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

MINUTES
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
January 14, 2025
Head Start Administration Office - Hugo, Oklahoma

The Board of Directors of LIFT Community Action Agency, Inc. met in a regular meeting session on Tuesday, January 14, 2025 at 10:06 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 William Smith.

Roll Call was taken and a quorum was established (20 Board Members present, 4 absent). The following Board Members were present at the meeting site: Tami Barnes, Colby Bryant, Brad Burgett, Kevin Cory, Brent Franks, Kristi Graham, David Hawkins, Andrea Henkel, Jordan Hill, Sharon Johnson, Vickie Leathers, Kara Maness, Sandra Meeks, Carolyn Pool, William Smith, Consuelo Splawn, Jim Bob Sullivan, Leah Thomas, Debra Williams, and Craig Young. The following members were absent: Patsy Guess, Jia Johnson, David Smith, and Vicky Wade. LIFT CAA employees and visitors present at the meeting site were: Kinsey Cox, Macy Self, Sheree Ensley, Rhonda Teague, Kathy James, Rebecca (Reynolds) Porter, Amber Garman, Taylor Dunn, and Dionne Frankum.

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.

Sheree Ensley, Fiscal Officer, provided the Board with the Finance/Audit/Loan Committee Report. The Committee met on January 14, 2025 prior to the Board Meeting. 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 November 2024 and was presented with the December 2024 Financial Reports (pre-closing). The Committee also received a property update concerning the sale of the Transit Building in Antlers.

CONSENT DOCKET ITEMS

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES/FINANCIAL REPORTS

David Hawkins, Chairman, requested the Board's consideration, discussion, and vote to approve the December 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes and the November 2024 Financial Reports;

the December 2024 Financials were distributed for consideration and vote at the February 2025 Board Meeting (Organizational Standards 5.5 and 8.7). A motion was made by William Smith and seconded by Andrea Henkel to approve the December 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes and the November 2024 Financial Reports. The roll call vote was as follows: Yes 17; No 0; Abstain 1. The motion carried. The Voting Record is attached (Items D & E).

CONSIDER SUBMISSION OF RESOLUTIONS/GRANT APPLICATIONS

1. FY 2025 Network NTI Training Grant & Lodging Benefit Application to NeighborWorks® America in the amount of $5,750; if awarded, these funds will be used for agency staff and Board Members to participate in NeighborWorks-provided training (i.e. NeighborWorks Training Institutes and others) to increase staff and Board Member capacity. Funds can be used to support expenses associated with travel, tuition, lodging, and other training costs.
2. Justice for Families Program Grant Application to U.S. Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women in the amount of $600,000; if awarded, these funds would be used to establish a supervised visitation program, providing critical resources (such as staff with specialized training in visitation and exchange practices) for safe parent-child interactions in Choctaw, McCurtain, and Pushmataha Counties.
3. Rural Business Enterprise Grant Application to U.S. Department of Agriculture, Rural Development in the amount of $99,999 and Signing of Authorizing Resolution; if awarded, these funds will be used to support the creation of a Business Learning Academy to provide training in the areas of human resource management, technology training, and leadership development for new and existing small businesses in Choctaw County.
4. FY 2025 Community Services Block Grant Application (1st Allocation) to Oklahoma Department of Commerce/Community Development in the amount of $59,906; if awarded, this funding will be used for operational support of agency programs.
5. Oklahoma Initiative Fund Application to Communities Foundation of Oklahoma in the amount of $15,000; if awarded, these funds would be used to support the LIFT YouthBuild Program/activities, through the purchase of a CNC (Computer Numerical Control) wood cutting machine.
6. FY 2025 Flexible Impact Grant Application to NeighborWorks® America in the amount of $260,000; if awarded, funding under the Expendable category will be to support Housing Department staff and other operational expenses associated with the agency's housing and lending lines of business. In addition, funding under the Capital category will be used to make improvements at LIFT CAA's multi-family properties and/or increase homeownership opportunities via the residential lending line of business.

After discussion and Board Member input with regards to the applications presented, a motion was made by Jordan Hill and seconded by Brad Burgett to approve the submission of resolutions and/or grant applications in the amount of $1,040,655 presented as listed on the Consent Docket. The roll call vote was as follows: Yes 18; No 0; Abstain 0. The motion carried. The Voting Record is attached (Item F).

CONSIDER ACCEPTANCE OF GRANTS/CONTRACTS/AWARDS

1. Oklahoma Early Childhood Program Grant Award (Year 19) from Community Action Project of Tulsa County in the amount of $181,239.68 (with $90,812.94 Match); a total of $272,052.62 in funding (grant award plus match) will be used to support personnel costs

within Early Head Start Program and Early Learning Centers, as well as other associated operating costs. The Oklahoma Early Childhood Program grant is a supplemental funding source used to enhance the quality of LIFT CAA's Early Head Start and Early Head Start-Child Care Programs. This grant provides the agency's birth to age three programs the ability to raise the quality of existing classrooms in various aspects. The funding provides the resources needed to supplement staff salaries, heighten training opportunities that would otherwise be unobtainable, and raise classroom monitoring standards.

