

# SMCAA BOARD OF DIRECTORS MINUTES

Wednesday – April 21, 2021

6:00pm

Microsoft Teams Phone Conference

*\*\* All Documents sent via email for this meeting.*

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

ABSENT: J. Johnson

GUESTS: None

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

The meeting attendees stood and recited the SMCAA mission statement.

QUORUM: The meeting, due to the coronavirus, was conducted via Microsoft Teams and the entire agenda's documentation was emailed to each Board member. Each member present responded they had received and had access to these documents for the meeting. **M. Warren** invited **K. Smith Oldham** to facilitate the Board of Director's meeting as calls were made into **K. Smith Oldham's** office phone.

A quorum was established and the meeting was called to order at 6:02pm.

ACTION: Motion made by **M. Warren** to accept the April 21, 2021 Agenda, seconded by **J. Wuerfel**. Unanimous approval; motion carried.

ACTION: Motion to approve the March 17, 2021 Board Minutes was made by **D. Fernandez**, seconded by **M. Franks**. Unanimous approval; motion carried.

OFFICERS' REPORT: **M. Warren** had nothing to report, but had a request. She asked each Board member to reply to **A. Slack's** meeting emails so she can confirm a quorum will be met. This month only three members responded to the emails and we were unsure if a quorum would be met or not. If a quorum will not be met in any one month, that meeting will need to be rescheduled.

**C. Christopher** presented the Executive Director’s Evaluation. The evaluation assessed **K. Smith Oldham** for the time period of October 1, 2019 to September 30, 2020, though keeping in mind that **K. Smith Oldham** was appointed as Executive Director on February 19, 2020. **C. Christopher** collected evaluations from the Executive Committee, the SMCAA Management staff members, and a self-evaluation from **K. Smith Oldham**, and developed a compiled a rating scale. The scale ran 1 to 5, with 1 being Unsatisfactory and 5 being Outstanding. **C. Christopher** was happy to announce that **K. Smith Oldham** received an overwhelmingly positive rating, receiving scores between a 4.5 and 5 in every section across all evaluations.

**C. Christopher** presented scores for each section:

- Section A: Relations with Board of Directors – the lowest score was a 4.4, and there were also two scores of 5.
- Section B: Strategic Planning – the lowest score was a 4.4, and highest score of 4.8.
- Section C: Program Development and Management – the lowest score was a 4, but this was due to an answer of N/A.
- Section D: Financial Management – the lowest score was a 4.4, and highest score of 4.8.
- Section E: Staff Management and Relations – the lowest score was a 4, and highest score of 4.4. There were several N/A’s in this section due to Board members not having the knowledge or experience of **K. Smith Oldham’s** relations with SMCAA staff members.
- Section F: Community Relations and Advocacy - the lowest score was a 4.2, and highest score of 4.6.

The overall compiled evaluation score was 4.6. Given that the year was full of unprecedented challenges caused by the coronavirus pandemic, **C. Christopher** stated that a very sound transition resulted from **K. Smith Oldham’s** first year.

**C. Christopher** said there were a few comments for “Top Three Goals” that resulted in seven (7) goals altogether. He will send those seven (7) goals to **K. Smith Oldham**, and she can bring any questions she may have to the Executive Committee after reviewing them and choose a “Top Three” for her next year of service. **C. Christopher** will send the full evaluation to **A. Slack** for it to be placed on-file.

ACTION:

A motion to accept and place on file the Executive Director Evaluation was made by **K. Lyons** and was seconded by **G. Patterson-Gladney**. Unanimous approval; motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS: a. **Fiscal Summary for March 2021.** **D. Oleneack** presented the Fiscal Summary for March. **R. Benjamin** questioned if the full \$670 under line item Bank Fees was for stop payment fees. **D. Oleneack** replied it is primarily for those fees. The CRF Migrant program required a number of stipend checks to be voided and reissued due to the workers' addresses being incorrect and/or changing.

**K. Smith Oldham** explained to **R. Benjamin** what the CRF Migrant program entailed as he was not on the Board during the program's course. Due to stalled contracts at the State level, funds did not arrive to SMCAA until after the harvest season ended in Michigan. A number of migrant workers who had been eligible and enrolled into the program had moved by the time funding became available, but the stipend checks had already been issued to their previous work addresses. Their caseworkers had difficulty tracking their whereabouts once they moved on from Southwest Michigan – many moved out of state.

There were no additional questions from the Board.

