

**Rocky Mountain Development Council, Inc.**  
**RMDC Board of Directors' Meeting**  
**February 23, 2017**

**Members present include:** Susan Geise, Mike Delger, Debbie Havens, Trever Kirkland, Keith Meyer, Daniel Pocha, Roberta Spengler

**Members absent include:** Rebecca Blend, Helen Fandrich, Lanessa Littrell, Jerome Loendorf, Bob Mullen, Maria Pace, Lois Steinbeck

**Guests:** Lori Ladas, Chrisy Irey, Kathy Marks, Gale Anderson, Jerilee Wilkerson, Walter Hanley, Ashley Peña-Larsen, Hannah Danzer, Sam Hall, Linda Nolan, Taya Hoven, Jacque Smith, Hunter Heaton, Diane Edgar

**Call to Order/Roll Call:** The meeting was called to order by Susan Geise at 3:30 p.m. Lori Ladas asked Community Outreach Coordinator, Jacque Smith, to introduce Hunter Heaton to those in attendance. Hunter is a Carroll College student completing a documentary photography project at RMDC, and she was in attendance to take photographs during the meeting.

**Approval of Minutes**

Since a quorum was not present, the approval of the January Finance Committee meeting and the January Board of Directors' meeting minutes was postponed until March.

**United Way Grant – Lori Ladas**

Lori presented information about the United Way Grant, which needs to be submitted by March 1. The grant would request funding for three RMDC programs: Meals on Wheels (\$25,000), RSVP (\$12,000), and Head Start (\$8,900). Lori requested Board approval to submit this grant, along with the Beaverhead County grant, which would request \$6,000 for Senior Corps programs.

**Debbie Havens made the motion to ask the Executive Committee to make the decision in regards to all proposed grants, as a quorum was not present. Keith Meyer seconded and the motion passed unanimously. The Executive Committee will bring the result of their vote back to the full Board at the next meeting. Daniel Pocha noted that he will abstain in the full vote, due to his possible participation with the United Way Board.**

**Ad Hoc Committee – Head Start Whitehall Site – Lori Ladas**

Following discussion at the Head Start Policy Council meeting on February 9, the Policy Council has requested to work together with the Board to create a committee designed to address the future of the Whitehall Head Start site. Susan Geise appointed Bob Mullen, Daniel Pocha, Trever Kirkland, and herself (as time allows) to serve on this committee along with members of the Policy Council. Ashley Peña-Larsen will send an e-mail to those involved to find an initial date and time to meet.

**Head Start Update – Ashley Peña-Larsen**

**a. Director's Report – Ashley Peña-Larsen**

Ashley offered three handouts to those in attendance. The first was a sheet titled "Head Start and Early Head Start in Montana". It was an overview of the Head Start program throughout the state. The second hand out was the Director's Report. Ashley noted that average daily attendance at the Head Start for January was 84.22%, down about 3.5% from the previous year. This was attributed mainly to illness. As of Wednesday, February 8, 231 children are enrolled, with 5 income-eligible children and 37 over-income children on the wait list. All screenings are up-to-date at this time. Fifty-three children are currently on IEPs, and 10 referrals are in progress. Nineteen children are receiving mental health services through Head Start's partnership with AWARE, and 4 children have been referred. Two homeless families are currently being served by Head Start. Ashley invited everyone to attend the upcoming Friends of Head Start Extravaganza on April 27 at the Radisson Colonial Hotel, beginning at 5:30 p.m.

Susan Geise asked about the possible use of Intermountain for mental health services with Head Start. Ashley reported that Intermountain does provide in-house services only, but that Head Start can refer out to them. Susan suggested that Head Start look for a way to grow that relationship, and that PureView would be willing to help make the necessary connections.



Ashley then reviewed her third handout, the Head Start budget. She calculated that she'd have an available budget of \$247,350.69 per month through the end of the grant year on April 30, 2017. She also reviewed the MPDG grant, which has a grant year end date of June 30, 2017. She said there was an overestimate in regards to personnel costs, and that she is working with Budget Analyst Taya Hoven to make some necessary adjustments. Ashley also reported that she'd requested a carryover of funds from the Duration of Services Grant, and a copy of the letter regarding that carryover will be distributed at the next Board meeting.

Ashley also shared that the City of Whitehall has uranium in their city water supply. She has been investigating the implications of uranium ingestion in the Head Start age population, and found it can lead to both cancer and kidney failure. The Head Start site in Whitehall is currently using bottled water at their facility, and Ashley has contacted the national Head Start office for further guidance. Ashley also said there had been a meeting in Whitehall with parents and the school district, and that the school district was interested in allowing Head Start to use some of their space; that proposal will be taken to their Board of Directors in April for approval. The official letter of resignation for the Teacher's Assistant in Whitehall was received, and to date, no applications have been received for the vacant Whitehall Head Start Teacher position.

