

West Des Moines Human Services Advisory Board
139 6th Street, West Des Moines, IA 50266

July 21, 2020 Minutes

(Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams)

Members Present: Council Member Russ Trimble, Rick Riley, Mary Bernabe, Matt McNeece, Mari Bunney, Bill Solawetz, Joe Happe, Sue Wright, Kasey Tickel, Jami Schnoebelen, Jo Helling, Janet Clarey-Jones, Tami Swenson

Members Absent: Doug Loots, Sean Fredregill, Dan Werner

Staff Present: Althea Holcomb

Citizen Participation: None

Call to Order: Rick Riley called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m.

Roll call.

Intro by Tami Swenson to the board & welcomed by Rick.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes from the June 20, 2020 meeting were approved by Mary Bernabe seconded by Joe Happe and approved by the board.

Director's Report:

- Althea shared that it's time to open the door to clients. Taking temps of everyone that walks in. Require masks of everyone. Ask them a series of questions to ensure no infection is brought in. Down to about 1/3 of the number of volunteers that normally have. Most in food pantry. Clothing closet has seen a huge reduction in volunteers. Accepting donations at garage doors on Mon & Thurs. & quarantining them for 3 days. Goodwill has just stopped taking donations so we are now inundated. Might have to consider discontinuing because we don't have enough volunteers to sort. This week clients can come in by appt to access clothing closet. Must wear a mask, temp taken, hand sanitizer, all by themselves, 1 per household, must be able to carry whatever they select out by themselves in order to maintain social distancing. Slow at first to work out the kinks.
- People come at other times to drop clothing, but can only accept on Mon & Thurs.
- Also accepting donations for school supplies
- Spending the Covid money - past month - wrote about \$60,000 for rent & utilities for clients.
- Received another \$231,000 in regular annual CDBG funds to help with rents and utilities as this situation continues/
- Rapid Rehousing got Covid money - \$52,000 from CARES to house a few more homeless
- Next year's Rapid REhousing funding got increased by \$7000 from last year's budget so budget going well
- All workers are healthy
- Numbers are down - food pantry down to less than half. Every morning tables are set up with bread & bakery items & food rescue items and every morning before 8:00 people are waiting (at least 7). Have to stand 6 ft apart & wear a mask. 8:00 start handing out. In 27 minutes, more than 35 people were served. Food pantry doesn't track these numbers.

- Question - dispersed more money for rent - is that for multiple clients? No - with Covid money, we can pay up to 3 months of full rent or mortgage so numbers are higher because they can backdate to March & pay 3 months rent or mortgage in one fell swoop to keep people in their homes. Not out of our discretionary funds.
- Question - the date for the curbside distribution of school supplies? Not doing it the normal way - have volunteers that will pack according to school & class requirements & then WDM Police Dept will monitor traffic as people come through and we will basically throw a backpack in their car. People schedule appts for 8/18 & 8/19.
- Question - if we have excess amounts of supplies will they be shared with the schools? Yes. Don't know if we'll have the same donations. Have received boxes from Amazon of backpacks. A new way of doing business.
- We do have money in a restricted account if we don't get everything we need we can purchase school supplies.
- Usually have about 435 kids that receive school supplies expect about the same. But we didn't have summer lunches so haven't seen kids to share info.
- We have an aging population. Have received donations of formula - need to find other places to take it.
- Sunday Supper letter went out Monday afternoon
- Will share template with us with a Donate Now button to share with our contacts
- Question - evictions could be coming up - any idea how apt complexes are thinking? We have relationships with some landlords/property managers in the community. We have not heard in what direction they intend to go when the moratorium is lifted but sense that they don't want to evict people, want to keep them in if rent can be paid. If haven't received help in the past, can help. If it has been at least a month, can use new CDBG money to help. Can also use discretionary funds if needed. The max amount hasn't change in 7 years - should it be raised? We will help up to \$250 with discretionary fund - can use twice a year. Should we consider changing? Can't use Fuhrman funds except for people over 60. Can use for utilities or snow removal.
- Rick - every year we have a discussion about helping with senior monthly bills. The source of that funding is the Fuhrman Fund - \$194,000 roughly. There are specific uses of that money. LIHeap we do - helps in winter months with their utility bill. Generally ends at end of April. Oct-April can't shut off utilities. A federal moratorium. We've taken those seniors that have applied for LIHeap & given \$200 directly applied to their MidAmerican bill. If their bill is up to date, they get a credit. If behind, it's brought up to date. Right around 149 people. Spent \$29,000 last year on this program. Alice Fuhrman fund - had no family - when she died she wanted to help keep seniors in their homes. Over a quarter of a million dollars in that fund. It is in a money market account & earns a little each year. Sue makes a motion to approve the expenditure of \$200 per senior (60 & over) from the Fuhrman Funds for this year. Mari seconded. Discussion - should it be increased? New motion to increase to \$250 by Sue. Could go in front of a judge to ask that they expand parameters. To explore if there are other opportunities to use those funds for. Mari seconded again. Motion passed.
- Strategic planning - we had a mtg scheduled for Mar 28th & had to cancel. Want to keep things moving. Sue, Bill, Althea & Rick met with Donna Galligan the consultant that was going to facilitate that discussion. She brought a lot of insight to how she does things in the Covid era. During the conversation, there are 33 stakeholders that would have a role in this planning exercise. Concluded that was a pretty big group to facilitate in a virtual fashion. Needed to find out if members of the board felt comfortable to meet in person with social distancing guidelines to accomplish some of these things. Should we wait to meet together or have a virtual.
- Donna submitted a bid to us but nothing was signed - a contract for 4 hours for an event - approx \$1200 for a half day workshop on values development and a couple hundred dollars for preparation.
- Should we meet in person, meet virtual, or table for a year or just focus on mission statement?
- Mary B moves to adopt the new mission statement & Joe seconds. Will have a 3 word vision at some point.
- Mission Statement is approved: ***The mission of West Des Moines Human Services is to provide opportunities for community residents to achieve healthy, stable and productive lives.***
- Motion to postpone the planning exercise to when we can all meet in person. Matt moved & Sue seconded. Motion approved.

- For Sunday Supper we still wanted to reach out to those that had donated in the past & for us to reach out to our personal contacts to see who would be interested in donating. Once Mindy has added the Donate Now button & then we can email our contacts & try to raise some funds for this year. Can use the letter or email message.
- No meeting in August - see everyone in September

Meeting adjourned at 6:06 pm, motion by Joe Happe and seconded by Sue Wright.

Respectfully submitted,

Kasey Tickel

