LIFT COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY, INC.
209 NORTH 4TH STREET
HUGO, OKLAHOMA 74743

MINUTES
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
December 10, 2024
Head Start Administration Office - Hugo, Oklahoma

The Board of Directors of LIFT Community Action Agency, Inc. met in a regular meeting session on Tuesday, December 10, 2024 at 10:02 a.m. The meeting was held at LIFT CAA's Head Start Administration Office, located at 1005 S. 5th Street in Hugo, Oklahoma. The notice of time, place, and an agenda for the meeting were posted 24 hours prior within prominent view at the main office (209 N. 4th St., Hugo, Oklahoma) and the meeting site (1005 S. 5th St., Hugo, Oklahoma) as well as online at https://liftca.org/board/.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman David Hawkins.

The Invocation was given by Board Member Andrea Henkel.

Roll Call was taken and a quorum was established (14 Board Members present, 11 absent). The following Board Members were present at the meeting site: Tami Barnes, Colby Bryant, Kristi Graham, David Hawkins, Andrea Henkel, Sharon Johnson, Vickie Leathers, Carolyn Pool, David Smith, Consuelo Splawn, Jim Bob Sullivan, Leah Thomas, Vicky Wade, and Craig Young. The following members were absent: Tiffany Brockway, Brad Burgett, Kevin Cory, Brent Franks, Patsy Guess, Jordan Hill, Jia Johnson, Kara Maness, Sandra Meeks, William Smith, and Debra Williams. LIFT CAA employees and visitors present at the meeting site were: Kinsey Cox, Rhonda Teague, Sheree Ensley, Dale Loughmiller, Rebecca (Reynolds) Porter, Macy Self, Johnny Moffitt, DeeDee Atwood, Tonya Finley, Raquel Lunde, Brittany Bailey, Alejondrina Sanchez, Branden Billy, Susie Mashburn, Kathy James, Darla Galyon, Jeannie McMillin, Jordan Mack, Mattie McKee, Johnny Driggers, and Amber Garman.

In order to be in compliance with the Open Meeting Act (Title 25, Oklahoma Statutes §§ 301-314), the vote of each member was publicly cast and recorded. The agenda contained Consent Docket items of business and the rules that pertain to voting on the items.

The Board recognized Sharon Johnson as elected representative for Washington Community Center, a Low-Income Entity on the LIFT Community Action Agency, Inc. Board of Directors (entity to expire 12/31/2027).

The Board recognized Kara Maness as elected representative for Kiamichi Family Medical Center, a Low-Income Entity on the LIFT CAA Board of Directors (entity to expire 12/31/2027).

The Board recognized Carolyn Pool as elected representative for Antlers Community Food Bank, a Low-Income Entity on the LIFT CAA Board of Directors (entity to expire 12/31/2027).

David Hawkins, Chairman, requested the Board's consideration, discussion, and vote to accept Colby Bryant as appointed representative for Hugo Rotary Club, a Private Entity on the LIFT CAA Board of Directors (entity to expire 12/31/2027). A motion was made by Tami Barnes and seconded by Vickie Leathers to accept Colby Bryant as appointed representative for Hugo Rotary Club, a Private Entity on the LIFT CAA Board of Directors. The roll call vote was as follows: Yes 13; No 0; Abstain 0. The motion carried. The Voting Record is attached (Item F).

David Hawkins, Chairman, requested the Board's consideration, discussion, and vote to accept Kristi Graham as appointed representative for the McCurtain County Board of Commissioners, a Public Entity on the LIFT CAA Board of Directors (entity to expire 12/31/2027). A motion was made by Tami Barnes and seconded by Andrea Henkel to accept Kristi Graham as appointed representative for the McCurtain County Board of Commissioners, a Public Entity on the LIFT CAA Board of Directors. The roll call vote was as follows: Yes 13; No 0; Abstain 0. The motion carried. The Voting Record is attached (Item G).