**Daniel Pocha made the motion to approve the Head Start Director's Report. Roberta Spengler seconded, and the motion was passed unanimously.**

#### **Director's Report – Lori Ladas**

Lori and Facilities Manager Jim Stack went to the Jackson Street location to tour the side of the building with water damage. The damaged area is basically gutted and ready to remodel at this time. The insurance deductible should be \$1,000, and beyond that all repairs to return the area to usable space should be covered. Lori is watching information regarding the Corporation for National and Community Service, as their program is one being targeted by the current Federal administration as a "waste of money". This is the corporation that funds the Senior Programs operated by Linda Nolan. Linda requested that the Board send a letter of support to Senator Tester and Senator Daines, and the recommendation was made to also address a letter to Congressman Ryan Zinke, thanking them for their support of these programs in the past. Linda agreed to draft a letter for this purpose. Lori reported that new Board binders are being created with updated information for all Board members, and they will be distributed at the next Board meeting. Board orientation will be held for all new members to the Board, and any current Board members who feel they could benefit from an orientation training should contact Administrative Assistant Diane Edgar. There will also be Board Governance training scheduled, and full Board attendance will be expected. As a reminder, Lori mentioned that Patty Dahl's retirement party will be held on Tuesday, February 28, from 5:00-7:00 p.m. at the Brewhouse.

#### **Finance Report Update – Chrisy Irey**

Chrisy handed out the Crystal Ball Spreadsheet, with actual numbers through January 31 and projections through the end of the fiscal year on June 30, 2017. The current cash balance is \$587,239, and the current AP balance is \$86,260. The projected program total cash at June 30, 2017 is \$105,116, after comp abs. Chrisy highlighted several numbers of interest. First, there was a State Fund dividend of \$19,311. Additions were made to the Head Start totals on the spreadsheet, to include income outside of the Head Start grant, such as STARS funding and Child and Adult Care Food Program. The revenue for Senior Corps programs was reduced, to reflect the potential funding that will not be drawn down due to lower volunteer numbers. Preschool projections for the fiscal year are positive at this time, due to some changes made earlier this year: after the resignation of a Teacher Assistant, Hannah Danzer approached Lori to ask if she could spend some time in the classroom until the end of June, to save some salary dollars. In July, the plan is to hire a part-time Teacher Assistant. The preschool is full at this time. Chrisy said that with \$12,000 in county mill carryover and \$58,301 in unallocated CSBG funds, there may be a little room to move forward with parts of the pay plan, mainly impacting those who are currently below the entry level of their new pay band.

#### **Executive Director Performance Appraisal – Susan Geise**

Susan gave a brief reminder that she needs responses from all Board members regarding the Executive Director Performance Appraisal, which was sent out via e-mail. Newer Board members were encouraged to offer whatever input they might have at this time. Program Directors also completed an appraisal form, and the Personnel Committee will meet on March 9 at noon after appraisals have been compiled. After that meeting, a meeting will be held with Lori to discuss the results, and then that report comes back to the full Board of Directors in an executive session at the end of the meeting, with a vote for approval during open session.

### Energy Services Presentation – Sam Hall

Sam distributed a packet of information about the LIEAP program, along with a copy of the LIEAP application. He said his intent during his presentation was to explain the impacts of the Energy Services programs on communities, especially for low-income individuals, and to boost the attendees' "literacy" of the programs and their terminology. There are three programs included under the Energy Services umbrella: LIEAP, Weatherization, and Energy Share. LIEAP was described as a heating season off-set, from the months of October through April. LIEAP is also a doorway to the Weatherization program. Those receiving assistance through Weatherization are typically determined through a sequential order by the State of Montana, and while approximately 55 homes are completed each year, the need far outweighs RMDC's capacity to meet the demand for assistance. Energy Share is a private non-profit program, and is available for those who have exhausted their governmental options and is not income based. There is a committee that meets weekly to discuss applications, and while there is no mandate to repay the funds provided under Energy Share, some wish to do so and those dollars go into a revolving fund to provide further assistance.

Sam then went into further details about each program. He noted that LIEAP is a cost-offset program, not providing 100% coverage of heating bills; it is meant to free up resources that would otherwise need to be spent on heating. LIEAP can be used to assist in emergency/no heat situations through the Contingency Revolving Fund (CRF), and participants can apply all the way through the end of season on April 30, as the benefits can be applied retroactively to heating costs incurred starting October 1st. Sam pointed out that the LIEAP application, provided by the State, is 10 pages in length and its size can be a barrier to receiving assistance. One thing helping with that barrier is categorical eligibility with SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program); if an individual is approved for SNAP benefits, they are automatically eligible for LIEAP as well. This year, 1,781 LIEAP applications have been approved, with \$915,000 in benefits issued. Of those approved, most were received from Lewis and Clark County, with 9-10% from Jefferson County and 7-8% from Broadwater County.

The impacts of the Weatherization Program can best be articulated in the context of "sustainability", with impacts measured across equity, environment, and economics. Social equity is achieved through households breaking the generational cycle of poverty, and bettering their living conditions. Environmental impact is achieved through energy conservation, reducing the collective impact on the planet. Economic impact is achieved through reducing the cost of heating a home. Weatherization has cost effectiveness at its core. This year, the Weatherization Program is estimated to complete 55-60 jobs.

Energy Share meets weekly to review applications, and provides an option when other resources have been expended. This year to date, 129 applications for Energy Share have been reviewed, with \$40,000 issued. Sam said Energy Share will be busy due to the severity of this winter and cold temperatures.

### Final Notes

After discussion about next month's meeting, the decision was made to move the meeting date up one week, to Thursday, March 23, at 3:30 p.m. Susan also suggested that due to the fact that individuals sometimes need to leave meetings before they are finished, that Head Start's spot on the agenda should sometimes be placed earlier in the meeting to allow for more complete Board attendance during their report.

The meeting adjourned at 4:55 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

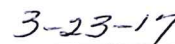


Diane Edgar  
Administrative Assistant, III



Bob Mullen

Secretary/Treasurer



Date