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

b. **Programmatic Report for March 2021.** **K. Smith Oldham** presented the programmatic report. There were (23) individuals/households services with Emergency Assistance. This number is low but this is due to Winter Protection remaining in effect. Winter Protection has since ended and more calls for emergency utility assistance are arrive at the office now. Out of those (23), (2) were water heater repairs, (1) was a furnace repair, and (1) was a car repair. The eviction moratorium remains in effect as well, and there was a low number – only (13) individuals/households -- assisted with rent or mortgage payments in March. The incoming CERA funding will increase rent assistance for the remainder of 2021 though. We serviced 2,048 individuals with CSFP and 1,402 individuals received food products from our pantries. There were (2) families/(10) individuals who stayed (212) bed nights in our Family Shelter.

The newer FSS program serviced (14) clients in March. Rapid Rehousing has (6) out of (13) slots filled and Supportive Housing has (9) out of (11) slots filled. The eviction moratorium and multiple CARES programs are

the cause of our lower numbers in these two programs, as clients are being serviced through alternative funding that has limited availability. Weatherization completed (3) jobs, LIHEAP completed (6) jobs, and there was finalization to (3) whole housing rehabilitations in March.

**J. Wuerfel** did not realize SMCAA offered car repairs and asked if this was a common service. **K. Smith Oldham** commented that this service is funded from the CARES program. There is a cap set at \$1,000, and the repair has to be in conjunction with the client's need to attend work and/or seek employment.

There were no additional questions from the Board.

**ACTION:**

A motion to accept and place on file the Programmatic Report was made by **C. Christopher** and was seconded by **M. Franks**. Unanimous approval; motion carried.

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

- The State conducted programmatic monitoring of SMCAA's CSBG Specific Assistance, MEAP, Summer Fuel Program, and the Weatherization program. CSBG Specific Assistance, MEAP, and Summer Fuel Program came back with suggestions on income and the calculation of income. However, SMCAA did conduct asset testing and all participants within these program were eligible. These programs received some Excellent and Great review feedback on files as well. Weatherization received all Excellent and Great review feedback on its files. Weatherization also received on-site monitoring of (12) homes weatherized in FY2019 and FY2020 the week of April 12, 2021, and more information on the results from that monitoring will be shared in our May Board meeting.
- **Y. Vidt** and **K. Smith Oldham** received an email from Cass County Commissioner **R. Marchetti** congratulating SMCAA on our recent Non-Profit-Excellence Award. **R. Marchetti** is an active volunteer for SMCAA and hands out our commodities at the Presbyterian Church in Edwardsburg. She said she appreciates commodity day at the church and how cooperative the Agency has been during the recent community crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The State's Bureau of Community Action and Economic Opportunity (BCAEO) acknowledged SMCAA receiving this award in their latest newsletter as well.
- SMCAA celebrated the 1-Year Anniversary of offering special food giveaways since the pandemic began. We celebrated through a day

of Volunteer Appreciation. **Y. Vidt** and **K. Smith Oldham** presented Certificates of Appreciation to (6) individuals who have become regular volunteers at the warehouse within the past year. One of these individuals received a special award because she has brought her church members to pass out commodities each month, but has also been bringing the members to the warehouse to pack the commodity boxes. SMCAA has received a number of cash donations from this volunteer's church as well as private donors who have sent in donations in this volunteer's honor.

- SMCAA moved into the temporary facility next to our shelter to administer the CERA program in Van Buren County. This building is being rented from Decatur Human Services and is located at 208 E. Delaware Street in Decatur. Staff moved into the facility during the first week of April. SMCAA hired (3) new staff members to assist with the upcoming CERA program. One of the new staff members will be the Van Buren Housing Assistance Resource Agency Specialist (HARA) and also assist with ESG funding.
- CERA funding was released the last week of March. With the hope the Agency will not get into a funding flow pinch, **K. Smith Oldham** instructed **D. Oleneack** to take the optional 25% draw for this program. **K. Smith Oldham** also encouraged her to take the 10% draw when she does her monthly billing as this option is available each month moving forward.

**K. Lyons** stopped by the CERA office while **K. Smith Oldham** and **A. Slack** were setting it up. She said she was impressed that Decatur Human Services had offered to allow SMCAA to use the office for free, even though the Agency has opted to pay them rent. She commented that the office space was wonderful, both in its location and in its set up -- the office furniture in particular is great quality. She believes the office will be a great asset to the incoming CERA staff.