2. FY 2025 Network NTI Training Grant & Lodging Benefit Award from NeighborWorks® America in the amount of $5,750; these funds will be used for agency staff and Board Members to participate in NeighborWorks-provided training (i.e. NeighborWorks Training Institutes and others) to increase staff and Board Member capacity. Funds can be used to support expenses associated with travel, tuition, lodging, and other training costs.
3. AmeriCorps Seniors Retired and Senior Volunteer Program Donation from Public Service Company of Oklahoma in the amount of $500; these funds will be used for operational expenses of the AmeriCorps Seniors Retired and Senior Volunteer Program.

A motion was made by Brad Burgett and seconded by Jim Bob Sullivan to approve acceptance of grants, contracts, and awards in the amount of $187,489.68 as presented and listed on the Consent Docket. The roll call vote was as follows: Yes 19; No 0; Abstain 0. The motion carried. The Voting Record is attached (Item G).

David Hawkins, Chairman, and Rebecca (Reynolds) Porter, Executive Director, requested the Board's consideration, discussion, and vote to ratify the Executive Committee's approval to submit revised Change in Scope – Enrollment Reduction Amendment Application for the Head Start/Early Head Start Programs to the Office of Head Start. Through continued conversations with Region VI Office of Head Start leadership, it had become apparent that further revisions to LIFT CAA's previously submitted Change in Scope – Enrollment Reduction Amendment Application were necessary to ensure the success of the Head Start and Early Head Start Programs. The revisions suggested by the Region VI Office of Head Start included increasing the enrollment reduction by 26 additional slots and reducing the number of classrooms by 10. This meant that LIFT CAA would be requesting the Funded Federal Enrollment to change from 387 Head Start slots to 234 slots without reducing the amount of grant funding received. The submitted application proposed a reduction of 260, so this would further increase the reduction. Along with the reduction in enrollment, the number of classrooms would be reduced from 28 to 18. Several of the classrooms proposed for closure are located in areas where enrollment has significantly declined due to factors such as geographic distance and competition from newly-opened centers. In fact, two of the 10 classrooms are not currently in operation. The 10 classrooms proposed for closure under the request included: Antlers II, Battiest, Broken Bow III, Clayton I, Clayton II, Haworth, Rattan II, Rattan III, Valliant I, and Valliant II. The Head Start Program will work to retain the staff members displaced in other positions or as float staff. The change in enrollment will also affect the Cost Allocation Plan for the Head Start/EHS/EHS-Child Care programs, which will require Management Team staff and funding to be reallocated accordingly. As the Head Start Program is currently serving more children than the proposed enrollment of 234, services would continue to be provided to those children until such time that they withdraw, disenroll, or age out of the program, so that no child will be displaced. The enrollment for the Early Head Start Program would remain at 48 slots. Additionally, the request will allow for reinvestment in staff through salary increases (for Teachers, Teacher Assistants, Float staff, Cooks, Special Needs Aides/Substitutes) as a retention and program quality assurance measure. Cost savings would also be converted and reallocated under the Early Head Start Program to support staff salary increases and associated costs (as a means of maintaining quality of program services) for the Lead Teacher/Caregivers, Caregiver Aide, and Center Directors. These proposed changes required approval by the programs' governing authorities (Board and Policy Council). However, there was a short turnaround to submit the revised application back to the Office of Head Start in order to ensure approval before the end of 2024 (especially given the upcoming holidays and possibility of a government shutdown), and the December 2024 Board Meeting had already taken place. Therefore, in accordance with LIFT CAA's Amended and Restated By-Laws, the Executive Committee was convened to seek approval to submit the revised application, which was approved by unanimous vote during the meeting on December 13, 2024. The Policy Council also approved submission of the revised application during their regular meeting on December 17, 2024. As is required by Article X, Section 4 of LIFT CAA's Amended and Restated By-Laws, any decision of the Executive Committee must be ratified by a majority vote of the Board of Directors at the next Board Meeting or it will become revoked. A motion was made by Craig Young and seconded by Brad Burgett to ratify the Executive Committee's approval to submit revised Change in Scope – Enrollment Reduction Amendment Application for the Head Start/Early Head Start Programs to the Office of Head Start. The roll call vote was as follows: Yes 19; No 0; Abstain 0. The motion carried. The Voting Record is attached (Item H).

