

Washtenaw County Community Action Board

Zoom meeting

Wednesday, April 27, 2022

5:30 pm to 7:30 pm

General Session/Regular Meeting

Meeting Minutes

Members Present:

1. Comm. Justin Hodge,
2. Danyelle Reynolds,
3. Mary Phillips-Smith,
4. Comm. Ricky Jefferson
5. Juanita House,
6. Elizabeth Janovic
7. Cathryn (Cath) Antkowiak-Howard
8. Beth Dulka
9. Jason Towler
10. Linh Song (joined at 6pm)
11. Alyshia Dyer (joined at 6:30pm)

Members Absent:

1. Rhonda Weathers,
2. Jimmie Wilson
3. Mark McBride,
4. Cherisa Allen,

Staff Present: Teresa Gillotti, Caitlin Nagler,

Staff Absent: Morghan Williams Boydston,

Guest: Jeremy Lapedis

- I. **Call to Order**
 - Chair called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm.
- II. **Welcome and Introductions**
 - Roll call of CAB board members
- III. **Public Comments**
 - No public comments at this time
- IV. **New Member Swearing In**
 - Oath: I, _____ do solemnly swear that I will support the Constitution of the United States, and the Constitution of the State of Michigan, and that I will faithfully discharge the duties of the office of Community Action Board in and for the County of Washtenaw, State of Michigan, according to the best of my ability, so help me God.
- V. **Approval of Meeting Agenda**
 - A motion was made by Juanita to approve the Agenda. Motion supported by Danyelle.

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- Roll call vote:
 1. Comm. Justin Hodge,
 2. Danyelle Reynolds,
 3. Mary Phillips-Smith,
 4. Comm. Ricky Jefferson
 5. Juanita House,
 6. Elizabeth Janovic
 7. Cathryn (Cath) Antkowiak-Howard
 8. Beth Dulka
 9. Jason Towler
- Motion carried.

VI. Approval of February 23, 2022 Meeting Minutes

- Motion made by Elizabeth. supported by Cath.
- Roll Call vote:
 1. Comm. Justin Hodge,
 2. Danyelle Reynolds,
 3. Mary Phillips-Smith,
 4. Comm. Ricky Jefferson
 5. Juanita House,
 6. Elizabeth Janovic
 7. Cathryn (Cath) Antkowiak-Howard
 8. Beth Dulka
 9. Jason Towler
- Motion carried to approve meeting minutes.

VII. OCED Updates

- COVID public assistance ending, changes to benefits
 - Jeremy Lapedis, Executive Director of Washtenaw Health Plan (WHP) presenting
 - Teresa also presenting
 - Introducing Jeremy Lapedis
 - WHP helps low income people get on Medicaid, among other services
 - The Public Health Emergency
 - Federal emergency declared that
 - Prevented individuals from being removed from Medicaid, and increased food assistance, and emergency rental and utility assistance funding
 - The public health emergency and many of these benefits are ending soon
 - Medicaid enrollment increased 25% since March 2020
 - Ypsilanti and Ypsilanti Township, where majority of Medicaid recipients in the County reside
 - Over the next 12 months, Medicaid will require people to prove they are still eligible for Medicaid; if not eligible, need to transition to different insurance

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- MDHHS often communicates through mail, will be challenging to reach everyone; people on Medicaid may struggle to get the communications from MDHHS
- Mistakes can be made
- And people have been receiving misleading mail saying “You are no longer eligible for Medicaid, need to get on ACA insurance plan”
- Can be confusing and challenging for Medicaid recipients
- At WHP, doing our best to prepare to help people through this process
- Importance of health insurance
 - People use healthcare more; improved health, better financial stability, better care reimbursement also; brings in reimbursement for healthcare providers
- CERA update from Teresa
 - Been able to assist 3,816 households in Washtenaw, with rent and utility assistance
 - Over \$19 million in assistance in Washtenaw County
 - CERA now can only be used for utility, if receiving rent assistance as primary type of assistance; new change as of Jan 2022
 - This is major impact on Barrier Busters, seeing increase in utility assistance requests
 - Application portal will close at the end of June, and program formally ends Sept 30, 2022
 - Impact on Barrier Busters Unmet Needs Fund
 - First quarter of 2022, spent out the quarterly amount in 6 weeks
 - Quarter 2 started, spent out in 2 weeks this quarter
 - Looking into increasing allocation for Barrier Busters, so we can keep assisting residents
- Recommendations
 - OCED and WHP have requested ARPA funds to help residents address health insurance and rental/utility assistance needs when Public Health Emergency ends
 - Spread message about Medicaid renewals
 - Keep address updated so you receive MDHHS mail
 - Respond to mail and requests from MDHHS
 - Reach out to WHP with questions
 - Residents need to apply to CERA now
 - Communicate this out to community now, about benefits ending
- Juanita recommended having a big event to communicate these updates out
 - Maybe at local church and community centers, on the bus line

