

**METROPOLITAN ACTION COMMISSION
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING MINUTES
Berry Head Start Center
2233 Winford Avenue North, Nashville, TN 37210
December 2, 2021 / 12:00 noon – 1:00 pm**

Breaking the cycle of poverty in our community – one child, one person, one family at a time.

Present: Leslie Buggs, Telisha Cobb, Kathy Floyd-Buggs, Tanya Hancock, Flo Kidd, Joseph Mitchell, Renee Pratt, LaVoneia Steele, Joy Styles, Kevin Warner, and Troy White.

Absent: Fatima Ali, Kasey Anderson, Karen Doty, and Keenyatia Nicholson

Staff/Others: Cynthia Croom, Matthew Garrett (Metro attorney), Lisa McCrady, Rickie McQueen, Derrick Smith (Metro attorney), Belva Weathersby, and Robert Wright.

Dr. LaVoneia C. Steele, Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 12:04 p.m. and welcomed new Board member, Dr. Troy White, representing Metropolitan Development & Housing Agency.

REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

Motion: Approve the October 28, 2021, meeting minutes.

Made by: Joy Styles **Second:** Kathy Floyd-Buggs **Motion Passed.**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT *as provided by Dr. Cynthia Croom, Executive Director*

Dr. Croom introduced three staff members who were recently honored during the Mayor's Service Awards ceremony for the tenure with the Metropolitan Government. Ms. Yvette Carolyn Owens, assistant transportation manager, has been employed with Metro Action Commission for 31 years. Mr. Kenneth Lett, transportation manager, has been employed with the Metropolitan Action Commission for 31 years. Mr. Donald Parham, Susan Gray Head Start center manager, has been employed with the Metropolitan Action Commission for 40 years. Each person shared his/her history with the agency, the various roles served within the agency, and the appreciation for being a part of the agency over the years.

Dr. Croom presented to Councilwoman Sharon Hurt a small gift on behalf of the agency in appreciation of Councilwoman's service to the agency during her tenure as a member of the Board of Commissioners.

The agency received a notification from the Tennessee Housing Development Agency (THDA) regarding Davidson County's actual share of funds the US Treasury granted directly to the THDA for each county's use yet not expended by THDA. Davidson County's share is \$24,000,000. Because these funds are directly from the US Treasury and not a pass-through grant from THDA, there will be just one monitoring entity of grant funds received.

Each year, the federal Head Start Bureau identifies one area for monitoring. The first-year monitor review for our current five-year funding cycle will be 12/6 – 10/21, reviewing program governance. Ms. Flo Kidd will represent the Board during this monitoring review. Currently, the Head Start Bureau is one year behind in its monitoring review as we are currently in year two of our five-year funding cycle.

Last week, staff met with NOAH regarding feedback about the HOPE program. Metro Action Commission (MAC) has one of the highest rates in the nation for expending ERA (Emergency Rental Assistance), aka HOPE.

FINANCIAL REPORT *as certified by Treasurer Telisha Cobb and presented by Robert Wright, CFO*

The September 2021 financial report reflects positive or zero fund balances. Prior to the corona virus pandemic, the agency budget was approximately \$30 million. However, with multiple CARES Act funded grants, the agency budget is now over \$117 million. The VOCA monitoring review had no findings or observations. The Head Start/Early Head Start in-kind report was reviewed with the match at 30%. Due to COVID-19, there are no volunteer hours to report for this period. Credit cards statements were presented and reviewed. The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) invoice and meal counts were reviewed for 21 days and reflect the meals eaten and not the meals prepared.

Motion: Approve September 2021 Finance Reports.

Made by: Joy Styles **Second:** Leslie Buggs **Passed unanimously.**

ITEMS REQUIRING BOARD ACTION

HOPE Portal

Currently there are over 11,000 applications in the HOPE portal with many of them being either duplicates, group assisted, or reapplications, all of which creates a backlog. Because the eviction court will close from December 14 – January 23, the agency sees this court closure as a time to address the backlog by closing the HOPE portal to new applications from December 14, 2021 – January 18, 2022, giving HOPE staff time to eliminate duplicate applications, combine group assisted applications and reapplications. A plan to notify the community of this temporary portal closure has been developed by the agency's Communications Department.

Motion: Approve closing the HOPE online portal to new applications from December 14 through January 17, reopening on January 18, 2022, to allow staff the opportunity to clear duplicate applications and backlogs

Made by: Kevin Warner **Second:** Flo Kidd **Passed unanimously.**

Job Descriptions/Position-Salary Changes

The Board held an extensive discussion regarding the compensation of and need for an equity adjustment of the salary of the Executive Director given her accomplishments and success of the agency under her leadership, her national reputation as a leader, her tenure as the longest serving current department head in Metro Government, and a history of her being under compensated. Based on the Board's recommended salary and the Mayor's subsequent response, the Board will continue to review the Executive Director's compensation over the next budget cycle in an effort to continue to achieve greater parity.

An agency program manager was promoted to the HOPE program director position, which requires a salary increase of 24%. Any staff salary increase over 16% requires board approval.

Motion: Approve staff salary increase of 24%

Made by: Flo Kidd **Second:** Kathy Floyd-Buggs **Passed unanimously.**

Grants, Contracts, MOUs

Motion: Approve Martha O'Bryan Center Memorandum of Understanding and Metro Water Services Vendor Agreement.

Made by: Leslie Buggs **Second:** Flo Kidd **Passed unanimously.**

PROGRAM REPORTS

Communications – no report

Family & Community Services – Report attached.

Housing, Opportunity, Partnerships, & Employment (HOPE) – Report provided in Executive Director report.

Early Education & Youth – Head Start is under a federal mandate for staff to be vaccinated for COVID-19 by January 31, 2022. If the federal mandate is not met, it may affect \$14 million in Head Start funding. All staff have been surveyed to determine their vaccination status. Report attached.

Policy Council – No report.

Workforce Development – Report attached.

Transformation & Innovation – No report as primary focus is helping to manage the HOPE program.

Administrative Services and Operations – Report provided.

Meeting adjourned.

Minutes submitted by:

Joseph Mitchell, Board Secretary