

ECONOMIC SECURITY CORPORATION OF SOUTHWEST AREA

BOARD MEETING MINUTES

May 2, 2019

The Economic Security Corporation of Southwest Area's Board of Directors met on Thursday, May 2, 2019, at 7:30 p.m., at 302 S. Joplin Avenue, Joplin, Missouri. Henry Lopez, President, called the general session to order. The invocation was given by John Joines.

Roll call was taken and those present were: Mike Davis, Henry Lopez, Darieus Adams, Chester Neel, David Holloway, Jeanetta Sullivan, Nikki Tappana, Randy Evans, Paula Carsel, Kevin Johnson, Thomas Wilson, Becky Crane, Phillip Knott, Melissa Lance, Erwin Stancheit, Joy Williams, and Joe Crosthwait. A quorum was present. Spring Knott represented the Policy Council.

Board members Jim Jackson, Doris Fast, Cleo Crosby, Karen Buckman, Melissa Kennon, and Yanet Pacheco had asked to be excused. Henry made a motion to excuse the absent members as requested. This motion was seconded by Kevin Johnson and approved unanimously.

Old Business

There was no old business to be discussed.

Executive Director's Report

John reminded everyone that May is Community Action Month. He would like for us to consider starting to broadcast the CAA's promise at the beginning of every month just as a reminder to every one of our purpose.

Head Start had authorized funding for a 1.77% cost of living increase, which was also approved in the budget of the other departments. All employees gratefully received this increase.

Despite the wet weather, we have started laying the underground piping and so on at the Joplin Bungalows site.

Two members of O'Reilly Corporation and Troy Bolander, for the City of Joplin, traveled to view the seven acres behind the Elks Lodge off 26th Street. This is the property where we are considering collaborating with them on a project of 46-48 units.

Eleven agencies in the state have paired up with the State of Missouri on the Skill Up program. All of them have reported issues and are considering terminating the program, including us.

John, Henry, Ryan Peterson, and two employees of the Liheap program are traveling to Kansas City this month for the annual Missouri Community Action Network Conference. They hope to build their networks, and learn new things.

Curtis, Debbie, and Ryan have been in contact with the Department of Economic Development for Missouri in regards to funds that were awarded for the big floods in 2017. These were to be used in five counties, but not all of the funding was dispersed. The Department was having a meeting to discuss the role of the Community Action Agencies in the dispensation of these funds, but we do not have any further information on the subject at this time.

Head Start Policy Council Report

There was no Policy Council meeting in April, so no report was made.

Head Start Update Report

Jeff reported that we are in the last days of the Head Start school year. Today, some of the centers held graduation ceremonies for those going to kindergarten next year. Tomorrow is the last day for twenty of the Head Start classrooms.

Tony, Leisa, and Jeff met with the Office of Head Start in Kansas City last week. Melissa, of that office, had attended our last meeting. She reported that they would like to see more interaction in the Board meeting, with members asking more questions. Board members are required to participate in the decision making and reporting process, and not just vote yes or no. The Office wants to make sure the Board members really understand what it is they are voting on, and one way to demonstrate that is to ask questions and make comments.

The focus group which met at the April 3D meeting was made up of parents of Head Start/Early Head Start students. They answered questions, asked questions, told us what they would like to see added, changed, increased, etc. The most outstanding item was their praise for the staff they dealt with, including Home Visitors and Family Resource Specialists. The parents specifically cited that the staff were NEVER negative in attitude, but always supportive and positive in their interactions. Parents felt welcome both in and out of the classroom, as though the staff were a part of their family, and they greatly appreciated the open door policy of the staff.

Board Training

Staci Bingham, Housing Director, introduced herself and let the Board know that her department provided rental assistance under eight different programs and the rental properties that we own ourselves. She then introduced her Housing Assistance Supervisor, Casey VanStory, who was presenting tonight's training.

Casey announced that she was doing her presentation on the New Beginnings program, formerly known as the Family Self Sufficiency Program. This program ties housing assistance to employment. All current Housing Choice Voucher clients are eligible to participate in the New Beginnings program. They are told of this at their Housing Briefing. A needs assessment is done for the client to determine what individual services and trainings the client needs in order to improve their employment and level of income. Two goals are set based on these determinations.

