



Southwest Michigan Community Action Agency

BOARD MEETING MINUTES



Wednesday, May 18, 2022 at 6:00pm

Berrien County Administration Building: 701 Main Street, St. Joseph, MI 49085

PRESENT: R. Benjamin, C. Christopher, M. Franks, G. Moore, G. Patterson-Gladney, J. Wuerfel

ABSENT: K. Lyons, M. Underwood, M. Warren

GUESTS: None

STAFF: D. Oleneack, A. Slack, K. Smith Oldham

The meeting attendees stood and recited the SMCAA mission statement.

QUORUM: A quorum was established and the meeting was called to order at 6:00pm.

AGENDA ACTION: Motion made by **J. Wuerfel** to accept the May 18, 2022 Agenda, seconded by **M. Franks**. Unanimous approval; motion carried.

MINUTES ACTION: Motion to approve the April 20, 2022 Special Board Minutes was made by **M. Franks**, seconded by **J. Wuerfel**. Unanimous approval; motion carried.

Motion to approve the April 20, 2022 Regular Board Minutes was made by **R. Benjamin**, seconded by **G. Moore**. Unanimous approval; motion carried.

OFFICERS' REPORT: **C. Christopher** reported that **M. Warren's** hip replacement surgery had gone well and she anticipates being back at the June Board meeting.

He also recommended next month's meeting to be rescheduled from June 15 to June 22. **K. Smith Oldham** explained when a meeting falls on the 15th of a month that it is difficult for Finance to have a full report to the Board as expenditures are due by the 10th. Per Organizational Standards, Finance must also present an update to the fiscal policies in June 2022. An extra week would allow Finance to complete its monthly fiscal reports and the fiscal policies update. Additionally, **A. Slack** will sit for her Certified Community Action Professional (CCAP) exam on June 15th and then travel to Mid-Michigan Community Action's facility in Clare to fulfill responsibilities of the Commission on Community Action and Economic Opportunity. If possible, pushing the meeting back by a week will allow her more time to complete her programmatic reporting to the Board while also studying for the exam.



J. Wuerfel said she would be unable to attend a meeting on the 22nd, but supported the change if it benefitted the other Board meetings and the Agency staff. None of the other Board members had conflicts with the date change.

ACTION: A motion to approve the change of date for next month's meeting to be Wednesday, June 22, 2022 was made by **G. Patterson-Gladney** seconded by **G. Moore**. Unanimous approval; motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS: **a. Fiscal Summary. D. Oleneack** presented the fiscal summary. This summary is 58% into the fiscal year. She noted the Agency is within \$2,000 of breaking even in the proposed budget.

Line item Occupancy may appear high at 82% expended, but this includes the quarterly rent for the SMCAA Main Office at the Vincent Place. We are now paid through June 30, 2022. Food Commodities Purchased had a large purchase for the month as **Y. Vidt** prepares for the City of Benton Harbor Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Food Program happening May 24, 2022. The purchase included frozen whole chickens, pork tenderloins, and pork roasts.

J. Wuerfel asked **D. Oleneack** if she has seen an increase in supply costs as inflation continues to drive costs of living higher. She replied she has not noticed increases yet, but anticipates higher costs moving forward. **J. Wuerfel** asked if there were specific areas of concern, and **D. Oleneack** said she would expect food commodity expenses and office supplies to increase.

K. Smith Oldham commented that, though Travel has been limited over the past two years due to COVID restrictions, this area will see more use. As conferences and trainings open to in-person attendance, the Agency will see more Travel expenses, especially with increasing gas prices. Similarly, delivery rates are likely to increase for food products.

D. Oleneack also said the Agency's insurance company has recommended better cybersecurity. This is something SMCAA will implement as soon as possible and will show an increase to Contract Services. **R. Benjamin** asked if the federal legislation to strength Cybersecurity Coordination with state and local governments may impact the Agency. **K. Smith Oldham** was not aware of such legislation and no information has come from our state or national associations. **R. Benjamin** said he would share the information he has with SMCAA through email.

