members present virtually.

At the request of Chair Amenta, Michael Bruci read the Promise of Community Action for the members.

3. Recommendation to approve the Agenda

The agenda was amended to add as item 9B, recommendation to approve the application submission for the Head Start Expansion Grant.

Michael Bruci made a motion, supported by John Bierbusse and Tom Kalkofen, to approve the agenda with the added item as 9B.

Summary of the vote on the motion: (6 – 0 – 0)

Aye – Denise Amenta, John Bierbusse, Monica Bihar-Natzke, Michael Bruci, Tom Kalkofen, Matthew Micinski

Nay – None

Abstain – None

Motion carried.

4. Recommendation to approve the July 14, 2020, minutes.

Michael Bruci made a motion, supported by Tom Kalkofen, to approve the July 14, 2020, minutes.

Summary of the vote on the motion: (6 – 0 – 0)

Aye – Denise Amenta, John Bierbusse, Monica Bihar-Natzke, Michael Bruci, Tom Kalkofen, Matthew Micinski

Nay – None

Abstain – None

Motion carried.

5. Public Comment

Chair Amenta stated that this committee operates under the Open Meetings Act and asked if anyone was present on the call who wished to address the committee. There being no one present on the call requesting this privilege, Chair Amenta proceeded with the meeting.

6. Recommendation to receive and file the HUD 2020 Annual Action Plan

Monica Bihar-Natzke made a motion, supported by Michael Bruci, to receive and file the HUD 2020 Annual Action Plan.

Joe Cooke presented information on the funds, stating:

- These funds are for us to conduct our Community Development programs
- Funds are broken down in three areas:
 - CDBG \$1.9M; slightly higher than last year's allocation
 - HOME \$1.7M for Home Investment Partnership / housing programs; slightly higher than last year's allocation
 - ESG \$157,000 supports homeless services; slightly lower than last years' allocations
 - These funds allow us to conduct work with the 21 communities in Macomb County, as well as through the HOME project through the entitled communities

Discussion ensued. Denise Amenta inquired if a committee would again work on reviewing the applications from communities who submitted proposals for work.

- Joe Cooke said that it would follow the same process.

Summary of the vote on the motion: (6 – 0 – 0)

Aye – Denise Amenta, John Bierbusse, Monica Bihar-Natzke, Michael Bruci, Tom Kalkofen, Matthew Micinski

Nay – None

Abstain – None

Motion carried.

7. Recommendation to receive and approve the CRF Water and Plumbing Funds

John Bierbusse made a motion, supported by Matthew Micinski, to receive and approve the CRF Water and Plumbing Funds.

Joe Cooke presented information on the funds, stating:

- These funds are from the Michigan Department of Health & Human Services Bureau of Community Actin and Economic Opportunity
- Funding allocation: \$345,000
- Period of performance: August 1, 2020 – December 30, 2020
- The program was designed so every eligible Macomb home will have access to hot and cold water, functioning toilet, bathroom faucet, shower, bath, laundry tub

- Funds can also be used for hot water tank repair and replacement, as well as septic field and tank work
- An average of \$5,200 for interior work and an average of \$9,000 for exterior work
- This is a new program, so specifics are still being developed
- We are working with the Health Department to identify people who are having problems with their septic system
- We are working with other partners to ensure these funds are spent out by the end of December

Discussion ensued. Tom Kalkofen inquired if the point / priority system is what will be used.

- Joe Cooke responded that we will use the priority system that is the best option so we service the most vulnerable people first
 - The program is still evolving but we will provide that information to the committee
- Tom Kalkofen stated that item #9 asks if waste water regularly drains from your house, suggesting an approved system to evaluate this be in place
- Mr. Kalkofen inquired about using local plumbing inspectors from various communities to provide this type of information to bring it to code
 - Joe Cooke responded that we have housing specialists on staff who can provide those inspections to us
 - We have established relationships with contractors in place for the Housing Rehab programs

Discussion ensued. Denise Amenta inquired if a customer was able to use both the interior and exterior funds, if jobs work together with weatherizing the home, and how are we advertising this program

- Joe Cooke responded
 - Yes, services for customers can be done on both interior and exterior
 - Yes, it will coincide with our existing weatherization and housing rehab programs
 - A customer does not have to be a weatherization customer
 - We are in the process of creating a flyer that will be released widely across the agency and our partners

Summary of the vote on the motion: (6 – 0 – 0)

Aye – Denise Amenta, John Bierbusse, Monica Bihar-Natzke, Michael Bruci, Tom Kalkofen, Matthew Micinski

Nay – None

Abstain – None

Motion carried.

8. Recommendation to receive and approve WCARE Grant Funds

Monica Bihar-Natzke made a motion, supported by Michael Bruci, to receive and approve the WCARE Grant Funds.

Joe Cooke presented information on the WCARE funds, stating

- These funds are from the Michigan Department of Health & Human Services Bureau of Community Action and Economic Opportunity
- This program is designed to provide direct payment assistance for water customers
 - All water providers throughout the County have the option to opt in or out of the program
 - Those that opt in, we can provide direct assistance
 - Remaining funds not used may go directly to the water provider to forgive arrearages, depending on how many customers receive assistance
 - Customers can have up to \$700 in direct payment assistance for water and waste water
 - For those who are billed separately, they may be eligible for up to \$1,400 combined
- Funds must be spent by the end of December, 2020
- Funding allocation: \$2,887,772

Discussion ensued. Denise Amenta inquired how this program will work with the WRAP program.

