

ECONOMIC SECURITY CORPORATION OF SOUTHWEST AREA

BOARD MEETING MINUTES

June 6, 2019

The Economic Security Corporation of Southwest Area's Board of Directors met on Thursday, June 6, 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, Jim Jackson, Chester Neel, Jeanetta Sullivan, Nikki Tappana, Paula Carsel, Kevin Johnson, Thomas Wilson, Becky Crane, Yanet Pacheco, Phillip Knott, Melissa Lance, Erwin Stanscheit, Joy Williams, Joe Crosthwait, and Kourtney Connelly. A quorum was present. Spring Knott represented the Policy Council.

Board members David Holloway, Doris Fast, Cleo Crosby, Karen Buckman, and Randy Evans 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.

We started with an introduction to new member Kourtney Connelly and her daughter. Guests Brenna and Joshua were also introduced, with more to come on them later.

Henry made a motion that the Board not meet in July, as the first Thursday was actually Independence Day. Mike Davis seconded the motion, which then passed unanimously.

Henry made a motion to approve the amended agenda. This was seconded by Paula Carsel and approved by all present.

Old Business

There was no old business to be discussed.

Executive Director's Report

John, Henry, and three staff members attended the annual Missouri Community Action Network Conference in Kansas City. John stated he felt this was one of the best conferences in a long time, and that the sessions were excellent.

Debbie, Tony, and John have been kept busy working on the Joplin Bungalows LLC project, especially with the City of Joplin. We are making headway, and despite the rainy weather, we should see some actual building very soon (as opposed to site preparation). Debbie has also been working with some other organizations, notably St. Thomas Church, who has made a \$125,000.00 commitment for furnishings to go into the Bungalows units.

A few employees suffered damages and property losses in the recent tornado and flooding. As

for the agency itself, we have had a few facility problems, mainly roof leakage at the main office.

Missouri Housing and Development Commission has made a grant available to help clients who need assistance due to the flooding and tornado.

This week we have taken delivery of three new agency vehicles. These purchases were approved at previous meetings.

Head Start Policy Council Report

The Head Start Policy Council met via conference call in May. Spring reported that members used the Chromebooks provided to them, and again she was very pleased with how doing so worked out.

New hires approved at the meeting included three Teacher Aides, one Home Visitor, and a Mental Health & Wellness Coordinator. The renewal of the Early Head Start Child Care Partnership Grant was approved. This grant has allowed for the hiring of nineteen teachers, twelve teacher aides, six cooks, six cook's helpers, and six other positions. Proposed summer activities were reviewed. Budgets and in kind reports were gone over, and were shown to be at the to-be-expected level. Attendance was good overall and the program was fully enrolled.

Head Start Update Report

Jeff reported that over this last program year, we have completed or are building six tornado safety rooms. We are working on improvements to playgrounds at another six sites.

Staff have reworked our brochures and have been handing them out to encourage knowledge of, and participation in, the Home-Based Option for the Early Head Start Program. That option has expanded, and we are building up the wait list for it, as well.

We currently have openings for both staff and children in all of our options. We do expect to fill the slots for children by the end of June, so if members know anyone interested in enrolling, they should remind the parents to do so as soon as possible.

Just last week, we finished up our self-assessment for the programs. One outcome that we are happy to announce now is that we have cut turnover down to half of what it was last year at this time. It was shown that this was mainly due to the new pay scale and increase in pay. More results of the self-assessment will be revealed at the August Board meeting.

Board Training

Tammy Walker, Community Development Director, introduced herself and presented the Board Training for this evening. As she explained, her department probably had the largest number of grants and programs of any we offer. The Community Development (CD) Department has been in existence since 1994. Tammy has been with the agency over twenty years, and has been with this department the entire time.

The CD Department dispenses grants through Housing and Urban Development for housing

assistance, Community Services Block Grants, and Community Services grants, among others. One of the programs is the CHANCE Program, which stands for the Comprehensive Homeless Assistance for New Career Employment, which was the first program in Southwest Missouri dedicated to helping homeless people gain employment and in doing so, transition off the streets and away from public assistance. To be eligible for this program, clients must be either under – or un-employed, homeless, and willing to make a commitment.

