

**Tri-County Opportunities Council
Board of Directors Meeting
June 22, 2023**

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 p.m. by Chair Harmon.

Ms. Jacob, Board Secretary, took roll call. A quorum was present.

The membership recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Members Present: (In-person participants are bolded)

Charlotte Balensiefen; Sue Britt; Susan Bursztynsky; **Mary Cork**; Mary Jo Credi; **Bernene Dahl**; David Ditzler; **Al Harmon**; **Marcia Heuer**; **John Hockstadt**; **Tom Howes**; **Betty Johnson**; **Lisa Johnson**; Julie Jacobs; **Ron Kleppin**; **Don Koehler**; **Donna Koehler**; Kenneth Krogulski; Michael McEmery; **Ginny McPerryman**; Linda Pennell; Ronald Preston; Juanita Randklev; **David Torres**; **Marissa Trumper**; Laura Watters; **Derek Whited**; Lorene Winfield.

Members Absent:

Karla Belzer; Robin Camplain; Kim Dahl; Jenny Lawrence; Brad Lindstrom; Charles Lenkaitis; Inga Neuner; Daniel Payette; Angela Shippert; Jeanne Vargas.

Others Present:

Jill Calkins; Rachael DeSpain; Dawn Kanzler; Tammy Saenz; Wayne Thompson; Neddie Watts.

Minutes:

May 23, 2023, Board minutes were previously sent to all members for review. Ms. Balensiefen made a motion to approve the minutes. Ms. Randklev seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried.

Financial Report:

The April 2023 Financial Reports were provided to the membership prior to tonight's meeting for review. Mr. Hockstadt made a motion to accept the April 2023 Financial Reports and file for audit. Mr. Kleppin seconded the motion. A vote was called, and the motion carried.

Fiscal Report, Dawn Kanzler

Ms. Kanzler sought Board approval for the revisions made to the Tri-County Opportunities Council's Procurement Policy as per the recommendation of the Audit/Finance Committee. Ms. Lisa Johnson made a motion to approve the Procurement Policies, and Mr. Howes seconded that motion. A vote was called, and the motion carried.

Ms. Kanzler shared that the ending book balance for May was \$206,026, and nothing was owed on the line of credit to Sauk Valley Bank as of May 31, 2023.

She reported that the package of umbrella insurance policies with Philadelphia was renewed and is effective July 1, 2023. The average increase for our industry was 9%. The complicating factors of social

inflation, storm losses, and general inflation continue to impact the overall market. The Agency's increase is 6.99% or \$9,683 for an annual premium of \$148,257. This is primarily a reflection of revenues increasing by \$3 million and the addition of seven new vehicles.

Ms. Kanzler informed members of additional handouts in tonight's packet, including the Nonprofit Rate Agreement final determination for 2021 with a provisional rate for 2022-2024 (10.1% to 9.3%) and minutes from Audit/Finance Committee meetings.

Program Reports:

Community Services Block Grant (CSBG), Neddie Watts

Ms. Watts sought Board approval to accept an additional \$7,000 for the Emergency & Transitional Housing Program to help homeless individuals with voucher shelter. Ms. McPerryman made a motion to accept the additional funds, and Ms. Koehler seconded the motion. A vote was called, and the motion carried.

Ms. Watts also sought Board approval to accept an additional \$189,000 for the DHS Homeless Prevention Program to help sustain housing for households at-risk of becoming homeless. Ms. Lisa Johnson made a motion to accept the additional funds, and Mr. Kleppin seconded the motion. A vote was called, and the motion carried.

Ms. Watts indicated that tonight's handouts included a document containing all Agency program income guidelines. She is hopeful that this will be of value to Board Members and stated that she would update it and distribute it annually.

