



Southwest Michigan Community Action Agency

BOARD MEETING MINUTES



Wednesday – October 20, 2021 at 6:00pm

Van Buren Conference Center
490 S. Paw Paw St, Lawrence, MI 49064

PRESENT: R. Benjamin, C. Christopher, M. Franks, J. Johnson, K. Lyons, G. Patterson-Gladney, M. Underwood, M. Warren, J. Wuerfel

ABSENT: None

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.

ACTION: Motion made by **G. Patterson-Gladney** to accept the October 20, 2021 Agenda, seconded by **K. Lyons**. Unanimous approval; motion carried.

ACTION: Motion to approve the September 15, 2021 Board Minutes was made by **J. Wuerfel**, seconded by **C. Christopher**. Unanimous approval; motion carried.

OFFICERS' REPORT: The officers had nothing to report.

OLD BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS: a. **Fiscal Summary for September 2021.** **D. Oleneack** presented the fiscal summary. The new fiscal year began October 1, 2021. The line item Supplies is showing over-budget due to the inclusion of food purchases from local farmers and dairy boxes. This will be show as a separate line item in FY2022.

Contract Services included additional funds also due to security deemed necessary at the main office, warehouse, and shelter. **K. Lyons** asked what types of security is necessary. **K. Smith Oldham** responded all three locations will receive intercom systems with cameras.

There were no additional questions.



ACTION: A motion to accept and place on file the September 2021 Fiscal Summary was made by **K. Lyons** and was seconded by **G. Patterson-Gladney**. Unanimous approval; motion carried.

b. Programmatic Report for September 2021. **K. Smith Oldham** presented the programmatic report. Following training done with the State and a data analysis specialist, **A. Slack** updated the format of the report to include demographics of clients served. **K. Lyons** commented that she loved the new look and seeing data on those individuals and households SMCAA is helping.

G. Patterson-Gladney asked why the Cass County numbers appear so low compared to the other counties. **A. Slack** responded that the HARA in Cass County is KeyStone Place which offers a lot of programming. CERA funds, which are covering many needs at the moment, are being absorbed in Cass County, and KeyStone administers CERA.

There were 466 households serviced with utility assistance and 40 households with rent or mortgage assistance. 1,731 households received food commodities from CSFP, 3,760 households serviced through TEFAP, and 750 households received assistance through SMCAA food pantries. Four families with 6 individuals stayed in the shelter for a total of 28 bed nights.

The FSS Program serviced 11 individuals, and **A. Slack** stated she has over 30 new clients whom she has begun contacting that may enroll in the program following the MSHDA mailers mentioned last month. There were 12 individuals served through DHHS's Rapid Rehousing Consolidated and 11 through Supportive Housing.

S. Klank requested that additional Weatherization information be shared with the updated programmatic report. In September, 3 homes were weatherized which assisted a total of 9 individuals. \$15,653 in DOE and \$6,925 in LIHEAP funding was utilized during the month. There was no Whole Housing Rehab projects completed, but 1 home with 2 individuals living within received assistance through Minor Home Repairs – a stair lift was installed costing \$2,500.

Per conversations with Board members in the past, **A. Slack** also included a section to the updated report on total funding awarded throughout September. SMCAA used funds from CSBG Specific Assistance, CSBG CARES, CERA Berrien, CERA Van Buren, and SWMI CARES Berrien in September.

ACTION: A motion to accept and place on file the Programmatic Report was made by **J. Wuerfel** and was seconded by **K. Lyons**. Unanimous approval; motion carried.

c. Director's Report for September 2021. **K. Smith Oldham** presented the Director's Report. Some of the highlights over the past month include:

- **CSBG Continuing Resolution:** The National Community Action Foundation (NCAF) let the national network know that the House, Senate, and Biden Administration signed the Continuing Resolution into law on October 1st. Included in the CR's language was an extension for CSBG eligibility to remain at 200% FPL for CARES Act funding as well as FY2021 CSBG regular appropriations.
- **City of Benton Harbor Emergency Water Distribution:** Governor Whitmer, MDHHS, BCAEO, EGLE, EPA, and the City of Benton Harbor have partnered with SMCAA to distribute packs of water bottles to City residents following reports of elevated lead levels in the city's supply. SMCAA was originally asked to hand out water for two weeks from September 27th to October 8th. Last week, the BCAEO worked at our main office because it had come down from the State that the water distributions would be for the length of the City's replacement of lead plumbing. This is an 18-month project funded by the State.

SMCAA will be storing at least 20 semi-truck loads at our warehouse (plus additional space) for the foreseeable future to be utilized in weekly distributions at the warehouse, distributions by other community partners, and other distribution initiatives organized by the State. This is a daily-evolving project, but all updates and information is being shared on our website at <https://www.smcaa.com/bentonharborwater>.