David Hawkins, Chairman, requested the Board's consideration, discussion, and vote to accept Andrea Henkel as appointed representative for the Broken Bow Ministers Fellowship, a Private Entity on the LIFT CAA Board of Directors (entity to expire 12/31/2027). A motion was made by Jim Bob Sullivan and seconded by Tami Barnes to accept Andrea Henkel as appointed representative for the Broken Bow Ministers Fellowship, a Private Entity on the LIFT CAA Board of Directors. The roll call vote was as follows: Yes 13; No 0; Abstain 0. The motion carried. The Voting Record is attached (Item H).

David Hawkins, Chairman, requested the Board's consideration, discussion, and vote to accept Jordan Hill as appointed representative for Wright City Schools, a Public Entity on the LIFT CAA Board of Directors (entity to expire 12/31/2027). A motion was made by Carolyn Pool and seconded by Jim Bob Sullivan to accept Jordan Hill as appointed representative for Wright City Schools, a Public Entity on the LIFT CAA Board of Directors. The roll call vote was as follows: Yes 13; No 0; Abstain 0. The motion carried. The Voting Record is attached (Item I).

David Hawkins, Chairman, requested the Board's consideration, discussion, and vote to accept Jim Bob Sullivan as appointed representative for the Choctaw County Board of Commissioners, a Public Entity on the LIFT CAA Board of Directors (entity to expire 12/31/2027). A motion was made by Tami Barnes and seconded by Craig Young to accept Jim Bob Sullivan as appointed representative for the Choctaw County Board of Commissioners, a Public Entity on the LIFT CAA Board of Directors. The roll call vote was as follows: Yes 12; No 0; Abstain 1. The motion carried. The Voting Record is attached (Item J).

David Hawkins, Chairman, requested the Board's consideration, discussion, and vote to accept Leah Thomas as appointed representative for the City of Hugo, a Public Entity on the LIFT CAA Board of Directors (entity to expire 12/31/2027). A motion was made by Vicky Wade and seconded by Vickie Leathers to accept Leah Thomas as appointed representative for the City of Hugo, a Public Entity on the LIFT CAA Board of Directors. The roll call vote was as follows: Yes 12; No 0; Abstain 1. The motion carried. The Voting Record is attached (Item K).

Sheree Ensley, Fiscal Officer, provided the Board with the Finance/Audit/Loan Committee Report. The Committee met on December 10, 2024 at 9:04 a.m. The Committee received a status report on all active loans; there were no new loan applications to present. The Committee voted to recommend full Board approval of the agency's Financial Reports for October 2024 and was presented with the November 2024 Financial Reports. The Committee was presented with and approved a proposal to increase rent amounts by 10% at Broadway Apartments, Boswell Apartments, Fort Towson Apartments, and Garvin Apartments, effective April 1, 2025 (pending approval from applicable funding sources). The cost of rent had not increased since 2017 at these properties, and the increase in rent revenue will be utilized to assist in covering rising operational expenses. The Committee received a property update concerning the sale of the Transit Building in Antlers, and the agency is also actively looking for additional office space to house LIFT's new programs.

CONSENT DOCKET ITEMS

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES/FINANCIAL REPORTS

David Hawkins, Chairman, requested the Board's consideration, discussion, and vote to approve the November 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes and the October 2024 Financial Reports; the November 2024 Financials were distributed for consideration and vote at the January 2025 Board Meeting (Organizational Standards 5.5 and 8.7). A motion was made by Jim Bob Sullivan and seconded by Andrea Henkel to approve the November 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes and the October 2024 Financial Reports. The roll call vote was as follows: Yes 10; No 0; Abstain 3. The motion carried. The Voting Record is attached (Items M & N).

