

**LEE COUNTY
COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY/NEIGHBORHOOD DISTRICT COMMITTEE
QUARTERLY MEETING**

**December 17th, 2024
Virtual Meeting 4:00 p.m.
Microsoft Teams Meeting ID: 210 822 965 620
Passcode: HD3Gi9Qp
or call
1-321-414-2159
Phone Conference ID: 415 969 938#**

I. Call To Order – Roll Call - *Establish Quorum

A. Members Present

Carl Baxter Jr.
Marion Dale Spain II
Amanda Brunson
Timothy Hennessy
Julian Ramirez
Gwynetta Gittens
Vacherre Howard
Susan Dahod

1. Member Absent/with Excuse

Maricela Morado

2. Members Absent without Excuse

Aimee McLaughlin
Carmen Henry
Amy Earley

3. HVS Staff Present

Caitlyn Roberts
Jami Browder
Julie Boudreaux
Heather Leonard
Kim Usa
Tara Martinson

4. Others Present

Amanda Warner

Quorum has been established.

B. Approval of October 26th, 2024 Minutes *

Gwynetta Gittens made a motion to approve the October 26th, 2024, meeting minutes. Tim Hennessy seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

II. New Business

A. Community Action Plan Presentation and Approval*

Caitlyn Roberts went over the Community Action Plan Presentation. Caitlyn explained that the Community Action Plan aims to address poverty and support low-income individuals and families in Lee County. The first topic that was addressed was identifying community needs, so Lee County Human and Veteran Services contracted Elite Business Strategies to conduct a Community Needs Assessment. In that Community Needs Assessment, there were 5 needs identified, which are Housing, Health Services, as well as other services such as Mental Health Services, Employment and Income Support, and Systems and Infrastructure. Those 5 identified needs were used to determine how to allocate CSBG funding and they utilized the Community Action Plan to establish that. Caitlyn explained that they currently use CSBG funding at Lee County Human and Veteran Services for the Homelessness Prevention Program, which assist those who are at risk of homelessness or homeless with move-in costs, and for those who are at risk of homelessness with past due rent or mortgage. In 2025, they will continue to use that CSBG funding for the Homelessness Prevention Program. In the budget, 15% of that funding is allocated for administrative overhead, and the remaining of the funding is allocated for direct services. Also discussed in the Community Action Plan, are how the partnerships are fostered which means collaborating with different agencies and non-profit organizations to expand and meet the needs of the community.

Gwynetta Gittens inquired about the major changes from last year's Community Action Plan in comparison to this year's Community Action Plan. Caitlyn Roberts went over the Community Action Plan and explained that the Geographic Area of Service has not changed and that they still only serve Lee County residents. She explained that included in the plan is Lee County Human and Veteran Services and Family Impact Mission and Vision statement which has not changed, along with an overview of the Client Satisfaction Survey. Also included, was an overview of how Elite Business Strategies conducted the Community Needs Assessment, the different agencies that they utilized to conduct their primary and secondary research, how they gathered the quantitative and qualitative data for the Community Needs Assessment, and the different community agencies that they partner with. Caitlyn also discussed some changes that were made to Community Action Plan but most of the information remained the same. Also discussed in the plan, were the vacancies on the Community Action Agency/Neighborhood District Committee Board and the steps taken to fill the vacancies.

Tim Hennessy inquired on why there was a 15% administrative overhead of the CSBG Funding and if they entire 15% is not needed would the remaining allocation get transferred elsewhere. Caitlyn Roberts explained that the budget can always be amended but administrative cost cannot exceed 15% so they put at the max and watch it quarterly and if needed they take some of the administrative funding to go to that program funding.

Gwynetta Gittens inquired if the number of applications accepted per application day for the Homelessness Prevention Program and Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program were included in the Community Action Plan. Caitlyn Roberts explained that in this plan there is not a specific number of applications they are looking to move toward in 2025. She also explained that for these programs, they only take a limited number of applications on each application day and the goal is to be able to take more applications once they move to the Neighborly Software System, however, with staff turnover they have not been able to complete that project as of yet but that is the goal in the new year.