David Hawkins, Chairman, and Rebecca (Reynolds) Porter, Executive Director, requested the Board's consideration, discussion, and vote to ratify the Executive Committee's approval to submit revised Change in Scope – Enrollment Reduction Amendment Application for the EHS-Child Care Partnership Program to the Office of Head Start. Through continued conversations with Region VI Office of Head Start leadership, it had also become apparent that further revisions to LIFT CAA's previously submitted Change in Scope – Enrollment Reduction Amendment Application were necessary to ensure the success of the Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership Program. The revisions suggested by the Region VI Office of Head Start included increasing the enrollment reduction by eight additional slots and reducing the number of pods (of four children with one teacher). This meant that LIFT CAA would be requesting the Funded Federal Enrollment to change from 120 Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership slots to 104 slots without reducing the amount of grant funding received. The submitted application proposed a reduction of 112, so this would further increase the reduction. Along with the reduction in enrollment, the number of pods would be reduced from 30 to 26. Broken Bow Early Learning Center (which houses all four pods proposed for reduction) is located in an area where enrollment has significantly declined, mainly in part due to competition from existing and newly-opened centers; in fact, two pods are not currently in operation. No children will be displaced as a result of the enrollment reduction, and will continue to receive services until such time that they withdraw, disenroll, or age out of the program. The EHS-Child Care Program will work with the partner centers to retain as many staff members as possible. The change in enrollment will also affect the Cost Allocation Plan for the Head Start/EHS/EHS-Child Care programs, which will require Management Team staff and funding to be reallocated accordingly. Additionally, the request will allow for reinvestment in staff through salary increases for Special Needs Aides/Substitutes as a retention and program quality assurance measure. These proposed changes required approval by the programs' governing authorities (Board and Policy Council). However, there was a short turnaround to submit the revised application back to the Office of Head Start in order to ensure approval before the end of 2024 (especially given the upcoming holidays and possibility of a government shutdown), and the December 2024 Board Meeting had already taken place. Therefore, in accordance with LIFT CAA's Amended and Restated By-Laws, the Executive Committee was convened to seek approval to submit the revised application, which was approved by unanimous vote during the meeting on December 13, 2024. The Policy Council also approved submission of the revised application during their regular meeting on December 17, 2024. As is required by Article X, Section 4 of LIFT CAA's Amended and Restated By-Laws, any decision of the Executive Committee must be ratified by a majority vote of the Board of Directors at the next Board Meeting or it will become revoked. A motion was made by Brent Franks and seconded by Debra Williams to ratify the Executive Committee's approval to submit revised Change in Scope – Enrollment Reduction Amendment Application for the Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership Program to the Office of Head Start. The roll call vote was as follows: Yes 19; No 0; Abstain 0. The motion carried. The Voting Record is attached (Item I).

Rebecca (Reynolds) Porter, Executive Director, and Kathy James, Senior Program Planner, provided training over Board Member/Executive Director Duties, Roles, and Responsibilities as well as Community Services Block Grant Information Memorandum #82 Tripartite Boards. The Board Training first included a review and discussion of the Powers, Responsibilities, and Role of the Board and Executive Director, as well as the Role of the Tripartite Board, presented by Porter. James then reviewed CSBG Information Memorandum #82 Tripartite Boards. Using excerpts from LIFT CAA's Amended By-Laws and "Board Roles and Responsibilities: Nonprofit Community Action Agencies" (training material created by Community Action Program Legal Services, Inc. [CAPLAW] and the Community Action Partnership), the role of the Tripartite Board and key roles/responsibilities were also reviewed and discussed further. In addition, documents required for each LIFT CAA Governing Board Member were distributed: Code of Conduct, Conflict of Interest Policies/Certification, Board Member Job Descriptions, Demographic/Disclosure Questionnaire, Child Abuse and Neglect Information System Search Form, and By-Laws/Addendum and Attestation. James conducted a review and discussion of the documents; Board Members completed the documents, which were then collected. Porter also reviewed the Amended and Restated By-Laws/Addendum (as provided) with the Board, for attestation of review/receipt. These required documents, which will be checked for compliance during the next Oklahoma Department of Commerce Monitoring Review, will be kept securely on file at LIFT CAA's Administrative Office, located at 209 N. 4th Street in Hugo, Oklahoma. This item corresponds with Organizational Standards 5.4, 5.6, 5.7, and 5.8.

Rebecca (Reynolds) Porter, Executive Director, requested the Board's consideration, discussion, and vote to approve a Board Resolution authorizing the Executive Director to conduct business on behalf of LIFT CAA. Porter explained that this is an annual authorization. A motion was made by Brent Franks and seconded by William Smith to approve a Board Resolution authorizing the Executive Director to conduct business on behalf of LIFT CAA. The roll call vote was as follows: Yes 19; No 0; Abstain 0. The motion carried. The Voting Record is attached (Item K).