In order for the client to receive the escrow funds for their participation in the New Beginnings

program, they must obtain suitable employment and have NOT received any cash assistance (TANF) from the state during the most recent twelve months. During the participation period, which begins as five years, the agency deposits our contribution into the escrow account. The original five years may be extended dependent on circumstances.

The escrow, or savings, account contributions may be estimated based on the participant's income. We deposit the amount based on how much their portion of the rent increases due to their increase in income. During the participation period, the employee can make a withdrawal for certain needs.

The rental assistant works closely with the client to build a rapport with them, which enables them to better determine their needs and setting of goals, etc. They also work with banks in the area to help the client set up second chance banking accounts. Once the client graduates from the New Beginnings program, they complete an exit interview to assist the agency in how we may make improvements to the program. The client can also still qualify for the Housing Choice Voucher Program.

The agency also works with the Social Security Administration's "Ticket to Work" program. This program allows disabled clients to work full time and still draw their disability. There was considerable discussion of this program by Board members.

Executive/Finance/Audit Committee Report

As the committee chairman, Henry made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 4, 2019 meeting. This motion was seconded by David Holloway, and approved unanimously. All members had received a copy prior to the meeting for review, and no discussion was required.

Secondly, Henry made a motion to approve the Financial Statements for the month of March 2019, including the credit card statements and balance sheets. He reminded everyone that the items printed on green sheets were reports for the Head Start/Early Head Start programs. This motion was seconded by Thomas Wilson, and passed with no nay votes.

Henry then asked Jeff Goldammer to cover the next item for the Board. Jeff stated that we were looking for approval of two bids for the purchasing of autos. The first was for a 2019 Honda Pilot, and the second was for the purchase of a 2019 Ford Explorer. Both vehicles come with warranties, back-up cameras, etc.

In answer to member questioning, Jeff answered that the vehicles will be used mainly for two purposes: traveling to trainings, monitorings, etc. and for transporting Head Start/Early Head Start families to appointments. The two together come to a little over \$80,000.00. Also, in answer to member questions, he explained that since we are a business and not an individual purchasing the vehicles, there were some limits to the warranties. We did get a good deal on the vehicles, as both came with what would normally be upgrades in the models that would normally cost extra, such as leather seats, heated seats, etc.

Henry made the motion to approve the bids to purchase the two vehicles. It was seconded by

Randy Evens, and passed unanimously.

Community Relations Committee Report

Kourtney Connelly was the election winner for the vacant seat of Low-Income Representative for Newton County. Members were given a copy of the information provided to the clients with the ballots. Kevin Johnson, as committee chairman, made the motion to approve Kourtney Connelly as our next Low-Income Representative to the Board for Newton County. Chester Neel seconded the motion, which then passed unanimously.

Kevin then made the motion to approve Kristi Fleener as the Alternate for the Low-Income Representative for Newton County. The alternate is approved to fill the position if the winner is unable to serve. The motion was seconded by Becky Crane and also approved unanimously.

Agency Personnel and Planning Committee Report

There were no items on the agenda for this committee.

Program Monitoring and Evaluation Committee Report

In Yanet's absence, Mike Davis served as chair for this committee. Debbie had reported on the agency's second quarter grade card outcomes. They were all on track and we are in good shape to meet our goals for the year.

Next, the members heard about the Child Care Partnership Continuation Grant. This grant is in its third year of the five year term. It provides approximately \$1.6million. Over the four counties of our operation, it supports the participation of seventy-four children in the program. Mike made the motion to approve applying for this grant, which was seconded by Paula Carsel. Members then approved the motion unanimously.

Leisa Harnar, Operations and Development Director for the Head Start/Early Head Start programs, reviewed the Head Start Data Reports with members. All of the reports reflected positively, including the attendance. While some of the waiting list numbers were a little lower than our goal still, they have greatly improved.

Announcements

The next Board meeting is scheduled for Thursday, June 6, 2019 at 7:30.
This meeting adjourned at 8:25 P.M.

Henry Lopez, President

Attest: Nikki Tappana, Secretary