Gwynetta Gittens inquired about when the next review for the next Community Action Plan will be. Caitlyn Roberts explained that the next Community Action Plan will be around the same time next year as it has to be submitted with the CSBG Organizational Standards which were submitted last week and will be completed upon the CAA Board's approval of the Community Action Plan.

Carl Baxter Jr. inquired on when the Community Action Plan will go before the Lee County Board of County Commissioners. Caitlyn Roberts explained that this plan does not go before the Lee County Board of County Commissioners, and that the Community Action Agency Advisory Board are the ones to approve the Community Action Plan for CSBG Funding and once it is approved, it will go to Florida Commerce for the final approval.

Timothy Hennessy made a motion to approve the Community Action Plan. Gwynetta Gittens seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

B. 2023 Lee County Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER)

Heather Leonard discussed the 2023 Lee County Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report

(CAPER). She explained that the CAPER is an annual report on the accomplishments of Lee County Human and Veteran Services federal funded activities. This CAPER is for program year 2023, which covered the period of October 1st, 2023 through September 30th, 2024. This report is due to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) by 90 days after the closing of the grants, which would be by the end of December.

Gwynetta Gittens inquired if this is an evaluation of the grants that Lee County Human and Veteran Services have. Heather Leonard explained that the CAPER is a reporting for the fiscal year on Lee County Human and Veteran Services expenditure financially and their accomplishments of the Annual Action Plan. She also explained that they have a Consolidated Plan, which is a 5-year plan that ran from 2019 through 2023, that covered what they planned to accomplish in that 5-year cycle. Every year they have an Annual Action Plan, that has more details on the project's and expenditures that they want to accomplish for that year with their federal funding, so this is reporting on 2023 progress.

Heather Leonard explained that the funds that were covered by the Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan included the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG, CDBG-CV), HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME, HOMR-ARP), and Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG, ESG-RSH). These programs addressed 4 categories of need, which are Housing, Homelessness, Non-Homelessness Special Needs, and Non-Housing Community Development.

For the 2019 – 2023 Consolidated Plan, the goals they had were Affordable Housing Development, Housing Rehabilitation and Reconstruction, Down Payment Assistance, Housing and Services for Persons who are Homeless, Public Services for Community Revitalization, Infrastructure Improvements, Economic Development, and Public Facility Improvements. From those goals, priority needs were developed, which included Affordable Housing, Housing and Services for the Homeless, Public Facility Improvements, Economic Development, and Community Revitalization.

For the Community Development Block Grant program, they had the available resources of \$7,433,687.46 which were made up of the prior year unspent resources of \$4,189,964.06 that carried over, the annual entitlement grant from HUD of \$3,085,111.00, program income that they received in the amount of \$129,452.40, and funds that were returned to credit in the amount of \$29,160.00. Their total expenditures were \$3,582,854.43. CDBG was used for Public Services (Community Policing, Childcare, Homeless Services), Public Facility Improvements, Housing (Rehabilitation), and Home Purchasing Financing Assistance. Through CDBG, 16,630 persons were assisted with Public Services, 4,305 persons were assisted with Public Facility/Neighborhood Improvement, 33 Housing Units (12 Rental and 21 Homeowner Units) were assisted with Housing (Rehabilitation), and 8 households were assisted with Home Purchase Financing Assistance. Gwynetta Gittens inquired if neighborhood watch was included under Public Services. Heather Leonard and Julie Boudreaux explained that it falls under Community Policing and they had target neighborhoods as outlined on the Project Locations map (Suncoast, Palmetto Park, Pine Manor, and Page Park), where community policing took place utilizing those funds, which were Law Enforcement doing extra duty.

For the HOME program, they had the available resources of \$1,160,673.00 and their expenditures were a total of \$933,152.64. HOME funds were used for Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA). Approximately, 90 households were served through HOME and HOME-ARP.