- **FY2020 CSBG Annual Report Data:** The BCAEO reviewed the SMCAA CSBG FY2020 Annual Report and provided feedback regarding our performance in meeting ROMA goals. SMCAA reported 3,524 outcomes and 8,190 services in FY2020. We served 4,956 unduplicated clients which is 3.79% of the total clients served in Michigan. (Approximately 3.10% of the population in our service area is below 125% FPL.) Best practice guidance was also provided in the report to take into FY2022.
- **Southwest Michigan's 40 Under 40:** On October 7th, **A. Slack** was honored as one of Moody on the Market's 40 Under 40 which recognizes young professionals in the area for the individuals' achievements, civic leadership, and impact on the community. Pat Moody said that the nomination committee was "inundated with many nominations and it took a Herculean effort to sort through everything and narrow the field to only 40 winners."
- **Press Release on 40 Year Anniversary:** A press release about the SMCAA 40 Year Anniversary was sent out on October 6, 2021 and has been distributed by a few media outlets.

ACTION:

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

d. **STAR Report FY2021. K. Smith Oldham** presented the State Technical Assessment Report (STAR) Report from the Bureau of Community Action and Economic Opportunity (BCAEO). This report is used to prepare the BCAEO's monitoring plan, schedule, risk-based approach, and training and technical assistance plan.

SMCAA remains in Good Standing with a STAR score of 4.40, which is the same as FY2020. There were no additional concerns or questions regarding the STAR Report.

e. **Strategic Plan Report for FY2021. A. Slack** presented the annual Strategic Plan Report. Some of the 2020-24 Strategic Plan objectives and/or strategies have been fully completed such as:

- Create a cross-departmental Organizational Standards Task Force
- Identify and hire an experienced grant writer
- Reconfigure the main office to maximize effectiveness

Many objectives and/or strategies are in progress and expected to be fully completed by the end of the plan's timeframe in 2024.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, capacity concerns, and other circumstances, some objectives and/or strategies have not began yet. These include:

- Host Board meetings at on-site program locations – due to the pandemic, on-site meetings have not been held
- Introduce an Employee Feedback Survey – quarterly all-staff meetings have not regularly taken place due to the pandemic and capacity concerns
- Conduct a talent gaps assessment – will occur once the HR Department is developed
- Explore 2 potential facilities to co-locate main office and warehouse – not begun due to pandemic closures

There were no concerns or questions regarding this report.

f. **2021 Community Needs Assessment Report. A. Slack** presented the Community Needs Assessment Report. The process for this report began in January 2019 and resulted in a 129-page report noting the Southwest Michigan demographic profile, poverty causes and conditions, and key findings as to the Top 5 Community Needs. These needs are:

1. Safe, Affordable Housing
2. Housing Repairs and Weatherization
3. Emergency Assistance and Services
4. Access to Food/Nutrition
5. Job Opportunities with Living Wages

K. Lyons was surprised that Transportation is not a top need. **A. Slack** commented that the need did arise throughout the data collection, but ultimately was not in the Top 5 Needs. However, she did touch on the need for transportation with Need #5: Job Opportunities with Living Wages as transportation is necessary for employment accessibility.

The Board complimented the thorough report, and there were no additional questions or concerns.

ACTION: A motion to approve the 2021 Community Needs Assessment Report was made by **R. Benjamin** and was seconded by **K. Lyons**. Unanimous approval; motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT: **M. Warren** thanked **K. Smith Oldham** and her team for their continued great work. **K. Lyons** agreed, saying she is amazed by how SMCAA can roll with the punches and keep fulfilling our mission. She asked what the Board can do to show their appreciation to the SMCAA staff. **K. Smith Oldham** thinks positive feedback from the Board even in only an email would be appreciated. **R. Benjamin** suggested a Resolution of Appreciation be created for the Board to approve at the December Board meeting.

OTHER: None

ACTION: Hearing no other business, a motion to adjourn was made by **J. Wuerfel** and was seconded by **K. Lyons**. The meeting was adjourned at 7:11pm.

NOTE: The next scheduled SMCAA Board meeting will be held before the Holiday Retreat. The meeting will be at the **Boulevard Hotel:** 521 Lake Boulevard, St. Joseph, MI 49085 on **Friday, December 17, 2021 at 11:00am**. All Board members are invited to join the entire SMCAA staff following the meeting for a holiday luncheon at the hotel as well.

Respectfully submitted,
Ashley Slack, SMCAA Operations Manager

Reviewed and approved,

Gail Patterson-Gladney, SMCAA Board of Directors' Secretary