CONSIDER SUBMISSION OF RESOLUTIONS/GRANT APPLICATIONS

1. Child Care Stabilization Grant Program Application (Year 4, Early Learning Centers) to Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, Child Care Assistance Program in the amount of $72,000; if awarded, these funds will provide key operating support to maintain child care services within the Early Learning Centers.
2. FY 2025 Healthy Start Initiative: Eliminating Disparities in Perinatal Health Grant Application (Continuation, Year 12) to Health Resources and Services Administration in the amount of $1,100,000; if awarded, these funds will be utilized during the second year of the five-year grant cycle to: 1) improve access to quality health care and services for women, infants, children, and families through outreach, care coordination, health education and linkage to health insurance, 2) build healthy communities and ensure ongoing, coordinated, comprehensive services are provided in the most efficient manner through effective service delivery, 3) strengthen the health workforce, specifically those individuals responsible for providing direct services, and 4) promote and improve health equity by connecting with appropriate organizations.

After discussion and Board Member input with regards to the applications presented, a motion was made by Andrea Henkel and seconded by David Smith to approve the submission of resolutions and/or grant applications in the amount of $1,172,000 presented as listed on the Consent Docket. The roll call vote was as follows: Yes 13; No 0; Abstain 0. The motion carried. The Voting Record is attached (Item O).

CONSIDER ACCEPTANCE OF GRANTS/CONTRACTS/AWARDS

1. Child Care Stabilization Grant Program Awards (Year 4/Quarter 1, Early Learning Centers) from Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma in the amount of $18,000; these funds for the first quarter of the Year 4 funding period will provide key operating support to maintain child care services within the Early Learning Centers.
2. FY 2025 Head Start/Early Head Start Program Grant Award (Continuation) from Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start in the amount of $2,307,266; this partial funding award will provide support for program operations and training/technical assistance for the Head Start and Early Head Start Programs for a period of one year (12/1/2024–11/30/2025), with a funded Federal enrollment of 435 children (387 Head Start, 48 EHS).
3. PY 2024 Department of Energy Weatherization Assistance Program Award from Oklahoma Department of Commerce in the amount of $293,075; these funds will be used to support LIFT's Weatherization Program and provision of services within Region 5 (Atoka, Bryan, Carter, Choctaw, Coal, Johnston, Love, Marshall, McCurtain, Murray, Pontotoc, and Pushmataha Counties).

A motion was made by Carolyn Pool and seconded by Jim Bob Sullivan to approve acceptance of grants, contracts, and awards in the amount of $2,618,341 as presented and listed on the Consent Docket. The roll call vote was as follows: Yes 13; No 0; Abstain 0. The motion carried. The Voting Record is attached (Item P).