R. Benjamin also inquired if Salary and Wages for the SMCAA staff are being considered in comparison to growing costs of living. **K. Smith Oldham** said the Bureau of Community Action and Economic Opportunity (BCAEO) is currently researching this topic. She has requested **D. Oleneack** sit on this committee as only the agencies sitting on the committee will receive information from the

resulting findings. **K. Smith Oldham** noted Salary and Wages was an area she had initially hoped to focus efforts when she became Executive Director in 2020. However, the coronavirus pandemic, increased programming, and Benton Harbor water situation caused her to set the discussion on the back burner. She will inform the Board on more as information is shared from the committee.

A. ACTION:

A motion to accept and place on file the Fiscal Summary was made by **J. Wuerfel** and was seconded by **G. Patterson-Gladney**. Unanimous approval; motion carried.

b. Programmatic Report. **K. Smith Oldham** presented the programmatic report. There were (138) households serviced with utility assistance and (85) households with rent assistance. (1,692) households received food commodities from CSFP and (1,170) households received assistance through SMCAA food pantries. (4) families of (10) individuals stayed in the shelter for a total of (245) bed nights.

G. Moore questioned the decreasing numbers served through the food programs. **K. Smith Oldham** replied that Directors' Council shared that the entire state's Community Action network is seeing decreased need in this area. She said there has been rumor that Feeding America of Michigan may be attempting to request Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) funds, thus taking slots away from Community Action. Directors' Council noted CAAs across the state have lost 3,000 slots in CSFP. **Y. Vidt** received a call from Feeding American West Michigan asking for information on the Agency's CSFP food sites, which she did not divulge. The Executive Director of the Michigan Community Action Association (MCA) is meeting with the Department of Education to learn more on this issue, and **K. Smith Oldham** will keep the Board informed as more is learned.

The FSS Program serviced (23) individuals. There were (3) individuals served through DHHS's Rapid Rehousing Consolidated and (8) through Supportive Housing. Water Distribution at the SMCAA Self-Serve Station provided (30) households of (98) individuals received (180) cases of water from SMCAA's self-serve station.

Weatherization did not complete any projects in May, but **K. Smith Oldham** noted the funds being expended in the program meaning work is in-progress. There were no Whole Housing Rehab projects completed, but (1) household received a new roof through the Benton Harbor CDBG program and (2) households received minor home repairs in CARES funding.

In reference to Weatherization, **M. Franks** asked the difference between deferred homes and waitlisted homes. **K. Smith Oldham** explained that deferred homes are those that do not fit within the program's guidelines. This may be due to a number of reasons such as the house needing more work than

the Agency can complete with the funding restrictions or health issues within the home (asbestos, lead, etc.) must be addressed before SMCAA can weatherize. SMCAA is unable to touch these homes for any sort of weatherization work. Waitlisted homes are those that have passed guidelines and are waiting for contractors to begin weatherization work.

Per the request of the Board in April, **A. Slack** prepared a one-page overview of the Agency's service numbers in the past five years. The report presents numbers for only 50% through Fiscal Year (FY) 2022. So far, (5,608) unduplicated individuals and (2,897) unduplicated households have been serviced in FY22. In FY21, (4,629) unduplicated individuals and (2,212) unduplicated households were serviced. The next highest count was in FY20 when (4,956) unduplicated individuals and (3,293) unduplicated households were serviced.

K. Smith Oldham also ran a report from FACSPRO for the CARES and CERA Programs. During FY22, (2,175) of the (2,897) households assisted so far have been through these two programs alone.

B. ACTION: A motion to accept and place on file the Programmatic Report was made by **G. Moore** and was seconded by **M. Franks**. Unanimous approval; motion carried.

c. Director's Report. **K. Smith Oldham** presented the Director's Report. Some of the highlights over the past month included:

Legislative: Republican Congressman Fred Upton signed the CSBG HR 5129 Reauthorization Bill on April 21, 2022. The bill has now passed the House of Representatives and is being presented to the Senate.

Shelter: The second story floors have been replaced with industrial-strength laminate wood flooring. **Y. Vidt** and **J. Weinrick** are considering additional projects at the shelter such as replacement siding, rebuilding the front porch, and interior painting.