- Joe Cooke responded that it is different than WRAP, and one does not preclude a customer from the other
- This program requires that a customer must be an active food assistance recipient through the State
- Agencies across the State are working with DHHS to get lists of food recipients who qualify
 - Agreements with providers and the State are being generated to formulate these lists of who is eligible

Summary of the vote on the motion: (6 – 0 – 0)

Aye – Denise Amenta, John Bierbusse, Monica Bihar-Natzke, Michael Bruci, Tom Kalkofen, Matthew Micinski

Nay – None

Abstain – None

Motion carried.

9. A) Recommendation to receive and approve QCARE Grant Funds

John Bierbusse made a motion, supported by Matthew Micinski, to receive and approve QCARE Grant Funds.

Linda Azar presented information on the QCARE Grant Funds, stating:

- We had the opportunity in the spring to create Q-boxes for folks who were in quarantine or isolated due to COVID-19
 - We created 150 boxes and vetted out calls from folks who may be eligible to receive the kits
 - We partnered with an organization, Mobile Missions, to deliver these boxes
- The Bureau (Michigan Department of Health & Human Services Bureau of Community Action and Economic Opportunity) allocated funds to support and continue this effort for vulnerable families who are isolated
 - Funding amount: \$150,000
 - These funds will allow us to provide quarantine boxes with food / household items to low-income people who are either in isolation due to COVID-19, been exposed, awaiting test results, are vulnerable or immune compromised
 - We are working with a potential partner to create the boxes for us
 - We hope to partner with the Health Department to offer at the COVID-19 testing sites, as well as to offer to seniors who are vulnerable

Summary of the vote on the motion: (6 – 0 – 0)

Aye – Denise Amenta, John Bierbusse, Monica Bihar-Natzke, Michael Bruci, Tom Kalkofen, Matthew Micinski

Nay – None

Abstain – None

Motion carried.

9. B) Recommendation to approve the application submission for the Head Start Expansion Grant

Monica Bihar-Natzke made a motion, supported by Michael Bruci, to approve the application submission for the Head Start Expansion Grant.

Linda Azar presented information on the Head Start Expansion application, stating:

- The opportunity to add to existing Head Start slots has not been offered for many years
- There is \$21,000,000 available for the region, and Michigan is one of the states in the region who can apply competitively to expand our Head Start programming
- We are excited to apply and expand our full day Head Start programming by 80 slots with five classrooms
- This is a competitive grant and it has a tight timeline
 - The application is due September 21, 2020

- We have found the demand is greater in the full day program so we are focusing the grant opportunity on expanding our Head Start capacity

Discussion ensued. John Bierbusse inquired if any state can apply.

- Linda Azar responded that it is for the expansion of any existing Head Start programs

Summary of the vote on the motion: (6 – 0 – 0)

Aye – Denise Amenta, John Bierbusse, Monica Bihar-Natzke, Michael Bruci, Tom Kalkofen, Matthew Micinski

Nay – None

Abstain – None

Motion carried.

10. Other Business

Joe Cooke provided an update on the Community Needs Assessment, stating that four qualified vendors were received in the request for qualifications process. Applicants will be vetted and a selection will be made for a vendor to complete the CNA by December.

Tom Kalkofen inquired if the funds from the water and plumbing grant can be used for tap or connection fees for water and sewer.

- Joe Cooke responded that the goal of the program is to provide water access because of COVID
 - If a customer needed a tap in fee paid for in order to provide healthy water to their family during COVID, that may be a possibility, depending on the State's guidance

Ernest Cawvey provided an update on the Census, stating:

- We are in the home stretch
- We have not received any determination on how the out-of-state injunction by the judge will affect our local operations or the deadline for the Census
 - This may affect the door-to-door enumeration
- Macomb County has been doing great with only one tract below the 50% threshold
- Initial plan was not designed for Macomb County to do everything but to work alongside the Field Office to conduct the Census
 - Issues with large turnover, staffing, and training
- Macomb County continues to go strong
 - Outreaches have been done in many mobile home communities and apartment complexes
 - We are working with the City of Warren, Sterling Heights, and Eastpointe on final events
 - We are working with the Regional Census team to get their staff to an upcoming event at a mobile home community in Chesterfield
- If the injunction does stand, the end date may go back to the end of October
 - Additional events can then be planned

Denise Amenta inquired as to how the staff are doing with all the additional funds and deadlines.

- Ernest Cawvey responded that the cumulative effect of COVID is wearing away on all of us
 - What might long term consequences look like for everyone; we have all been affected in one way or another
 - Macomb Community Action has the compelling mission to serve the vulnerable in our community
 - It makes a difference but can get daunting with more calls than ever with an increased demand for assistance
 - Since March, we have put all hands on deck
 - The workshare program helped the County but left MCA further short staffed when additional monies and programs are being managed
- Linda Azar agreed that staff are feeling overwhelmed but staff are also pulling together and facing what comes day to day
 - Morale is good and staff are keeping things moving

Chair Amenta extended gratitude to the staff during these challenging times and offered her personal assistance.

- Sheila Cote' responded that any way of recognizing our staff would be appreciated
 - Staff have gone under the radar for all they have done
 - Office of Senior Staff have been on-site since the beginning and have not missed one meal delivery to seniors

11. Schedule next meeting: October 13, 2020
 Full Board
 Virtual meeting

12. Adjournment

John Bierbusse made a motion, supported by Monica Bihar-Natzke, to adjourn the meeting.

Summary of the vote on the motion: (6 – 0 – 0)

Aye – Denise Amenta, John Bierbusse, Monica Bihar-Natzke, Michael Bruci, Tom Kalkofen, Matthew Micinski

Nay – None

Abstain – None

Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 12:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Frasard