DeeDee Atwood, Victim and Youth Services Director, and Kathy James, Senior Program Planner, provided a Board Training/Programmatic Report over the LIFT CAA Victim Services Programs and Evaluation (Organizational Standards 5.7 and 5.9). This training and evaluation is a requirement for the agency's Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, Stalking Victim Services Program Certification through the Oklahoma Office of the Attorney General. The agency was granted temporary certification status in September 2019, and received full certification (for a three-year period) in 2021. Atwood introduced the staff of the programs and provided the Board with an overview of domestic and dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. James reviewed the Victim Services Programs Policies and Procedures Manual, stand-alone policies and standards of conduct, which provide the basis for operations of the programs. The Manual was developed in accordance with the standards and criteria set forth in the Oklahoma Administrative Code, Title 75, Chapters 1 and 15, as well as information included on the DVSA Certification Review Forms and guidance from the Oklahoma Office of the Attorney General. James also reviewed the Mission Statement as well as the Philosophy underlying the standards and criteria for domestic violence and sexual assault programs (Oklahoma Administrative Code § 75:15-1-1.1), which is based upon voluntary services and individual self-determination. The approved Philosophy of service provision and Victim Services Programs Policies and Procedures Manual is made available to the community, staff, volunteers, and clients. James reviewed the programs and services (for each component) under the Victim Services Program Certification, which include: Court Appointed Special Advocates (established in 1997), Safe Place Healing Hearts (est. 2017), Safe Place Healing Hearts Too (est. 2021), and Victim Advocacy Services (est. 2015). James then reviewed the rules, standards, and criteria followed by these programs to ensure the multicultural needs of clients are met. She reviewed confidentiality standards/practices within the programs (including verbal confidentiality and client records); LIFT CAA's Victim Services Programs comply with both State and Federal laws governing confidentiality and any exceptions to those laws. James explained client rights and grievance procedures, as well as legal and ethical issues faced by the Victim Services Programs. Additionally, program staff have undergone a great deal of training to help understand the complexities of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking, as well as the laws and ethics that impact this work. The programs also have a great network of partners that provide technical assistance when needed. James then reviewed the generalized goals for each program (initially approved by the Board in March 2019 and thereafter with the annual Program Evaluation and grant approvals), consistent with the existing goals and activities/work being conducted. However, to better demonstrate compliance with the standards, the program goals have become a standalone annual approval item by the Board, which last took place on July 9, 2024. James then presented the Program Evaluation and explained that an evaluation of LIFT CAA's Victim Programs' services, facilities, and policies and procedures is conducted each year. This assessment helps to identify special populations of victims who are underserved or have special needs. The annual Evaluation utilizes information derived from client service data, staff evaluations, the Advocacy and Supportive Services Feedback Form (Evaluation Template), surveys, and other programmatic information (such as reports submitted to funding sources, progress reporting, financial statements, etc.). The evaluation data is submitted to the Board for review and approval each year. James then provided an evaluation report for the Victim Services Programs for the period of July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024. During this period, the programs served a total of 457 primary victims and 180 secondary victims. Primary victims by type of crime included: 98 adult physical assault, 11 adult sexual assault, 155 child physical abuse or neglect, 3 child sexual abuse/assault, 182 domestic, dating or family violence, 12 stalking/harassment, and 2 robbery. Each of these crimes were perpetrated against individuals in the service area (some clients had multiple categories of victimization). Of the new primary victims served (343), 84% were female and 16% were male. The majority of the new victims served were White/Caucasian (56%) and between the ages of 25-59 (54%), followed by American Indian/Alaska Native (26%) and the 0-12 age group (23%). In addition, 7% of total victims served had a cognitive, physical, or mental disability (31) or were Deaf/Hard of Hearing (1). There were also two victims served with limited English proficiency and 6% who were homeless. Clients of LIFT CAA's victim services programs were provided with emotional support, advocacy, emergency assistance, referrals, court accompaniment, and follow-up services as appropriate, in addition to comprehensive case management. Along with core program services, clients also received emergency food, medication, housing, and/or transportation assistance. Furthermore, 29 children within the CASA Program had their cases closed during the performance period, achieving reunification or safe placement. Based on program assessment of services and victims served/feedback, special populations of victims who are underserved or have special needs include victims of assault and those individuals with a disability or who have limited English proficiency. Client and partner interviews were conducted to evaluate the services provided. Of the program clients surveyed, 91% said the assistance they received was "very helpful" while 9% rated services as "helpful". Additionally, 100% of clients reported they knew more ways to plan for their safety and 99% reported they were more hopeful about their future. Most importantly, 100% of clients would recommend the programs. Furthermore, 100% of partners strongly agree they are satisfied with the programs, and find the programs to be helpful, to have increased their knowledge, and to have enhanced/improved their efforts and service to victims. With regards to evaluation of facilities, there were no issues found during the period of performance. All policies and procedures concerning the Victims Services Programs were reviewed during the performance period. Changes were made to the Language Access Plan and Restrictions on Smoking in Facilities Policy, which were updated to reflect current operations, agency, and personnel changes. These changes were approved by the Board of Directors in August 2023. No other changes were made to the policies and procedures.

