

CITY OF PORTAGE HUMAN SERVICES BOARD

Minutes of Meeting February 4, 2016

CALL TO ORDER: 6:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Staff member Elizabeth Money called roll: Diane Durian (arrived 6:37), Effie Kokkinos (aye), Ray LaPoint (aye), Elma (Pat) Maye (aye), Nadeem Mirza (aye), Edward Morgan (aye), Fiorella Spalvieri (aye), Amanda Woodin (aye), and Lindy Nebiolo, Youth Representative, (aye)

STAFF PRESENT: Elizabeth Money, Neighborhood Program Specialist and Vicki Georgeau, Director of Community Development

CITIZENS PRESENT: Thom Phillips

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Spalvieri moved and Maye seconded approval of the minutes as submitted. Motion passed 8-0.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Public Hearing 2016-2020 Consolidated Plan – Needs Assessment and Market Analysis – Community Development Director Vicki Georgeau: Spalvieri moved and Maye seconded opening the public hearing for the Needs Assessment and Market Analysis at 6:32 p.m. Motion passed 8-0. Director Georgeau began the presentation by handing out updated copies and explained that new data, including homeless data, had been received since part I was presented and the current agenda prepared. Continuation of the presentation commenced and summary information was provided on public housing, homeless needs, special needs populations and non-housing community development needs. With regard to the Market Analysis, data on the cost, condition and availability of affordable housing was presented. In addition, potential barriers to affordable housing, availability of facilities to assist homelessness and special needs housing was discussed. Morgan asked if vouchers were similar to Section 8 housing. Both Georgeau and Maye responded that vouchers were essentially the same and that recipients had housing choice options, and that participating landlords are required to make accessibility accommodations for tenants when needed. While there was no public housing in the county, Georgeau had indicated that the Michigan State Housing and Development Authority acts as the public housing authority. Spalvieri inquired how many beds the Gospel Mission had and Georgeau responded. Georgeau further explained that there is research that indicates it is more expensive to maintain homeless shelters than to rapidly re-house homeless individuals. Georgeau clarified that the homelessness data included in the plan are based on a point-in-time, one-day county-wide count, and annual data from 2014. With regard to non-housing community development needs, CDBG funds are not typically used for capital improvements, with the exception of small-scale playground and sidewalk improvements within low-moderate income neighborhoods. Board members had questions regarding nursing homes, those that accept Medicaid, new senior assisted living facilities being constructed in Portage, and how accessible these housing developments would be low-income special needs residents. The presentation was concluded by indicating if anyone had any questions on the information provided to please contact city staff, that the plan would be completed in early March 2016, and the 30-day public comment period would conclude with the April 7th Human Services Board meeting. Thom Phillips of Michigan Habitat for Humanity was asked how he heard about the public hearing and he indicated he had read about it in the *Portager*. There being no further comments, Spalvieri moved and Maye supported closing the public hearing at 7:17 p.m. Motion passed 9-0.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. **FY 2016-17 Human/Public Service Application Review:** Woodin opened the discussion noting that Board scoring was very consistent except for the applicant Goodwill Industries. The Board discussed their scores for this applicant and what basic human need tax preparation service filled. Woodin indicated that the program was not designed to be an educational tool but to assist low to moderate income households with securing qualifying refunds and submitting their returns electronically for no fee. Durian added that AARP provides free tax preparation service to qualifying individuals at several locations throughout the county. The Board was divided on whether or not this service constituted a quality of life enhancement. While the Board disagreed on what basic human need the tax service fulfilled, no Board member changed their individual scores. LaPoint noted that if you remove the Board's high and low score for each applicant that it did not affect the overall ranking of any of the applicants and that Board and staff ranking were similar. Nebiolo brought up that everyone received full points for the outreach (criterion question 6) and was that a necessary question. LaPoint and Mirza added that review of that criterion was ongoing and things like internet advertising verses personal outreach may need to be considered. Spalvieri inquired how much impact the Board recommendation had with City Council. Staff members Money and Georgeau explained that while staff offered their own recommendation, and it may or may not coincide with the Board's, that City Council took the Board's recommendation seriously as they were the Advisory Board charged with recommending action on human/public service funding. Durian asked for clarification on the Portage Community Center's (PCC) two applications being reviewed as one. Staff explained that PCC had always requested their CDBG grant and General Fund grant requests be considered as one application because grant funding amounts are not known at the time of application and CDBG grants funds can fluctuate significantly from year to year and General Fund monies may be needed to balance their request. As the Board was satisfied with their scores and ranking, no further discussion was had. LaPoint moved and Kokkinos moved to accept the ranking as indicated on the monitor: CDBG - 1. PCC (177); General Fund- 1. PCC (183), 2. Housing Resources, Inc. (181), 3. YWCA (174), 4. Catholic Charities (164), 5. Gryphon Place (153), 6. Lending Hands (132), 7. Goodwill Industries (126). Motion passed 9-0.
2. **Kalamazoo Transit Authority LAC update - Maye:** Maye indicated that the expanded bus services on Sunday would begin in February and not September as indicated at the last meeting. She had no further updates as the LAC had not met since the last meeting.

STATEMENT OF CITIZENS:

ADJOURNMENT: Georgeau reported to the Board that at a recent City Council meeting a motion was made to investigate/review a Nondiscrimination Ordinance that included sexual orientation and gender identity and that the Board may be asked to participate. The Board discussed that the issue had previously been brought before the Board. There being no further business of the Board, Maye moved and Spalvieri supported adjournment of the meeting at 8:14 p.m. Motion passed 9-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Elizabeth Money,
Neighborhood Program Specialist