

CITY OF PORTAGE HUMAN SERVICES BOARD

Minutes of Meeting March 3, 2016

CALL TO ORDER: 6:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Staff member Elizabeth Money called roll: Diane Durian (aye), Ray LaPoint (aye), Elma (Pat) Maye (aye), Nadeem Mirza (aye), Edward Morgan (aye), Sandra Sheppard (aye), Fiorella Spalvieri (aye), Amanda Woodin (aye), and Lindy Nebiolo, Youth Representative, (aye). A motion was made by Maye and supported by LaPoint to excuse Effie Kokkinos. Motion passed 8-0.

STAFF PRESENT: Elizabeth Money, Neighborhood Program Specialist; Randy Brown, City Attorney and Bryan Beach, Assistant City Attorney

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

NEW BUSINESS:

1. **Memo Regarding Nondiscrimination Ordinance:** Money opened the discussion by referencing the memo and attached material in the agenda packet. It was indicated that, consistent with the Board's role as an advisory board to City Council, the Board would handle public review for the proposed nondiscrimination ordinance that the City Attorney's office was currently working on. The attached agenda information was given to the Board to apprise them of actions being taken, provide an example with the recently adopted Kalamazoo Township nondiscrimination ordinance, and provide additional information including an executive summary from a Michigan Department of Civil Rights report. Randy Brown, City Attorney, indicated that his office was researching the various nondiscrimination ordinances currently in effect throughout Michigan and that they were customizing a proposed ordinance for Portage. Brown informed the Board a public hearing would likely be held in May 2016 and that his office would have a proposed ordinance for the Board to review at the April 7th Board meeting. Morgan asked what Brown liked or didn't like with the ordinances he was reviewing. Brown indicated the review was still in process so he couldn't yet comment. Woodin asked what the proposed ordinance would cover – housing, employment, or both. Brown responded that housing, employment, and public accommodations were all being reviewed. A discussion was had on the public hearing and Money indicated it would likely be scheduled in the City Council Chambers and a date had not been set. At this time, it was not known if the hearing would occur during a regularly scheduled meeting or be a separate meeting. Maye suggested the public hearing be separate from a regular Board meeting as she had worked with Oshtemo and Kalamazoo Townships during their nondiscrimination ordinance process as a (former) employee of the Fair Housing Center of Southwest Michigan. Brown thanked Maye for her advice and indicated that a separate meeting was an option. Mirza asked how such an ordinance would be implemented. Brown indicated that how other communities implement their ordinance varied considerably and that his office was trying to develop a workable model tailored to Portage. Woodin asked if there was consensus with the City Council over this subject and Brown responded that there was consensus but that it was Councilmember Urban who initiated action. Brown indicated that further information would be provided to the Board for the April meeting.
2. **FY 2016-17 Human/Public Service Application Funding:** Woodin opened by requesting that Money explain the new updated funding amounts and the City Administration proposed funding amounts. Money indicated that there was more funding available from the General Fund and that was incorporated into the revised memo given to the Board in the Final Agenda. Money indicated that both new applicants were recommended to be funded, and that while the services they provided did not rank/score as high as most of the other applicants, they did improve the quality of life for participating Portage residents. Money indicated that applicants to the CDBG Housing Assistance Program had informed her that they utilize the

VITA tax program offered by Goodwill Industries. Some applicants also informed her they did not have Internet access and this free service was a way that they could file securely online. The remaining applicants, all FY 2015-16 grant recipients, are recommended to receive increased funding from FY 2015-16 levels. Higher ranked applicants are recommended to receive a larger dollar amount increase with Portage Community Center (PCC) receiving the largest increase. The Board had a lengthy discussion about the quality of some applicant information and that some applicants would score higher if they submitted more detailed information. LaPoint indicated that some applicants get more than they requested and some get less. A discussion was had about what applicants request and how that should effect the funding they received. Money indicated that application question #17 does ask applicants to explain why they are requesting an increase in funding from the previous year. The purpose of this question is to provide information on significant changes (increased staff, new infrastructure, etc.) that could justify a change in funding. Woodin added that some applicants ask for a realistic amount because they have to prepare their budgets before grants are awarded. If they regularly receive a similar amount from the city, that is what they will budget for and request. If they were told beforehand that amounts could change, they would likely increase their request. Mirza questioned applicant accountability and Money indicated that each applicant had to submit six month reports to the city accounting for expenditures and the number of Portage residents served. The Board discussed the presentations and that some applicants better communicated useful information about the funding requests. Money reminded the Board that presentations were not required and, while presentations are intended to supplement the applications and provided an opportunity for the Board to ask questions, that the quality of the presentation was not scored. Woodin asked if the Board had any alternative suggestions or if the proposed City Administration funding amounts were acceptable. After no alternative funding suggestions were made, Morgan moved and Mirza seconded accepting the funding amounts as proposed. The motion was opened for discussion and Maye wondered if Gryphon should get more of an increase. Money explained that Gryphon was receiving \$160 more than last year and that they scored or ranked last out of the previously funded applicants. Durian again commented on PCC combining their requests and staff and the Board explained that was due to changes to the funding levels in the two funds and PCC being the only applicant to receive funding from both. No further discussion was had and the funding amounts were as follows: CDBG Fund/ PCC \$41,928; General Fund/ PCC \$82,386, Housing Resources \$20,735, YWCA \$11,685, Catholic Charities \$11,635, Goodwill Industries \$1,500, Gryphon Place \$2,500, Lending Hands of Michigan \$1,500. A roll call vote was taken (Mirza left at 7:36): Durian (aye), LaPoint (aye), Maye (aye), Morgan (aye), Sheppard (aye), Spalvieri (aye), Woodin (aye). Motion passed 7-0. While Youth Advisory Representative Nebiolo does not have a casting vote, she also agreed with the Board on the proposed funding.

3. Kalamazoo Transit Authority LAC update - Maye: Maye had no updates as the LAC had not met since the last meeting.

STATEMENT OF CITIZENS:

ADJOURNMENT: Money indicated that the Board would receive an email with a link to the draft 2016-2020 Consolidated Plan when it was uploaded to the city website. She reminded the Board that the public comment period started next week and would end a public hearing during the April 7th Board meeting. There being no further action, LaPoint moved and Maye supported adjournment at 7:52. Motion passed 7-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Elizabeth Money,
Neighborhood Program Specialist