



Kent County Community Action
Advisory Governing Board
Thursday, May 16, 2024, 12:00 pm

Meeting Minutes

1. Call to order – Daniel VanderMolen, Chairperson
 - a. Chairperson VanderMolen called the meeting to order at 12:08 pm
2. Welcome and Roll Call for Quorum
 - a. Present: Daniel VanderMolen, Tricia VanderHaar, Jean Ramos, Kristina Colby, Bernard Ayoola, Samarhia Giffel, Jessica White-Hatinger, Kim Moore, James Geisen
 - b. Absent: Chris Smith, Wende Randall, Kendrick Heinlein, Catherine Aldridge, Hattie Patterson, Reyna Quintino
 - c. Staff: Gustavo Perez, Stephen Stratton, Bobby O’Connor, Rachel Pillar, Rachel Kunnath, Sherrie Gillespie, Ashley Huey, Chad Coffman, David Zeyl
3. Review and Approval of Minutes, March 21, 2024 --- ***Action Item***
 - a. KCCA Office Administrator, Ashley Huey noted that the header needs to be changed from “Agenda” to “Meeting Minutes”. Motion to approve the meeting minutes with the noted change by Samarhia Giffel, support from Jessica White-Hatinger. The motion carries unanimously.
4. A Public Hearing to accept any public comments for the Kent County 2024 HUD Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER) and Kent County’s Housing and Community Development Needs --- ***Information Item***
 - a. Chad Coffman noted that the incorrect public comment period was noted on the agenda. It should be displayed as “The Public Hearing for the 2024 Annual Allocation of CDBG, HOME, and ESG funding”. No comments were offered, chairperson VanderMolen closed the public comment period. Virtual comments will still be accepted until May 22, 2024.
5. Personal Hygiene Policy – Food Distribution Programs
Sherrie Gillespie, Program Manager --- ***Action Item***
 - a. Motion to approve the Personal Hygiene Policy by Jessica White-Hatinger, support from Samarhia Giffel. The motion carries unanimously



6. Director's Report --- **Information Item**

a. Staff & Program Updates

- Gustavo welcome KCCA's newest Advisory Board member, Bernard Ayoola. He emphasized ongoing efforts to expand team capacities in Community Development, Emergency Services, and Senior Services. Discussions included adjustments to job descriptions and pay rates as feasible, alongside plans to secure additional funding sources to support staff and community needs. Highlights from the recent team building retreat hosted by Kids Food Basket, facilitated by Floyd Booker, focused on fostering trust and camaraderie among staff, aligning with organizational norms identified through employee surveys. Gustavo encouraged board members to engage more actively with staff and advocate for KCCA initiatives. Other topics covered included initiatives in lead management and efforts to enhance self-sustainability through additional funding opportunities. The meeting also recognized Community Action Month and media appearances by Gustavo advocating for contractor support in the Weatherization and Rehabilitation programs. Plans were discussed for upcoming legislative engagements and strategic planning, including the release of the latest Annual Report.

b. Assistance Activities and Potential Conflicts of Interest

- There was one conflict of interest, an employee applied for and received gas and electric assistance.

c. Monitoring Updates

- KCCA recently submitted documentation for the Organizational Standards monitoring, which ensures compliance with the federally mandated Community Services Block Grant. The desk review is underway, but no feedback has been provided yet. Gustavo expects that KCCA will meet all standards.

7. Audit Report: *Org. Standard 8.3-8.4*

Stephen Stratton, Financial Supervisor --- Information Item

- a. Stephen presented the single audit report, focusing on three main areas. He provided an overview on how to interpret the financial statements, emphasizing clarity and understanding. The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) was highlighted, offering insights into the year's expenses across the entire County, with particular emphasis on page 14 of the report. Stephen reported that there were no findings on internal controls over compliance. He also summarized findings from prior audits, noting that two issues identified in previous years had been resolved. Specifically, concerns regarding Housing Quality Standards (HQS) inspections within the Housing Department have been addressed and no longer pose an issue. Additionally, improvements in reporting accountability have been made, resolving the second previously noted concern.



