

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT
3rd CDBG CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE ZOOM MEETING**

March 4, 2021, 5:00 PM – 7:00 PM

FINAL MINUTES

Roll Call: The meeting was started at 5:02 pm

Members Present: Pauline Gudas, Ashley Medina, Safiya Khalid, Abdikadir Negeye, David Nielsen, Jr. and Paul Robinson

Staff Present: Lincoln Jeffers, Jessica Wilson and Cathy Lekberg

1) Agency Interviews

Tree Street Youth, MAPLE Program – Julia Sleeper-Whiting Presenting

Julia stated that their facility has been very busy but they are serving less children. Because their facility is so large, they are able to spread children out so they can serve children in person. They are open for children when the schools are closed and make sure they are connected with Zoom and doing their school work. They target the most vulnerable families and help them connect to remote learning. They did run their summer program last year and that ran smoothly but they had to cut back on the number of students. They are planning on continuing running this program next summer but for next Fall they are not sure what will happen. Their current funds was originally proposed for the CEDAR program. They decided to shift the focus onto the teens which is caked the MAPLE program. With the restriction of only being able to have smaller amounts of teens and children, they were able to reallocate the funds and support more teens throughout the pandemic than they would essentially done traditionally. The teens are playing a pivoting roll in being tutors and one on one support for kids during remote learning. These teens want the opportunity to become leaders in the community. Safiya said this work is really needed in the downtown and asked if they assist these teens with resumes and job applications and Julia said they do through their BRANCHES Program (Becoming Responsible Adults and Cultivating Higher Education Success. Other CAC members also said this is a great program and to keep up the good work.

Tedford Housing, Lewiston Supportive Housing Services – Giff Jamison Presenting

Giff explained they provide three major components of services. They have an emergency shelter in Bath, Brunswick area, homeless prevention services in the mid coast and a range of locations of permanent housing, one that is located at 114 Blake Street in Lewiston. This is a ten unit building and serves mostly families. The building has one case manager on-site to help small problems stay small and help put people with resources to maintain stability. Some people increase their income where they no longer need to be at the building and this creates a spot for a new family. All the people in the building have experienced homelessness. In mid-March they experienced the Covid pandemic. Their supportive services were less impacted by this. Their case manager,

Anthony has an office on-site and comes in a couple of days a week. When he is not at the office, he works remotely to help people via the telephone. He is very flexible and he has stayed consistent to serve these people. Their goal is to have at least one parent in each household to maintain a job, volunteer or get training. This goal fell short this year as only 4 out of 7 were able to do that. Some of the economic opportunities dried up and Covid created a problem with children not going to school and learning remotely. They are hoping when more vaccines are given, this will reverse this year. Abdi asked if the case manager helps with job assistance or help with resumes and Giff said yes. He said that Anthony helps people by referring them to the Career Center. Fafiya asked if one case manager is enough. She was concerned it was not enough to support 10 families. Giff said he is the only case manager they can support right now but he gives these families various resources to get help. Safiya asked if there were families that have moved out and got permanent, safe housing and Giff said yes. The majority of people move on because they do not need the supports anymore.

New Beginnings, Homeless Youth Educational Support Program – Allie Smith Presenting

Allie stated that this has been a tough year, particularly difficult for young people to keep connected to their education. That has been true for the children serviced by New Beginnings. A year ago they chose to deliver their services virtually. Staff could video chat with people and they worked with the DOE to get 35 tablets to distribute to children. They video chat with youth, they share their screen with us, login to their Google classroom and take us through the classes they are in and the assignments they have and the volunteers help them choose the assignments they need to focus on. The biggest shift is the drop-in center and they could not serve as many youth and earlier, they had to close it. At this time, it is now open, but is limited to how many youths they can reach and support. Having the additional support with remote schooling is very important. Homeless youth are 87% more likely than their peers to drop out of school. Finishing high school is the key to economic mobility and stability for these young people. Youth who do not finish high school are 4.5% likely to experience homelessness as adults. The good news is because of the service provider zone New Beginning's are in, staff will be able to be vaccinated and they plan to resume in person services starting on March 15th. Also, over the summer they will resume their outdoor programs where children can get out of their houses and experience nature. Abdi asked if they had to make adjustments to the residences on-site. Allie said they keep their spaces open and give them a safe space to stay. Their facility is not full all of the time. They social distance and wear masks for safety. All members thought this was a great program.

