

# West Des Moines Human Services Advisory Board Meeting

139 6<sup>th</sup> Street West Des Moines, IA 50266

## March 21, 2023 Minutes

**Members Present:** Mary Bernabe (online), Joe Happe, Jo Helling, Wes Franklin, Clarissa D'Souza, Karen Smith, Greg Nichols, Mike Frandsen, Kasey Tickel, Bill Solawetz, Sheila Nelson

**Members Absent:** Deann Howard, Bill Crane, Eric Tabor, Victor Dutchuk

**Staff Present:** Althea Holcomb

**Citizen Participation:** MJ, citizen of West Des Moines

**Call to Order:** Meeting was called to order @ 5:30 pm by Joe Happe

**Approval of Minutes:** Motion to approve the minutes by Jo Helling, seconded by Bill Solawetz. Minutes approved.

**Condolences** offered for Althea by the Board on the passing of her mom.

**Communications Coordinator** has been doing an excellent job of posting to social media and on creating new print materials. There is a new client brochure and she is working on a new donor brochure. The print materials are offered in English and six other languages.

A sheet of programs and services stats has been put together so that it is clear how many people/clients have been served by each program in the past year.

An additional info page has been created to share income qualifications for the various programs.

There is also a program assistance guide that is organized by city so that people/clients clearly know what they can get if they are from various areas (Clive, Urbandale, Windsor Heights, etc.)

Jo asked if anyone can access the Tuesday night medical clinic, and Althea replied that anyone can, so that will be added to the information sheets.

Joe notes that everything is very clear, well organized and easy to read and understand.

**Strategic Plan:** The final draft was handed out to everyone present. Althea will be sharing it with the WDMHS staff and they will begin working on the items that are most do-able to start with. Some of the items will not necessarily be able to be completed, but the hope is that solutions can be found that are do-able and sustainable.

Sheila asks what is an example of an item that will be tackled first. Althea shares that communications and marketing items have already been increased and translated in other languages so that the community is aware of all that is offered / available. Althea says that they are also working with WDM Police so that if the police are called for domestic situations, the police can call WDMHS so that items such as diapers can be given to the family.

Joe states the importance of tracking all of the items that are completed or put into place from the Strategic Plan. Althea says that they can definitely do that. The goal remains to reach all of the people that need help.

Greg shares that he learned from the new print materials that for someone that needs heat/energy assistance, but lives in a different county, they cannot receive assistance from

WDMHS. Althea shares that is because it is a federal program and they will be directed to Dallas County or the appropriate county/location.

An item on the Strategic Plan is to connect with other like organizations to end duplication of services and make everything easier for clients to access. That is a goal that will be worked toward.

**Water Works update:** Althea spoke with Christine Murphy who is the general manager at Water Works and she is willing to help get more donations to WDMHS via water bills. She said that we could advertise through their newsletter and on social media, while also putting an insert into the monthly bill, as long as postage wasn't increased. She was also interested in the "round-up" option and offering that to WDMHS. The goal is to accomplish this before June 30th as that is when Mary Bernabe goes off the board and this has been one of her goals.

### **Director's Report:**

The total number of new clients has doubled.

WDMHS has continued to do what they do and that is serve clients. The month has been busy, but quiet as far as no major crises.

The annual Volunteer Appreciation Lunch will be April 19th at noon at Raccoon River Lodge.

Althea has an upcoming meeting with the WDM Police Dept. and she will be giving gift cards from WDMHS to the officers so that they can provide those in need with items they need instead of using their own money to purchase necessary items. This will be a good partnership between WDMHS and WDMPD.

The IT Dept is distributing older, wiped computers to low-income people through a program called PCs for People. This is a new program that WDMHS will be involved with.

### **Comments / Items For Discussion:**

We talked about putting together a fund-raising committee to help build an email list of possible donors. The Friends committee will meet soon and then let us know what they want/need from us.

Wes asks if video testimonials are being put together to also share along with the new print materials and Althea says that yes, they are.

Audrey Kennis, City of WDM Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Director, has met with the WDMHS staff and provided training. She will offer more training depending on the questions and needs the staff has. While the department is definitely diverse, is it as equitable and inclusive as can be? There is still always work to be done and the staff wants to continue to work on these to be able to serve all clients.

Greg asks how the translations are done for the print materials in other languages. Althea shared that she attended a training and re-connected with a former colleague, Mak Suceska, who works for the state and provided this service through his department.

The new sprinter van came today. WDMHS is providing about 1,000 lbs per week in food rescued items. We are getting more bread than needed, but fridges are full.

MJ notes that one of the QR codes in the brochure does not work. Althea will note / address.

Joe shares that fundraising for a police fund to have access for items needed for families when police respond would be a good fundraising idea.

Motion to adjourn by Bill Solawetz, second by Mike. Meeting adjourned at 6:13 pm.

Respectfully submitted, Kasey Tickel