8. Fiscal Report: *Org. Standard 8.7 –*

Bobby O'Connor, Financial Analyst --- Information Item

- a. One-Time Funding Grants – Updates provided on CDBG and HOME grants; minimal changes reported.
- b. 12/31 Grants – GRICB grant expenditures expected to increase with the new water program initiation. Discussion on the progress on HCV grants spend-down.
- c. 6/30 Grants – Multi-year CDBG and HOME grants discussed; Chad will brief on current projects. CGRS is fully expended; DOE funds at \$400-500k, with plans to further reduce in coming years.
- d. 9/30 Grants – CSBG 22-24 grant fully spent; transition to CSBG 24-25 noted. MEAP on track for full expenditure; LIHEAPWAP exceeds annual unit targets. OAA and NSIP fully spent; TEFAP progressing towards full expenditure. CSFP and LIWACA fully expended; KCSUPP on track, pending later-year spending. Discussion on new grant arrivals; queries on ARPA fund expenditure deadlines addressed by Stephen.

9. Programmatic Report: *Org. Standard 5.9 -*

Chad Coffman, Rachel Kunnath, Sherrie Gillespie --- Information Item

- a. Community Development – Chad introduced David Zeyl as the newest member of the Community Development team, joining as a housing rehab specialist at the end of March. Updates from HUD included the recent allocation of funds to finalize the budget. It was noted that Kent County did not receive Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) funds for the upcoming year, whereas the City of Grand Rapids did, based on specific funding criteria. Recipients of recurring funds will be notified once current allocations are expended. Regarding funding cuts, both CDBG and HOME awards were reduced, with HOME funding experiencing a 20% decrease compared to previous years. However, these reductions are not expected to significantly impact the annual action plan for CD initiatives. Chad detailed upcoming projects funded by CDBG, with 13 projects scheduled to commence on July 1. Board members interested in further details were encouraged to contact Chad for additional information. HUD's ARPA funds are being utilized for tenant-based rental assistance and the establishment of a new program called KCLEAR (Kent County Lead Evaluation and Reduction Program). A portion of the \$3.8 million allocated from ARPA will fund free lead inspections for owner-occupied homes outside Grand Rapids, with additional financial support available based on income levels. To support these initiatives, additional contractors will be needed, which will also benefit existing HUD-funded programs. Over the next two years, preparations will be made to implement the HUD lead program. Jennifer Kozlowski was extended an offer for the Lead Hazard Project Supervisor position, further strengthening the team for upcoming initiatives.



- b. Senior Services – Rachel provided updates on Senior Services, including her and Gustavo’s advocacy efforts at the Kent County Senior Millage Review Board to secure increased funding for outreach, assistance, and meals programs in response to growing demand. They await final decisions on FY25 funding, expected by July, and plan to meet soon with the Older Americans Funding Board for further discussions. The team is focused on enhancing program sustainability preemptively to ensure operational resilience, recently redirecting efforts from a SNAP-ED grant to expanding service coverage within existing areas. Recruitment efforts are underway for a cook and driver positions to meet service demands, with plans to attend upcoming job fairs. Strategies are also being implemented to reduce service wait times and effectively manage high demand for outreach and meals programs. Additionally, the Board of Commissioners allocated funds for rural transportation training and staff development, reinforcing their commitment to enhancing service delivery.
- c. Emergency & Specialized Services – Sherrie provided updates on Emergency & Specialized Services. It was noted that MEAP (Michigan Energy Assistance Program) funds have been fully expended. Details on new programming initiatives will be presented in the upcoming meeting. The launch of the Local Water Utility Assistance (LWUA) program was highlighted, offering up to \$3,000 in assistance for water-related issues. Efforts are currently underway to secure plumbers, with initial support already provided for addressing water arrears. Additionally, approximately 20 new enrollments per week for the Diaper Bank program are being facilitated through collaborations with the Health Department. Future distributions include the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) scheduled for tomorrow and The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) distribution set for June 6th at Eastern Ave Church.

10. Other Business

- a. KCCA has received offers from the Grand Rapids Housing Commission (GRHC) and the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) to absorbing the Kent County Housing Commission (KCHC) vouchers. County Admin and Fiscal are in favor of the transfer. Gustavo is working with Human Resources to find positions for the HCV staff. He is also working to ensure there is no disruption for clients during a voucher transfer process.

11. Public Comment - none



12. Adjournment

- a. Motion to adjourn from Kristina Colby, support from Bernard Ayoola. The meeting adjourned at 1:35 pm.

Next Scheduled Advisory Governing Board Meeting

Thursday, July 18, 2024

12:00 PM