There are three phases to the CHANCE program: 1.) Empowerment/Soft Skills; 2.) Job Readiness and Career Preparation; and 3.) Job Retention and Permanent Housing. Clients first attend the classes to learn these items. We then do such things as driving them to get job applications and to interviews until they obtain a job. Housing assistance is often obtained through The Homeless Coalition's Coordinated Entry and Housing First Approach.

Once a client is employed, case management services are provided for 180 days or longer. These supportive services help to ensure the client remains employed and retains permanent housing.

Guests Brenna and Joshua Schwartz are graduates of this program, and attended this meeting to tell their story. They had been homeless for two years, staying in missions or living in a tent. During that time Brenna was pregnant, and DFS took their child because they could not provide a safe home for it. Family was no longer willing to help them because they were perceived as “not willing to help themselves.”

Following the loss of their child, they attended rehabilitation and then went to stay at Watered Gardens. While there, staff told them about the CHANCE program and recommended they participate. Following graduation from the CHANCE classes, Joshua got his GED, and obtained employment at General Mills. He has won a scholarship to Franklin Tech's HVAC school.

The couple now live at God's Resort, have a car, and both work. They have another baby on the way, and if they continue on their current course, expect to get back custody of their first child in September. They have completed training at the Career Center. Family is now willing to integrate with them and help because they can see how the Swartz's are willing to work for their life as a family. Joshua says he grew up never knowing what it meant to have a home and family and he has “Come from nothing, and now going to have a home and family” and it is the best reward he could ask for.

Executive/Finance/Audit Committee Report

As the committee chairman, Henry made a motion to approve the minutes of the May 2, 2019 meeting. This motion was seconded by Nikki Tappana, 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 April 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. There were no outstanding comments or questions in regards to this item. The motion was seconded by Chester Neel, and passed with no nay votes.

Curtis Scott, Director of the Home Repair Department, then explained that the agency had sent out a request for bids for the construction of the two houses we are planning to erect in Sarcoxie. We received four bids, one of which was disqualified because it was not sealed. The remaining three were scored using the same items for each. The lowest priced bidder did not have the highest score. The winning bid was \$8000 higher, which led to some members questioning how that happened. Curtis explained that points were given for the fact that we had worked with a bidder before and how that experience was. He stated that they would be revising the scoring system in the future, and this item would not carry as much weight, especially since they did not get as many bids as expected. Darius felt that this item could cause some new companies NOT to bid, and questioned whether it was worth the extra \$8000 we will have to pay. In answer to Becky's question, Curtis stated the number quoted covered the construction of both houses, which are three bedroom homes.

Henry made a motion, seconded by Becky Crane, to approve selection of Woodland Construction as the winning bidder. The motion was approved.

Community Relations Committee Report

There was no meeting of this committee.

Agency Personnel and Planning Committee Report

Darius explained that the funding for the Missouri Housing Trust Funds Disaster Relief funds were offered to all Community Action Agencies in the affected areas of Missouri. The funds can be used for utilities, rent, motel/hotel bills, repairs, etc. for victims of the floods and tornado. He made the motion that we apply for the \$12,000.00 grant. The motion was seconded by Chester Neel and was approved.

Program Monitoring and Evaluation Committee Report

Mike Davis reported that this committee had only discussed the items on their agenda and no action was needed or taken. Tammy reported to the committee on the Rapid Rehousing Review and ESG monitoring letters. Jeff reported on the Head Start Data Reports. All items on the reports were positive, and on track for this stage of the programs.

Announcements

Jeff reminded everyone that we expect the slots for the new Head Start/Early Head Start program year to be filled quickly, and anyone wishing to enroll should do so by the end of June.

The next Board meeting is scheduled for Thursday, August 1, 2019 at 7:30.

Mike stated that again this year, May 22 was a somber day and we should all remember the blessings we have. Three deaths occurred in Barton County due to this year's tornado on that date. All emergency staff once again stepped up and did their job. No doubt, this saved lives, and we all owe them our thanks.

This meeting adjourned at 8:25 P.M.

Henry Lopez, President

Attest: Nikki Tappana, Secretary