She reported that in 2020, the Emergency Solution Grant obtained funds to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus homeless individuals and families or at risk of becoming homeless. There were 18 Continuum of Cares that received funding that allowed organizations to create programs to target homelessness. These funds are called ESG-CV. TCOC was one of the agencies that received over \$1 million. After three years, the grant will end on September 30, 2023, and all funds received must be spent. Numerous organizations have already spent their funding and are still trying to help those homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. They are seeking additional funds to continue supporting homeless shelters, street outreach, or direct client assistance. After thoroughly reviewing the current ESG-CV grant, she has decided to modify her grant and offer a little over \$300,000 back to the State to distribute to other organizations needing funding. By doing this, TCOC will still have funds available to help those seeking assistance, pay staff, and provide program support through other means and successfully spend the entirety of the grant before the deadline. From the start of the ESG-CV grant, the program has helped 397 households obtain or sustain housing.

To gather data for the upcoming Community Action Plan and to help develop the Agency's Community Needs Assessment, Ms. Watts has created an online survey for any resident living within the nine-county service area and stakeholders. She posted the link on the agency's Facebook page on Friday, June 9. As of June 20, 175 have completed the community survey, and 43 have completed the stakeholder survey. Only 89 completed the community survey last year using paper copies and self-addressed return

envelopes. The data will be collected and reviewed sometime in July and then reported to the Board sometime in August or September. The data will be used to update or create new CSBG work programs.

Finally, Ms. Watts indicated that the CSBG Outreach Staff took their June meeting to a local park in Rock Falls for a picnic and laughing yoga, which Ms. Newell instructed. She stated that the staff had the best time, and many faces and bellies hurt from the laughter afterward. She thanked Lorene Winfield for joining them. She encourages everyone to check the Agency's Facebook page for pictures and videos.

Foster Grandparents, Brandi Newell

Ms. Newell reported that the AmeriCorps Seniors hosted their first in-person convening in 4 years this May. She was lucky enough to attend and received a great deal of training and inspiration from the experience.

They were pleased to host the volunteers and guests for the 2023 recognition banquet on May 18. A copy of the program was included in board packets. Our volunteers celebrated some significant milestones and were recognized for their hard work.

Eight new volunteers have applied to the program and have been interviewed over the past two weeks. One did not qualify due to income guidelines; however, pending background checks, it looks like they will welcome at least seven new volunteers into their ranks this fall. After initial years of being back in the schools, they are seeing more schools open to additional volunteers, and they are doing what they can to answer their needs.

They are proud to represent the Agency at diverse community events. Admin Professionals Jeffrey Newcomer and Taylor Wiedman were joined by staff from EHS/HS for the Dixon Pride Festival over the weekend. They did a fantastic job representing the Foster Grandparent Program and all services available through the Agency.

The spring and summer months are moving at a record pace. Before they know it, they will be delivering new fall paperwork to schools, hosting new volunteer orientations, and having their back-to-school in-service. Don't blink. The days are now growing shorter.

Early Head Start/Head Start Program, Rachael DeSpain

Ms. DeSpain sought Board approval of the Tri-County Opportunities Council Early Head Start/Head Start Policy Council By-Laws, which includes Policy Council composition. The Board is responsible for approving the composition of the Policy Council. Copies of the By-Laws were distributed at the May Board meeting for review. Ms. Randklev made a motion to approve the Policy Council By-Laws, and Mr. Preston seconded the motion. A vote was called, and the motion carried.

Ms. DeSpain thanked Mr. Krogulski and Mr. Harmon for attending Policy Council Meetings. She shared that members of the Policy Council have commented on their involvement and how great it is to have them in attendance.

The program remains understaffed, but they have hired five applicants this week and have 11 additional applicants currently in the hiring process. The program has vacant positions in all counties but Carroll. Bus Drivers and Teacher Assistants are the most difficult to secure.

Emphasis on locating, attending, and bringing awareness to Agency services during community events remains a focus. Head Start and CSBG program members are working to establish, enable, and evaluate the success of newly developed “community event” procedures. Please continue to offer any information regarding events scheduled throughout the service area during June, July, and August.