Kathy James, Senior Program Planner, requested the Board's consideration, discussion, and vote to approve the Victim Services Programs Evaluation. A motion was made by Andrea Henkel and seconded by Tami Barnes to approve the LIFT CAA Victim Services Programs Evaluation. The roll call vote was as follows: Yes 13; No 0; Abstain 0. The motion carried. The Voting Record is attached (Item R).

Brittany Bailey, ERSEA Specialist, requested the Board's consideration, discussion, and vote to approve the updated Integrated Services Policies and Procedures. In February 2024, the Board approved the 2024-2025 Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance Integrated Services Policies and Procedures with Prioritization Schedule/Point System. However, updates to the policies and procedures were necessary to align with the newly revised Head Start Program Performance Standards (as of August 2024) and upcoming effective dates for changes. Therefore, these updates to the Integrated Services Policies and Procedures (which includes the Prioritization Schedule) will be necessary to ensure continued compliance with Federal regulations/requirements of the Office of Head Start and the schedule of implementation effective dates. The proposed changes were reviewed in depth with the Board. A motion was made by Craig Young and seconded by Colby Bryant to approve the updated Integrated Services Policies and Procedures. The roll call vote was as follows: Yes 13; No 0; Abstain 0. The motion carried. The Voting Record is attached (Item S).

Brittany Bailey, ERSEA Specialist, provided a Board Training over Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance (Organizational Standard 5.7). This program training worked to inform the Board of processes, strategies, and policies/procedures used to ensure that Head Start/Early Head Start/EHS-Child Care only enrolls eligible children within the programs. Bailey reviewed each component of ERSEA—Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance—the processes involved with each, and how they are utilized or implemented within the three programs.

Susie Mashburn, Head Start/Early Head Start/EHS-Child Care Early Childhood Development and Curriculum Coach, provided a Board Training/Programmatic Report over the Head Start, Early Head Start, and Early Head Start-Child Care Programs' School Readiness/Child Outcomes Results for Fall 2024-2025 (Organizational Standards 5.7 and 5.9).

Darla Galyon, Head Start/Early Head Start/EHS-Child Care Director, provided the Board with a Programmatic Report over the upcoming FY 2025 Office of Head Start Focus Area 1 Monitoring Review (Organizational Standard 5.9). Galyon provided a comprehensive overview, explaining how the review will assess the agency's compliance with programmatic and operational standards, focusing on areas such as services to children, family engagement, and staff qualifications. Galyon outlined the preparation steps underway, including data collection and policy updates, to ensure readiness for the review. The Board was informed of the timeline for the review as well.

Jeannie McMillin, Transit Director, provided the Board with the Transportation Advisory Council Report (Organizational Standard 5.9). The Transportation Advisory Council was established during the April 2021 Board Meeting for the Transit Program with regards to funding received from the Kiamichi Economic Development District of Oklahoma's Area Agency on Aging Division. These KEDDO funds help to fill a gap in transportation services for older Americans (60 years of age or older) who do not qualify for Medicaid, Tribal, or other free transportation services. The Transportation Advisory Council regularly convenes each quarter, with a primary purpose to inform agency leadership of the transportation needs of older Americans within their communities, and serves an essential function in helping to identify and address transportation barriers, challenges, and resources. During the 14th meeting, held on December 10, 2024 (prior to the Board Meeting), Advisory Council members were briefed on the service results so far. In the last year, there has been a tremendous increase in service usage in all three counties, which went from 47 trips conducted in January 2024 to 351 trips completed in November 2024. Advisory Council members were also asked to report on any new or additional identified gaps in transportation needs in their communities; no such gaps were reported.

Andrea Henkel, Board Member, provided the Board Giving Report (Organizational Standard 5.7). To date, 17 of the currently seated 25 Board Members have provided a monetary donation to the agency during 2024. Achieving 100% of giving by the Board is the goal as it is an eligibility requirement by many private funders and foundations. Any amount is appreciated and ensures the agency's ability to apply for funds where Board giving is a threshold requirement. Board Members can designate what program or activity the donation is to be used for, and employees of the agency can also make donations on behalf of Board Members. Since the funding entity typically looks at the year prior, by achieving 100% Board giving in 2024, the agency is eligible to apply for funding in 2025.

