

ECONOMIC SECURITY CORPORATION OF SOUTHWEST AREA

BOARD MEETING MINUTES

November 7, 2019

The Economic Security Corporation of Southwest Area's Board of Directors met on Thursday, November 7, 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, Joe Crosthwait, Jim Jackson, Joy Williams, Chester Neel, David Holloway, Jenny Sullivan, Nikki Tappana, Paula Carsel, Kevin Johnson, Thomas Wilson, Becky Crane, Erwin Stanscheit, Kourtney Connelly, and Phillip Knott. Doris Fast, Cleo Crosby, Karen Buckman and Melissa Lance were absent. A quorum was present. Spring Knott represented the Policy Council and was present.

Henry Lopez made a motion to excuse the absent members. Kevin Johnson seconded the motion, which was then approved unanimously.

Old Business

There was no old business to be discussed.

Executive Director's Report

John reported that we have been working on bids for the employee insurance benefits for 2020. Although our experience was down so far in 2019, the insurance company started out with a 24% renewal rate for the medical insurance. They have gone down to 17%, then 14%, and finally stopped at 11.2%. John assured everyone that if our current broker cannot start shopping around earlier to find a cheaper plan, we would be switching brokers again. Neither the agency nor the employees can afford the coverage when it keeps increasing every year by double digits. We also want to do a short year, from January 1 to August 31, 2020. Then, we will return to a 12 month year, but it will be from September 1, 2020 to August 31, 2021 and so on. The hope is that this will allow our brokers more time to shop for coverage each year, and also cut down on additional Human Resource and Fiscal work due to the benefits during the summer layoff.

Legal Aide has given their notice that they have found new office space, and will be completely moved out of our building by November 15. Head Start will be taking over the space Legal Aide is currently renting from us, as they have outgrown their offices on the third floor. However, since we have a Federal Review coming up for Head Start, they will wait until after that review is over to move into the space.

We recently had our leaking roof repaired. However, now we have some leaks occurring through the ceilings on the first floor. We have asked the roofer to come back and confirm that these leaks are a separate issue. Then we can determine how to deal with them.

Approximately ten years ago, the federal government cut funding for the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) mid-year due to the federal budget not being approved on time. The state, who distributes those funds to the various agencies, did not want to pay us for the funds we had already paid out on behalf of our clients for the year. The community action agencies fought the state government, and our attorney was able to maneuver them into paying the agencies. However, while the fight was going on, we were thrown behind in making our pledged payments.

November 1st of this year arrived, and we still had not received our funds from the state for the utility programs that we were due to start paying out on behalf of our clients. The determination was made by John and the director that until we had received funds from the state, we were not going to pay out any money for those programs. We did not want to wind up in the same fix that we did ten years ago. John also made sure our legislators knew what was going on and about our decision. We then received a letter from the state guaranteeing we would be reimbursed for any funds we paid out before receiving funding for the programs from the state CSBG office so we were able to then proceed with the utility program.

A few days later, we received notice that the state had received their CSBG funds from the federal office, and they would be sending us our portion of those funds. It would be appreciated if everyone would express our gratitude to the legislators for making this happen.

Head Start Policy Council Report

Spring reported that the most recent Policy Council meeting began a new year, and new officers had been elected. She had been approved to serve as the liaison to the Board of Directors for another term. Phillip Knott was elected as the new Policy Council President, Michelle Durringer is the new Vice-President, and Kelly Spencer is the new Secretary.

The Council approved new hires including a classroom safety monitor, one cook's helper, one early head start teacher aide, one family advocate, two teachers, one janitor, and an enrollment coordinator. The Nutrition Coordinator is working on measures to reduce waste, and hopes to have a report on that next month. Jeff went over the details for the Continuation Grant application, to be submitted next month. We are going to request funding to enroll 695 children.

There are currently thirteen students enrolled in our CDA classes. There are also several parents enrolled in our Conscious Discipline classes.

Our Head Start classrooms are currently fully enrolled. Three areas still need to work on filling their wait list. Fifty one students are on the list for severe chronic absenteeism, which is approximately nine percent. We are working to develop support plans to reduce the incidence of this.

Our Early Head Start classrooms are fully enrolled, and have complete wait lists. Their chronic absenteeism is at 12%, mostly due to ill individuals. The Early Head Start Home-Based program is also fully enrolled, and all areas have complete wait lists except one. Barton County is

working on filling their wait list. This program has had six ill children, and their absenteeism is at 5%.

Head Start Update Report

Before the committee meetings this evening, Jeff met with the Board members who will be speaking with the monitors during the upcoming federal review. He reminded them that they will need to be at this office at 1:00 P.M. on Tuesday, November 19th. The review is scheduled for the week of November 18th through November 22nd. We have received our funding notice to apply for next year's grant, and he will furnish a summary to the members. Next year's budget is expected to be comparable to this year's expenses. That grant is to be submitted next month.

When Jeff spoke at the grantee assessment meeting in Kansas City last time, it caused other agencies to look at the Home-Based Program for Early Head Start in a whole new way. He received a call a week ago that for the next meeting, attendees would like to come here instead of going to Kansas City. Clarence Small stated he wanted to go on a Home Visit with our staff and experience this first hand.

There will be a Budget Question and Answer Session at noon on December 3rd here at the office. Everyone is invited to attend. If you wish to but cannot attend in person, you are also invited to call or email Jeff with your questions.

The Government Accounting Office has issued a report on the follow-up to undercover research they did with Head Start personnel and programs ten years ago. There were fifteen cases cited. Seven of these occurred when staff did not determine eligibility correctly, in one third of the cases fraud was committed, and the rest were determined to be simple errors. After the first of the year, we intend to do the same type of operation within our program. We would rather catch the errors ourselves, than find out we have a problem when someone else does an investigation. The undercover operations in the report were completed in Los Angeles and Boston.