The request to reduce the total number of Head Start slots remains undecided. The program is approaching recruitment and hiring efforts as if the request has been approved.

Ms. DeSpain brought members’ attention to the School Readiness Report in tonight’s packet. She explained that this report shows overall growth from fall to spring. She noted that the program met all of its School Readiness Goals this year. Discussion followed.

In tonight’s handouts, Ms. DeSpain also provided a copy of the June 2023 Board Report, Policy Council minutes from the June 13, 2023 meeting, current enrollment status, and a register of vacant positions throughout the program. She asked members to please encourage any interested candidates to visit the Agency website at www.tcohelps.org or call 1-800-323-5434. In conclusion, Ms. DeSpain reminded Board members to fill out the In-Kind/Volunteer sheet for any time spent reading over materials previously handed out.

Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), Tammy Saenz

Ms. Saenz reported that the PY 2023 LIHEAP program has ended. The State has program year 2024 scheduled to start on October 2, 2023, with priority periods to return. While there had been a consideration for LIHEAP to return to the 150% federal poverty level income guidelines, the State has decided to stay at 200%. Unfortunately, customer benefits will be reduced due to decreased funds and high need.

Some of the LIHEAP workers began their seasonal layoff on June 19 and will return in September. The workers that are staying will be getting the paperwork and other things ready for the next LIHEAP program. Employees in the PIPP program will be steadily busy with re-certifications starting in July.

Weatherization/Housing Program, Wayne Thompson

Mr. Thompson reported that they have wrapped up the 60-unit Multi-Family housing complex in Sterling, the Ster-Lynn Estates apartments. The HVAC & Architectural Contractors have completed their work, and the Weatherization staff have inspected all the units. Members of the Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity (DCEO) team, Ms. Kanzler, Mr. Thompson, two Final Inspection staff, and the complex’s maintenance and management staff visited the site on Wednesday, June 14th, to inspect and walk through the complex.

Mr. Thompson also reported that the Weatherization Department continued to process and complete single-family homes for the 2023 Weatherization Program throughout the entire time the multi-unit was being completed, and we will continue to use the same process in 2024.

They are now concentrating on reconciling the program costs for the 2023 Weatherization grant closeout process. They are on track to spend out all of the 2023 grants and will not have any carryover funds on the HHS and State grants. Those grants end on September 30th.

The new 2024 program year for Weatherization begins on July 1, 2023, and they will be ready to start on homes immediately as any homes not complete as of June 30, 2023, will automatically become a 2024 job. They also have assessments completed for the 2024 program.

He informed members that they will perform a new Procurement process and sign new contracts with all contractors for the 2024 Weatherization Program. This year, DCEO has completed a comprehensive Market Analysis by region for the entire state, thus saving Agencies many, many hours of research.

Lastly, Mr. Thompson reported that Mr. Campbell, the Agency's new maintenance employee, is working out well. He has done several minor repairs around the office and has done some great work on the agency's rental units. They moved in two families within the last couple of weeks, and with Mr. Campbell almost complete with a third unit, they hope to have another rented soon.

President/CEO's Report, Jill Calkins

Ms. Calkins reported that the Agency received approval for the extension request for filling the Bureau County, Category B seat. In addition, The Board anticipates a resignation from Dan Payette, which will leave the Whiteside County, Caegory B seat vacant.

The Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity has received a final Disallowance Decision letter from HHS concerning the CSBG Revolving Loan Fund program. The agreement included the State remitting funds equivalent to the cash held by the RLF program at the time of repayment to HHS in the amount of approximately \$22M. TCOC's portion of this repayment was \$172,582.77. A check was made for this amount and mailed to DCEO on May 30, 2023. Illinois withheld about \$4M due to loans that declared bankruptcy, no longer active loans, etc. To resolve this, Illinois will use other state funds to inject an amount equal to that withheld amount into the CSBG-funded programs administered by the state. This will be done through one agency, CEDA, which will issue energy assistance benefits to low-income clients from a CSBG grant from the state's energy assistance fund. That will complete Phase 2 of the agreement, at which time DCEO will issue a letter to all agencies that ran a CSBG RLF program, officially closing the program.