Center for Wisdom's Women, Sophia's House – Susan Kingsland Presenting

Sue stated Sophia's House is a new launch and started in 2020. This is where our focus is right now. Covid impacted their drop off center for women and they had to cut back on their services. They did give away clothing, hygiene products and also showers to women who needed them. Once they had their Covid protocol intact they will begin their programming again. They are putting that on hold until they hear from the State CDC. Goals that were proposed for this year is to provide safe and secure housing for women

in Maine. What Sophia's House does is address needs of women who are healing from trafficking, exploitation, addiction and/or incarceration and they take a housing approach with these women. They house six women at a time and they share Sophia' House with five tenants, three of whom are subsidized and the other two units are at market rate. There is no program in Maine that does what Sophia's House. It is a very unique space for these women. All women are at less than 80% of the medium income. They are all survivors of many extremely adverse childhood experiences. They establish long-term plans for affordable housing and really have done well. They also want to train volunteers for trauma informed resiliency and focus on care and support and they have succeeded doing this. They still offer women, regardless of their insurance status, trauma informed therapy and really been able to extend our reach to other health affiliates in Lewiston. They are continuing to development programming and have some programming on board right now. They cover financial literacy, are able to secure pro-bono dental and healthcare for women and extensive dental care. Another goal that they had using CDBG funding is to support residents reentry into the workforce and increase likelihood of sustainable employment. Sophia's House is based on the Thistle Farm model out of Nashville, Tennessee. They were accepted as one of five programs in the country to become a part of their accelerated program. One goal they set was to empower women to become better mothers, daughters, friends and workers and actively participate in community life. Also, each of the women engage weekly in a care team to identify their strengths and challenges. This identifies the support they will need. Next year we are looking for similar to last year. The CDBG funds will support our program coordinator who extends to sister agencies in the community as well as provide individual support. Members had no questions for this agency but stated good job.

2) Discussion of agencies deemed ineligible for CDBG Funding

Lincoln explained that Lewiston Housing Authority had submitted an application for internet access for children but they found out from the HUD representative that this was considered an income payment and is not eligible under the HUD guidelines. He also said that Meirs submitted an application that was not complete and there were five or six policies required by HUD that needed to be written. He said he would be connecting with the Rilwan Osman, the Executive Director tomorrow to discuss the issues and he invited Abdi to be a part of that discussion. Lincoln stated that if we are audited and all requirements are not meet, they would have to pay the money back. Pauline suggested that for next year, they schedule a workshop for all applicants and inform them of all of the necessary requirements and procedures of the CDBG process so they will have plenty of time to prepare their applications properly. She said this should be done in August or September so all agencies would be on a level playing field. Abdi agreed with Pauline about training and technical support.

3) Review and approval the February 26, 2021 CDBG meeting minutes.

The following motion was made:

MOTION: by **Paul Robinson** approve the February 26, 2021 meeting minutes as presented. Second by **Ashley Medina**

VOTED: 5-0-1 (Passed)
David Nielsen, Jr. Abstained

4) Any other business members may have relating to the duties of the CDBG Committee.

Safiya asked if there would be enough funding for all of the agencies and Lincoln said that that there is not enough staff capacity to fund all of the agencies. He said that staff would like to see fewer agencies funded with more impact. Pauline recalled in earlier years, they had received 23 applications and funded 18. This was way too many and HUD at that time wanted them to fund only five or six.

Pauline asked Lincoln about the scoring and that they have not received the forms. Lincoln said he would send them out and if possible, would like to see them back at the end of next week.

Pauline said the next meeting would be held on Friday, March 12, 2021 at 10:00 am to 12:00 pm.

5) Adjournment

The following motion was made:

MOTION: by **Paul Robinson** to adjourn meeting at 6:45 p.m. Second by **Ashley Medina**

VOTED: 6- 0 (Passed)