For the ESG program, they had the available resources of \$276,288.00 and their expenditures were a total of \$356,996.62, some carry over resources were used to cover that expenditure. ESG funds were used for Street Outreach and Rapid Re-Housing.

For CDBG-CV (CARES Act, Coronavirus Response), they had the available resources of \$4,574,937.00 and their expenditure was \$3,456,606.62. CDBG-CV funds were used for Eviction/Foreclosure Counseling, Homeless Prevention/Subsistence Payments, Coordinated Entry/HOT Team, Mental/Behavioral Health and Substance Abuse Treatment, and Food Pantry.

For Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP), they had expended the amount of \$474,953.75. NSP funds were used for construction of a new single-family residence located on 70 Becker Drive in North Fort Myers, FL. For this project, they had to have a demolition of the original structure as is it was built below the current FEMA flood height requirements. The home is currently on the market and applications are being reviewed.

Heather Leonard went over a map of project locations and outlined the low- to moderate- income areas in Lee County and which projects were used in specific areas. She also went over a map of Minority Concentration areas and their project locations. Also, she went over a map of NSP project locations.

For the CAPER Citizen Participation, there is a required 15-Day Public Comment Period that started on December 5th and ends on December 19th. They also wanted to bring it to today's Community Action Agency Meeting to give the CAA Board an opportunity to comment on it. The final CAPER must be submitted to HUD by December 29th, 2024.

Comments:

Gwynetta Gittens inquired on how Lee County Human and Veteran Services gets public input. Heather Leonard explained that an advertisement is placed in the News Press for both the Public Comment Period and this meeting, with email instructions and phone instructions so any comment can be submitted to Lee County Human and Veteran Services. All comments submitted and shared in this meeting will be submitted to HUD.

Marion Dale Spain inquired if with the Neighborhood Stabilization Program the entire \$474,953.75 was spent on that one house. Heather Leonard explained that it was, but that was because the house had to be completely re-built not just rehabilitated. Marion Dale Spain mentioned that selling the house for \$350,000 is not considered affordable. Kim Usa explained that there are homeowner's assistance programs that through the application process, the homeowner will not actually be paying that price. Marion Dale Spain also inquired where the money was going back to, if the re-building cost was \$474,000 and the selling price is \$350,00. Kim Usa explained that the money will be going into program income so that it can be re-invested into other programs. Marion Dale Spain mentioned that with Fort Myers and Cape Coral, they are saying that they are building affordable housing and pushing \$300,000 to \$400,000 houses and calling them affordable housing when it's not, and that a \$400,000 house is going to cost about \$3,000 a month. Gwynetta Gittens mentioned that on one of the reports, it was mentioned that 47% of the clients had an annual income of less than \$35,000. Marion Dale Spain mentioned that on the application, it states that the applicant has to be at 120% median annual income then he inquired about how much that is. Kim Usa said she doesn't have the numbers at the moment but mentioned that home specifically was slotted for those who are low- to moderate- income in order to make it affordable.

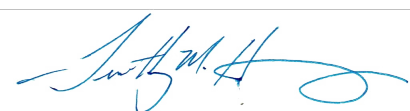
Gwynetta Gittens inquired about the requirements needed to be considered for that home besides need. Kim Usa explained that as part of the application process, they do verify income and they also look at other documents like bank statements for instance, and that it's an intensive process where documentation is required. Gwynetta Gittens stated that she agrees with Marion Dale Spain and that she feels as though this process will disqualify those with an actual need than those with a want.

III. Adjournment

Timothy Hennessy made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Carl Baxter Jr. seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

X 

Maricela Morado
Chair

X 

Timothy Hennessy
Secretary

*Item Needing Action

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, Lee County will not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities in its services, programs, or activities. To request an auxiliary aid or service for effective communication or a reasonable modification to participate, contact Raphaela Morais-Peroba, (239) 533-8782, ADArequests@leegov.com or Florida Relay Service, 711. Accommodation will be provided at no cost to the requestor. Requests should be made at least five business days in advance. For additional information, please contact: Melanie Arias, Lee County Human and Veteran Services at 533-7934.