

West Des Moines Human Services Advisory Board

139 6th Street, West Des Moines, IA 50266

Sep. 21, 2021 Minutes

(In-person & virtual meeting via Zoom)

Members Present: Rick Riley (via Zoom), Bill Solawetz (via Zoom), Kasey Tickel, Jo Helling, Wes Franklin, Mary Bernabe (via Zoom), Dan Werner, Victor Dutchuk, Jamie Schnoebelen, Janet Clarey-Jones, Doug Loots, Tami Swenson (via Zoom)

Members Absent: Joe Happe

Staff Present: Althea Holcomb

City Council Liaison: Russ Trimble (via Zoom)

Citizen Participation: None

Call to Order: The meeting started at approx. 5:30 by Bill Solawetz.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes were amended to show that Dan Werner was not present at that meeting and then Rick moved for approval and Mary seconded.

Director's Report:

- Althea distributed the Pre-Covid client services report.
- Client needs are picking up.
- Doug had heard that there would be 8 Afghan refugees coming to WDM. Althea had not heard this yet and shared that there is no affordable housing in WDM. Refugees come with \$1,000 per person and that is supposed to last for 3 months.
- Balance sheet and income statements - Doug asked about adjustments.
- ELL classes are being offered via Zoom. We don't have as many students as previously. Ten students per class is a good number. The max has been reached. The hope is to get back to in-person classes.
- Practicum student ended in August and she is now at the library. She has referred people visiting the library to WDMHS so that is a good thing. WDMHS hopes to hire a person to share between the two.
- 315 backpacks were packed and distributed this year by WDMHS. This took a lot of volunteers and each backpack was packed specifically for the student. Any student that needed a backpack received one.
- Dowling Catholic High School donated canned goods collected from their faculty on their first day back to school in a Hunger Games competition. Thank you to Dowling Catholic for their donation.
- Carol Boden retired and she requested a small retirement gathering. Everyone was very sad to see her go. She worked at WDMHS for 18 years. Shawna Rolph has taken over and has been doing a good job. Still not sure on the future of the Rapid ReHousing Program.
- We have received the BKD report. The major issues in the report are the divisions of duties between WDMHS and the Friends Foundation. WDMHS should not be staffing the Friends Foundation. WDMHS is working with the Friends Foundation to establish the delineation between the two. The chair of the Friends Foundation just resigned due to change in life circumstances so right now the Foundation is down to 4 board members. There has been some progress made. More work will be done after Sunday Supper, and all of the changes will be made then. Althea will go to future Foundation meetings to suggest or recommend ways that money could be best spent. Two suggestions were made. 1) Announce at the Sunday Supper that the Friends Foundation is looking

for members to see if anyone would be interested. 2) Contact past WDMHS Board Members to see if they would have any interest in serving on the Foundation. Everything else in the report was excellent!

- October 26th, Althea will be a presenter at HUD National Housing Development webinar speaking on the use of CovidCare funds. She will talk about the use of those funds to purchase a refrigerator/freezer to use for all of the donated food during Covid to preserve it for use. It is an honor to be asked to talk about this.
- The Polk County Financial Empowerment Center has been opened/started but so far have not had one person sign up. That is typical for the start of a new program. We have added an incentive - if West Des Moines people come in and talk with Michael Hardat twice, they will receive a \$50 gift card. The service has been shared via social media and Constant Contact and with posters around the building. A suggestion is made to possibly rename the service to make it more inviting / applicable to the clients. It is a free service for WDMHS and it is a collaboration between the two.
- The City of WDM has an Emergency Broadband Benefit program right now and WDMHS has been asked to help promote it. Low-income residents can receive a monthly discount.
- LIHEAP will begin Oct. 1 - Low-income Home Energy Assistance Program. One of our program outreach staff members is due with baby and will be on maternity leave for 3 months so WDMHS is hoping to be able to cover the duties of the program while she is gone.
- There will be a winter coat giveaway on Oct 13th, 14th and 15th with the coats left over from the Athene and other donations from last year.
- Board input on income eligibility requirements. We will be reviewing our income eligibility guidelines at our meeting. LIHEAP has changed theirs from 175% of poverty to 200%. The reason for looking at the change is that all of the different organizations are using different numbers to calculate eligibility. It would be nice to have consistency somewhere. WDMHS already has a system that they use.
 - 1 household \$22,540 (gross, not net)
 - Looking to change to 1 household \$25,760 (a difference of about \$3200)
 - Doug Loots made a motion to go up to the 200%. Victor seconds the motion. The motion is to move all of WDMHS's services/programs to 200% of poverty, with the exception of CDBG which we don't control. The motion carries and the change will be made.

Doug motioned to adjourn. Victor seconded.

Meeting adjourned at 6:22.

Respectfully submitted,

Kasey Tickel