Board Training

Debbie Markman spoke about community action agencies having Organizational Standards to comply with. They also follow a Results/Outcome driven business model. The first step is to form a committee to develop a needs assessment. John, Jeff, and Debbie are on that committee. We are now in the second step, which is the community needs assessment. This is done by key informant interviews. Both qualitative and quantitative analysis is done. Surveys are also done. The data is used to determine those in our communities most in need. We cannot move to the next step until this step is completed. The results are used to develop a plan to serve those needs.

The agency's strategic plan is a three year plan, updated each year after determining what if any adjustments need to be made. This results in a long report but allows us to hone in on what we need to do, and where the item falls within the plan. Other data sources, including energy burden data, are utilized in addition to the community needs assessment to develop the plan. We have a Memorandum of Understanding with the Census Bureau. Tammy serves on a Board to make sure all people answer the questions fully and as honestly as possible.

This concluded the Board Training.

Executive/Finance/Audit Committee Report

Henry Lopez made the motion to approve the minutes of the October 3rd Board Meeting. The motion was seconded by Becky Crane. The motion was approved unanimously.

Henry then made a motion, seconded by Kevin Johnson, to approve the minutes of the Closed Session of the October 3rd Board meeting. This motion also passed unanimously.

Henry made a motion to approve the minutes of the Executive, Finance, and Audit Committee meeting via conference call of October 29th. This motion was seconded by Nikki Tappana, and passed unanimously.

Henry made a motion to approve the financial statements for the month of September 2019. He reminded everyone that the green sheets included in the packet referred to the financials for the Head Start/Early Head Start Division. He pointed out the pages that reported on the various credit cards as well. This motion was seconded by Phillip Knott, and was approved. The committee had reviewed these three items in more depth during their committee meeting earlier, and recommended approval of them. He did invite questions, but there was no further discussion.

The final item for this committee was a review only. They were provided with an update on the Agency's Risk Assessment progress, and discussed it in some depth. The Board as a whole had no further questions regarding this.

Community Relations Committee Report

Reporting for this committee, Kevin Johnson made a motion to approve Jessica Bryant as the new Low-Income Representative for Barton County. Tammy Walker interviewed all of those who wished to serve, and then a ballot was developed. Our clients in that county voted on who they wanted to elect to this position, and Ms Bryant received the most votes. This motion was seconded by Nikki Tappana and passed.

Kevin also made the motion to approve Larry Asemka as the Alternate for that position. The same process was followed as above for all of these vacancies. Each ballot, unfortunately, only contained two persons so the one with the most votes was elected as the representative, and the other candidate won the alternate position by default. Nikki again seconded the motion, and it was approved.

Kevin then made the motion to approve Tamara Serr as the Low Income Representative for the Newton County vacant seat. The procedure was the same as for Barton County. The motion was seconded by Paula Carsel, and passed unanimously.

Finally, Kevin made the motion to approve Chris Filancia as the Alternate for the Newton County position. Again, there were only two persons on the ballot. This motion was seconded by Nikki Tappana and passed unanimously, as well.

Agency Personnel and Planning Committee Report

Darius Adams explained that the committee had reviewed the proposed contents of the Head Start/Early Head Start Continuation Grant application to be submitted next month with Jeff Goldammer. This information was available to all the members in the form of the green hand out they received from Jeff. As this was an initial review, no further action was taken. Jeff did invite anyone who had questions regarding this to contact him.

Following up on the CEO's remarks during his earlier report, Darius made a motion to approve the renewal of the current insurance plans through Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield for the premium year January 1 through August 31, 2020. He added that this motion was to include the new rates and the short year. There were some questions regarding whether this would affect prescription coverage deductibles, and it was explained that none of the plans require such a deductible. Also, any deductible and out of pocket charges accrued by an employee would carry over to the total year balance, even if plans were changed in September, so the employees would not have to start over again to meet those balances until 2021. This motion was seconded by Paula Carsel, and was approved unanimously.

Program Monitoring and Evaluation Committee Report

Mike Davis stated that this committee had gone over the Head Start Data report with Jeff. Much of the information had already been covered in Spring's Policy Council report. He explained that absenteeism in the case of the Home Based Option is when family or child is ill and cannot participate in the visit by their Early Head Start staff member. This was a review and no action was needed.

The Program Information Report- ESC vs National was all good except for one item. This information was first measured last spring, and was just revisited. The comparison shows great improvement. Again, no action was needed for this agenda item.

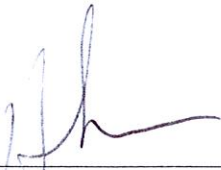
The final item was the School Readiness Update for our Head Start program. We have a new employee in Barton County, and she is working on recruitment and adding to the wait list. The other items covered in this report are at the level we would expect them to be, at this point in the school year. The Board was not required to take action on this item.

Announcements

The next Board meeting is scheduled for Thursday, December 5, 2019 at 7:30 P.M. There will be a dinner prior to the committee meetings, so look for that invitation in the next Board packet. Members should also come prepared to have their picture taken.

The Chairman of the Newton County Christmas for Kids project, which Kevin participates in every year, passed away three weeks ago. That group has elected Kevin to fill the vacant position, and the project is proceeding as planned. The annual wrapping party will take place December 16, with more than 200 gifts to be wrapped. Everyone is invited to participate in this charitable and FUN event.

The meeting adjourned at 8:20.



Henry Lopez, President



Attest: Nikki Tappana, Secretary