**K. Smith Oldham** stated that CERA applications have already been received by the Agency and that she anticipates the funds to move quickly. Several of the applications are for rent costs of \$6,000 to \$10,000. After working on the logic model for this program, **K. Smith Oldham** and **A. Slack** could only project (120) clients being assisted with CERA funds. She commented that she feels a lot of concern for the landlords who have not been able to require rent payments yet continue to pay the mortgages on their rental units. Even so, the CERA program will be critical to many landlords in our service area and is a welcome and very much needed program in Van Buren County.

The Organizational Standards list disbursed to the Board at the March meeting had (14) priority items needing to be completed with the Board's assistance. **K. Smith Oldham** reported that as of tonight's meeting (7) of those items have been completed and SMCAA remains on-target for success.

There were no additional questions from the Board.

**ACTION:**

A motion to accept and place on file the Director's Report was made by **R. Benjamin** and was seconded **K. Lyons**. Unanimous approval; motion carried.

**d. Annual CAP Plan Report.** **K. Smith Oldham** presented the CAP Plan Report. Per Organizational Standards 4.4., the Board must receive an annual update on the success of strategies included in the Community Action Plan (CAP). All updates were highlighted in red throughout the CAP Plan handout.

Key updates included:

- Changes in the top three needs of Southwest Michigan in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic
- Addressing the need of access to nutritious food by beginning to offer extra food giveaways each month
- Growth of partnerships with churches and other community services agencies
- Changes in work styles of SMCAA staff to adjust to providing services to clients in a pandemic-stricken world
- Submission of the Annual Report to the BCAEO must now be done every (3) months rather than bi-annually
- Comparison of numbers served between 2019 and 2020

During the May meeting, **A. Slack** will provide some examples of the Agency logic models and how the projected numbers are extracted into the Annual Report.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

**K. Smith Oldham** stated that May is Community Action Month. Advocacy for Community Action is the focus for the month. **A. Slack** provided a flyer for Board engagement which was provided by the Community Action Partnership.

**C. Christopher** asked if the upcoming change to the Child Tax Credit may affect our clients' income eligibility. (*The child tax credit is a tax benefit granted to American taxpayers for each qualifying dependent child. The*

*credit decreases taxpayers' tax liability on a dollar-for-dollar basis. The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 increases the maximum annual credit per child for 2021 and also makes the credit fully refundable. The 2021 child tax credit can be distributed in advance payments with the start of monthly payments beginning as soon as July 2021.)* **K. Smith Oldham** replied that the State has not given Community Action guidance on the new child tax credit. She would lean towards the credit not affecting income eligibility, but cannot say for certain. **A. Slack** and she will be attending a meeting with BCAEO on May 19<sup>th</sup>. **K. Smith Oldham** is hopeful the State will bring information on this tax credit as well as other potential new funding sources – there has been talk of additional CARES funding – to this meeting. May 19 is the date of our next Board meeting, so **K. Smith Oldham** may have updates to share with the Board at that time.

OTHER:

**G. Patterson-Gladney** thanked K. Smith Oldham and her staff for their continued excellence of servicing Southwest Michigan. She also shared (2) events happening within Van Buren County:

1. A new public transit offering transportation assistance to local veterans.
2. Free training for suicide prevention as a QPR Gatekeeper through Van Buren Mental Health.

**G. Patterson-Gladney** said she would forward the events' flyers to **A. Slack** to disburse to the other Board members who may share the information as they see fit. The veteran transit will also be shared with intake workers to provide to clients as needed.

**R. Benjamin** apologized that he was absent for the past Board meeting. He meant to provide advance notice of his hospitalization so a substitute from the Cass Commissioners would have been present, but that notification was not received on-time. He thanked **M. Warren** for stopping in to see him and making him aware that notification was not received. **K. Lyons** spoke for the Board saying they were glad **R. Benjamin** is feeling much better and that it is nice to see him this month.

**K. Smith Oldham** thanked the Board for their support and dedication to SMCAA. She also thanked everyone for the kind words brought to her through her evaluation. She said she looks forward to the opportunity to reunite for in-person meetings some day in the future.

ACTION:

Hearing no other business, a motion to adjourn was made by **M. Warren** and was seconded by **D. Fernandez**. The meeting was adjourned at 6:47pm.

NOTE: **The next SMCAA Board Meeting will be held via Microsoft Teams (with a phone call-in number as well) on Wednesday, May 19, 2021 at 6:00pm.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Ashley Slack, SMCAA Operations Manager

Reviewed and approved,

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Gail Patterson-Gladney, SMCAA Board of Directors' Secretary