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- Comm. Hodge, great idea, get some food trucks there also, and the Health department bus/RV could be there
 - Comm Hodge said, also have event based on the map of where Medicaid recipients are in the County
- Comm. Jefferson said, maybe put this info out via Ypsi Community Schools
- Jason Towler said he works for Washtenaw ISD and they would put this info out also
- Beth Dulka mentioned she's board member for CAN, and could distribute info through their food pantries; would be good to do an outside event
- Danyelle question about using social media; has that been helpful to use?
- Teresa, yes, we like to do info and outreach via social media, email, and through these physical locations
- Council Member Song, wants to use additional funds towards Barrier Busters, working on this as City Council A2 resolution
 - Only \$100,000 of \$1.2 million that Ann Arbor has, from marijuana excise tax money
 - Also \$400,000 for diversion from the criminal justice system
 - This is coming up for vote on May 16
- Comm. Hodge, would that money from Ann Arbor for Barrier Busters, that would only be for AA residents?
 - Yes, earmarked for just AA residents in Barrier Busters, similar to the other local jurisdiction funding
 - But this helps us stretch the County general funds and other funds further, in Barrier Busters
- New HSP safety net grants RFP process
 - Teresa presenting
 - New HSP, replacing CoFu
 - 34 applications received for Safety Net Grants RFP, deadline was Monday April 25
 - Key areas of safety net: housing and homelessness; healthcare/medical; childcare; and emergency food
 - We have community reviewers on our grant review team, helping us with scoring and funding recommendations
 - The mini grants funding round coming up this summer, excited to say United Way interested in partnering with us on this also
- Summer Youth 2022 updates
 - In 2020 it was very challenging, difficult to get businesses involved; mostly virtual
 - 2021, also difficult, not a lot of youth applicants, because burnt out on virtual work, variety of reasons
 - Now in 2022, significant increase, which is great! We're excited
 - 217 youth applications, 68 employers, and 57 mentors have signed up

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- 217 youth applicants, for the Ypsilanti Zip Codes we had 57 applicants from 48197 and 29 from 48198. We had 2 applicants from Superior Township, but the other 84 were from Ypsilanti. We had 130 applicants under 18, and 24 that are currently 18.
- Jason, question, is there a waiting list for summer youth program?
 - Teresa, yes, we should make sure to have placements and internships for everyone interested, all the youth
- **Barrier Busters update**
 - Annual report released, sent out link
 - <https://www.washtenaw.org/DocumentCenter/View/24810/BB-2021-Annual-Report>
 - In 2019, about \$214,000 in expenditures in Barrier Busters emergency assistance funding
 - Increased to \$750,000 in 2020, then down to \$501,411 in 2021
 - Increases in response to COVID pandemic from Washtenaw County, City of Ann Arbor, City of Ypsilanti, Pittsfield Township, Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation, United Way of Washtenaw County, Michigan Community Action, and individual donors.
 - Highlights
 - 41% of requests supported Black households in 2021 (38% in 2020)
 - 70% supported households in 48197/98 zip codes
 - 55% of requests for utility assistance in 2021 (36% in 2020)
 -

VIII. **Board: New Business**

- Teresa mentioned Morghan will be returning soon, likely see her for the next CAB meeting in May
- Danyelle said, if anyone is interested in an in-person event, time to meet and greet with the CAB members
 - What are people's comfort level with this?
 - Some planning obviously, so if anyone is interested in helping with that, let us know
 - Jason said, definitely interested, wants to meet everyone
 - Jason, also can offer WISD buildings for events or meetings
 - Danyelle, maybe for our May or June meeting, we could meet outside in person, have some food

IX. **CAB Member Discussion**

- Jason, really worried about his students and their families with housing and homelessness issues; concerned that COVID public assistance is ending
 - He's trying to help one student and family with housing choice voucher; difficult to find an affordable place, that meets the requirements and needs
- Teresa, we want to keep an eye on that, situations like that; sometimes larger families don't always fit into shelter programs
 - Working with SOS to expand family shelter
 - Housing voucher system, very challenging, getting priced out of the county; often people have to pay an application fee before they can even see the unit

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- Big challenge: lack of housing supply overall, and lack of affordable housing especially
- Jason said we're also seeing a "reservation" fee, have to pay like \$200 even before they sign a lease for it; people end up having to pay out of pocket for that
- Beth question, with the end of eviction moratorium, do we know how many families have become homeless?
 - Teresa response, it's hard to know an exact number; some families are prepared, and they can double up with other households to avoid becoming homeless
 - We can share link to website about monthly homelessness numbers
 - Doesn't seem to be a spike in the numbers yet, we'll keep you all updated
- Jason said some students trying to get CMH support, but CMH says can't help if they're not 26
 - Teresa, we should follow up after this also, would like to understand what's happening there

X. **BOC Representative Report**

- Comm. Hodge
 - Three things relevant to CAB
 - CAB bylaws on BOC agenda for next meeting
 - Also new Barrier Busters staff person for OCED on BOC agenda for next meeting
 - This person will be able to coordinate the network more, share information out regularly
 - Teresa, we're very excited about this, extra staffing support especially with all the new programs
 - Governor appointed him to Commission on Community Action and Economic Opportunity; now he is also appointed as the Chair of the Commission on Community Action and Economic Opportunity, excited about the work Community Action can do
- Danyelle, with the new Barrier Busters staff person be taking over the work from the other OCED staff?
 - Teresa, they will take over a large amount of the work from staff
- Cath, question about LIHWAP, when will that start?
 - Caitlin response, hiring LIHWAP program aide this week, program up and running in May
- Comm. Jefferson, with ARPA funds, community priority fund, review team will be looking over proposals and making decisions on the grants awarded
- Alyshia question, will we know who is reviewing the applications?
 - Comm. Jefferson he'll look into that, whether they can disclose those names, who is on the review committee
- Elizabeth mentioned, first graduate from drug trial court program, good program, good news, just wanted to highlight that good news

XI. **Public Comment**

- No public comment at this time

XII. **Adjourn**

- Meeting adjourned at 7:00 pm.