

West Des Moines Human Services Advisory Board Meeting

139 6th Street West Des Moines, IA 50266

June 20, 2023 Minutes

Members Present: Joe Happe, Greg Nichols, Clarissa D'Souza, Wes Franklin, Jo Helling, Kasey Tickel, Sheila Nelson, Karen Smith, Eric Tabor, Mike Frandsen

Members Absent: Victor Dutchuk, Mary Bernabe, Bill Solawetz, Deann Howard, Bill Crane

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 Eric Tabor, seconded by Mike Frandsen. Minutes approved.

Citizen Comments: MJ draws attention that the savings should be making much more than what it is - Althea says that she will check with the city on that.

Director's Report:

Althea points out that there is staffing tonight at the front desk due to extended service hours. After a year, if there are not numbers to validate having extended hours, then the hours will be re-evaluated. A client came last week and said that he used to have to take off work to come to the food pantry, which does not make sense financially, so that is at least one client it has made a difference for. Saturdays have been fairly consistent. WDMHS is open an additional 11 hours and if it is used/busy during those hours, it will stay open these additional hours.

Althea thanks Greg and Karen who have volunteered to work those additional hours. It is a great way to be involved and also to learn more about WDMHS. It is currently difficult to get volunteers for these hours. WDMHS will determine how to make a push for additional volunteers.

Looking at client numbers, WDMHS has grown 50% since May, 2022. It continues to grow and the need continues to be there. There has not been a huge number of repeat users. The highest number of repeaters was 22. June will be slightly higher. Repeaters are those who have accessed multiple DMARC food pantries.

A big thank you to Eric for helping with the Anytime Food Rescue Program while Larry has been gone. He has helped every day while Larry has been absent. There have been up to 50 people present each day when they open the doors.

There is a massive amount of people coming to WDMHS for help with rent. Althea was talking to Eric Kool, and there are ARPA funds still available (\$45 million for Polk County) for help with people facing eviction. IMPACT is stationed at the courthouse and when someone comes to the courthouse facing eviction, they will be assigned a case worker and will receive help with past rent and help in looking for affordable housing. This should help relieve some of the stress on WDMHS. When the \$45 million is expended, they will have \$15 million to create affordable housing.

We have 5 new WDMHS board members that will be joining in July: Dan Crew, Will de Blois, Taylor McDonald, Betsy Happe & Becky Cunningham. Althea will hold an orientation with the new members.

The gift cards are still at City Hall and they are still auditing them. There has been no communication since our last meeting.

There was a meeting to talk about Sunday Supper and how to increase the sponsor/donor list. The Friends organization is meeting on Wednesday, June 21st to discuss Sunday Supper. They will set sponsor giving levels. The program at the Sunday Supper is inspiring and so it is good to try to get sponsors and donors to actually come to the event to hear all about WDMHS. It was suggested to invite/bring someone that doesn't know about WDMHS so that they can learn about the organization and ideally be inspired to volunteer, get involved and support WDMHS.

Election of officers:

Greg moves that we approve of the slate of nominations. Deann seconds. The slate of nominations passes and the new officers are elected: Chair - Victor Dutchuk, Chair Elect – Karen Smith and Secretary – Eric Tabor.

Presentation to outgoing board members:

Thank yous and certificates of appreciation were given to Kasey Tickel, Jo Helling, Wes Franklin & Joe Happe for their service to the WDMHS board - each outgoing member shared some final thoughts about Althea and the entire staff/organization and what a big impact WDMHS has in the community and beyond. Joe also shares how proud he is of the City of West Des Moines for the space and funding that they have committed to WDMHS and the citizens of West Des Moines.

Board Comments:

Greg encourages others to jump in and volunteer, especially during the extended hours.

Other board members thank Joe for serving as President and offer thanks to the board members that are leaving. Also, members note how much the staff does and how much the board members do and how the numbers of clients have continued to grow in the past year which will continue to inspire commitment by the board.

Motion to adjourn by Deann, second by Clarissa. Meeting adjourned at 6:13 pm.

Respectfully submitted, Kasey Tickel