Scholarship winners must submit their fall schedules by July 7, 2023. Ms. Calkins reported that she had received about six thus far. Once all schedules are received, checks will be mailed to the respective colleges, and invites will be sent for the July Board Meeting in Mendota.

She reported that the contract for the sale of the property located at 507 West 3rd Street, Sterling, IL 61081, has been signed, and at the request of the buyer, the closing will be after August 1, 2023. The buyer has agreed to take care of the lawn over the next couple of months.

Ms. Calkins explained that they are seeking new tenants for the Wallace Center in Sterling, IL. When the Agency took over ownership in 2018, it had five tenants, bringing in about \$27,000 in rental funds. They are now down to one tenant. Bringing some new tenants aboard is crucial as these funds help offset maintenance costs, utility costs, etc. She has advertised through the Sauk Valley Chamber and encouraged members to help get the word out.

Each year at the annual meeting, Board members are recognized for their service on the Board. Recognition is awarded in five-year increments of time. Ms. Calkins recognized the following members. A certificate and a small gift of appreciation were provided and will be delivered to those who are not in attendance.

- Lisa Johnson, 5 years
- Robin Camplain, 10 years
- Ron Preston, 10 years
- Donna Koehler, 10 years
- Bernene Dahl, 15 years
- Sue Britt, 20 years
- Al Harmon, 25 years

Old Business:

There was no old business at this time.

New Business:

Nominating Committee Report:

Ms. Calkins informed the membership that the Nominating Committee met on June 9, 2023, to review and discuss the nomination forms submitted by members of the Board. The Committee is recommending the re-election of the slate of officers as follows:

- ✓ Al Harmon, Chairperson
- ✓ Don Koehler, Vice-Chairperson
- ✓ Julie Jacobs, Secretary
- ✓ Susan Bursztynsky, Treasurer

Ms. Dahl made a motion to approve the re-election of the slate of officers as recommended by the Nominating Committee, and Mr. Hockstadt seconded that motion. A vote was called, and the motion carried.

Ms. Calkins informed the membership that check signers needed to be named for the 2023-24 year and that traditionally, the signers have been the Board Chairperson and the Board Treasurer. Mr. Howes

made a motion to continue having the Board Chairperson and Treasurer named as the Agency check signers. Mr. Kleppin seconded the motion. A vote was called, and the motion carried.

Ms. Calkins also informed the membership that signers for Agency documents need to be authorized for the 2023-2024 year. Presently, they are the four Board officers and/or the President/CEO. In addition, on some grants, the Fiscal Operations Manager is deemed the signatory “designee” for a time when the President/CEO is unavailable. The Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) will only accept the President/CEO’s signature and/or their designee. Mr. Preston made a motion to keep the current signers for Agency documents as the four Board officers, the President/CEO, and/or her designee, the Fiscal Operations Manager. Ms. Balensiefen seconded the motion. A vote was called, and the motion carried.

Lastly, Ms. Calkins shared that the Planning/Evaluation Committee met on June 9 to discuss the meeting style for future Board Meetings. Initially, it was decided to pilot the hybrid-style meeting for six months in October and then re-evaluate. The committee is recommending that we continue with hybrid-style meetings going forward, with the exception of the July meeting being held in person only. She sought Board approval of the committee’s recommendation. Ms. Lisa Johnson made a motion to approve the committee’s recommendation, and Mr. Kleppin seconded the motion. A vote was called, and the motion carried.

There was no other new business to come before the membership.

Next Meeting:

The next Board meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, July 25, 2023, at the Mendota Civic Center, 1901 Tom Merwin Drive, Mendota, IL 61342, at 6:00 p.m.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:16 p.m.