Weatherization: The Agency received additional LIHEAP funding to gear up for the WX Stimulus anticipated in Fall 2022. Management met to discuss how to budget appropriately. Part of the budget will be used for an additional WX vehicle, and **S. Klank** has a Request for Proposals open to area car dealerships. During the discussion, consensus was SMCAA will need additional office space to house new WX employees. **S. Klank** stated she had (12) employees in the Weatherization department during ARRA funding that began in 2009. **K. Smith Oldham** is currently meeting with the Vincent Place's landlord for additional space.

TEFAP: **Y. Vidt** is excited to announce a new TEFAP location in Niles at Church of God Full Gospel: 1023 Cass Street. This comes after the Niles Senior Center quit TEFAP distribution in 2021. She is also working with representatives in the

Covert area to find a new TEFAP location. Hearing this, **G. Patterson-Gladney** invited **Y. Vidt** to reach out to her if she would like another contact in Covert to find a new location.

City of Benton Harbor Water Distribution (WADIS): Self-serve numbers remain low while homebound delivery continue to increase. As of April 27th, nearly (1,500) water service lines have been replaced or verified non-lead and more than (2,100) Right to Access agreements have been completed.

Monitoring News:

- *CSBG/CARES/Weatherization*: BCAEO monitored (36) files with only (1) file receiving a finding. This is due to intake not using the client's most recent income statement. The monitor noted the files flowed well and she was able to follow what was going on with the families. Staff has corrected this issue in the client's file.
- *CSFP and TEFAP*: Michigan's Department of Education (MDE) found (2) findings during the monitoring – 1.) A suggestion on wording in the Agency's Limited English Proficiency Plan; and 2.) The Agency needs to create a CSFP Certification Procedure. **Y. Vidt** is currently working on these items to resubmit to MDE.
- *CERA*: MSHDA completed (2) desk reviews through the CERA Portal. The reviews had some questions, which caseworkers have since answered and resubmitted. We are awaiting the final report on these reviews.

K. Smith Oldham congratulated **A. Slack** on winning Moody on the Market's BOLD Women of Business 2021 award. She also shared a short thank you note from Cass County Commissioner Roseann Marchetti. This note complimented the SMCAA Minor Home Repair program and the excellent plumbing work completed for a Cass County resident.

K. Smith Oldham reminded the Board to complete the monthly training videos supplied in the emailed packets. A corresponding training form is included with these videos, and the Board can sign the forms after completing the trainings and give to **A. Slack** for record-keeping.

C. ACTION:

A motion to accept and place on file the Director's Report was made by **G. Patterson-Gladney** and was seconded **M. Franks**. Unanimous approval; motion carried.

d. Approval of Fork Lift Waiver for WADIS. **K. Smith Oldham** presented an Equipment Waiver Request to utilize WADIS funding for a forklift purchase. Originally, the BCAEO would not allow SMCAA to purchase a new forklift when this program began. However, as the Agency's only forklift was old, BCAEO allowed us to lease an additional forklift. Throughout the past several months, these forklifts have gotten a lot of usage, and our old owned forklift has stopped working. Therefore, **K. Smith Oldham** approached the BCAEO again

and asked to purchase the leased forklift. BCAEO encouraged SMCAA to do so. The proposed forklift costs \$25,189 and has few hours on it. **K. Smith Oldham** asked for the Board's approval, per the waiver, of this purchase.

D. ACTION: A motion to approve the purchase of the proposed forklift with WADIS funding was made by **J. Wuerfel** and was seconded **G. Patterson-Gladney**. Unanimous approval; motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

OTHER: None

ADJOURNMENT: Hearing no other business, a motion to adjourn was made by **R. Benjamin** and was seconded by **G. Patterson-Gladney**. The meeting was adjourned at 6:46pm.

NEXT MEETING: The next scheduled SMCAA Board meeting will be held at the **SMCAA CERA Office**: 208 E. Delaware Street, Decatur, MI 49045 on **Wednesday, June 22, 2022** at **6:00pm**. Following the meeting, the Board will be invited to tour the Shelter, which neighbors the CERA Office.

Respectfully submitted,
Ashley Slack
SMCAA Operations Manager

Reviewed and approved,
Gail Patterson-Gladney
SMCAA Board Secretary