Mattie McKee, Head Start/Early Head Start/EHS-Child Care Assistant Director, provided the Board with the Policy Council Report for the November 19, 2024 meeting (Organizational Standards 2.1 and 5.9).

Rebecca (Reynolds) Porter, Executive Director, recognized Alejondrina Sanchez (Employment Job Coach, Work Ready Idabel) as the December 2024 Employee of the Month.

Rebecca (Reynolds) Porter, Executive Director, recognized Johnny Driggers (Energy Auditor, Weatherization Program) as LIFT CAA's 2024 Employee of the Year.

Rebecca (Reynolds) Porter, Executive Director, recognized Wayne Hawkins (Park Manager, Clayton Lake State Park) for Five Years of Service.

Other Reports/Announcements/Correspondence were presented as follows: Head Start/Early Head Start/EHS-Child Care Monthly Reports (Program Summary, Communication and Guidance, Meals/Snack, Enrollment/Attendance, Data Analysis); District Attorneys Council/ Victims of Crime Act Grant Site Visit Summaries; and upcoming staff member retirement celebrations (Organizational Standard 5.9).

David Hawkins, Chairman, invited the presentation of New Business not known about or which could not have been reasonably foreseen prior to time of posting the Agenda, in accordance with *Title 25, Oklahoma Statute § 311*. Darla Galyon, Head Start/Early Head Start/EHS-Child Care Director, proposed New Business as follows:

Consideration, Discussion, and Vote to Approve LIFT CAA Personnel Policy No. 410: Standards of Conduct.

Galyon explained that the approval of Personnel Policy No. 410: Standards of Conduct was being introduced as New Business due to the need for timely action. At the time the December 2024 Board Meeting Agenda was posted, LIFT CAA's Personnel Policies were still under review by the agency's attorney (a months-long process that began in Fall 2024). After the agenda posting, it was determined that a formally-approved, revised policy would be necessary during the Focus Area 1 Monitoring Review by the Office of Head Start. While these updated practices were already in place, a formal, written policy had not yet been approved by the Board or Policy Council due to the review process. A formally revised policy would be needed to demonstrate compliance with the Head Start Program Performance Standards, which were updated in August 2024. With the upcoming Focus Area 1 Monitoring Review scheduled to begin prior to the January 2025 Board Meeting, it was imperative to address this matter under New Business during the meeting. Galyon then explained that the only changes being proposed were to the Standards of Conduct specific to LIFT CAA's Head Start, Early Head Start, EHS-Child Care, and Early Learning Center programming, and is applicable to all staff, consultants, contractors, and volunteers of the programs. The proposed changes to LIFT CAA Personnel Policy No. 410 were taken verbatim from the Head Start Program Performance Standards to ensure the programs are fully compliant with all requirements. As such, these changes would not require further review by the agency's attorney, as they are mandatory elements of the Performance Standards and are necessary for program compliance. Galyon reviewed the proposed changes as outlined and facilitated discussion by the Board. A motion was made by Jim Bob Sullivan and seconded by Tami Barnes to approve LIFT CAA Personnel Policy No. 410: Standards of Conduct as presented. The roll call vote was as follows: Yes 12; No 0; Abstain 0. The motion carried. The Voting Record is attached (Item DD).

There being no other business to come before the Board, a motion was made by Tami Barnes and seconded by Jim Bob Sullivan to adjourn the regular meeting. The roll call vote was as follows: Yes 12; No 0; Abstain 0. The motion carried. Voting record is attached (Item EE).

The Regular Meeting adjourned at 11:19 a.m.

Brad Burgett, Secretary/Treasurer