Rebecca (Reynolds) Porter, Executive Director, requested the Board's consideration, discussion, and vote to re-appoint Jeannie McMillin as LIFT CAA Equal Employment Opportunity

Officer. McMillin has held this appointment since 2012, and has attended trainings and other continuing education to keep her well-versed and able to administer the duties as EEO Officer for LIFT CAA. A motion was made by Brad Burgett and seconded by Tami Barnes to re-appoint Jeannie McMillin as LIFT CAA Equal Employment Opportunity Officer. The roll call vote was as follows: Yes 19; No 0; Abstain 0. The motion carried. The Voting Record is attached (Item L).

Rebecca (Reynolds) Porter, Executive Director, requested the Board's consideration, discussion, and vote to approve the LIFT CAA Equal Opportunity Policy Statement. Porter then reviewed the Equal Opportunity Policy Statement with the Board. A motion was made by Tami Barnes and seconded by Andrea Henkel to approve the LIFT CAA Equal Opportunity Policy Statement. The roll call vote was as follows: Yes 19; No 0; Abstain 0. The motion carried. The Voting Record is attached (Item M).

Kathy James, Senior Program Planner, requested the Board's consideration, discussion, and vote to approve the Head Start/Early Head Start/EHS-Child Care Cost Allocation Plan. James explained the purpose of the plan is to ensure program funding is allocated appropriately across the various grants that support the programs. The Cost Allocation Plan represents only those expenses that require cost allocation and are distributed between the Head Start/EHS/EHS-Child Care Programs. The Cost Allocation Plan was reviewed and revised in preparation for submission of the Change in Scope – Enrollment Reduction Amendment Applications to the Office of Head Start as proposed under Items H and I. James stated the plan included changes to reflect the reduction of enrollment and classrooms/pods for the Head Start and EHS-Child Care Programs as discussed earlier in the meeting. In addition, all Management Team positions are currently cost-allocated across LIFT CAA's Head Start, Early Head Start, and EHS-Child Care Programs. As part of the Change in Scope – Enrollment Reduction Amendment Applications and reflected in the proposed Cost Allocation Plan, one Assistant Director and all Content Area Assistant Specialists will be allocated exclusively to the EHS-Child Care Program. James directed the Board to a handout demonstrating the Management Team page of the Cost Allocation Plan, explaining that the version included in the Board Meeting Packet was incorrect. This movement of staffing is being proposed as part of a broader program improvement strategy, aimed at enhancing the quality and effectiveness of services provided. Other key positions, including the Director, Professional Development Specialist, Outreach Specialist, Program Secretary, Program Clerk, Procurement Clerks, and Maintenance Technicians, will continue to be allocated across all three programs, ensuring that operational and administrative functions remain robust and efficient. A motion was made by Debra Williams and seconded by Brad Burgett to approve the Head Start/Early Head Start/EHS-Child Care Programs Cost Allocation Plan as presented, to include the updated Management Team page. The roll call vote was as follows: Yes 19; No 0; Abstain 0. The motion carried. The voting record is attached (Item N).

Kinsey Cox, Administrative Assistant/CSBG Administrator/Public Relations Specialist, requested the Board's consideration, discussion, and vote to accept the 2025–2027 Community Needs Assessment/Report (Organizational Standards 1.2, 2.2, and 3.1-3.5). Cox first explained the process undertaken to complete the Community Needs Assessment (conducted every three years), and detailed each step (as documented in the CNA). The Oklahoma Standardized Community Needs Assessment Survey was utilized and distributed to the public; survey collection was conducted from May through October 2024. The agency collected a total of 337 surveys. The data from the completed surveys provided the agency with demographic information, as well as an accounting of what residents identified as needs in their communities. After this process, the next step was to prioritize the identified needs in order to determine the top three. Focus groups consisting of agency leadership, front-line staff, and LIFT CAA Board Members participated in activities to prioritize the top three community needs. Focus group participants were asked to select or rank the top three needs and provide reasoning for their choice (qualitative data). The resulting top three prioritized needs were (in ranked order): 1. Housing, 2. Transportation, and 3. Youth Services. The next step involved community meetings; a total of three meetings were conducted, with one held per county (Choctaw, McCurtain, Pushmataha). At these meetings, participants discussed the causes and conditions of poverty, why the prioritized needs were so prominent in their communities, existing resources for addressing each need, and potential strategies for meeting these needs. This information, along with additional statistical data and research, was used to determine if the needs identified by the community were supported. This research showed that a great deal of information/statistics from reliable sources support the prioritized needs. The final step was to then compile this information into a report using the format required by the Oklahoma Department of Commerce. After providing a thorough review and analysis of the 2025–2027 Community Needs Assessment/Report, Cox emphasized that the CNA, once approved, will serve as a guide and resource for strategic planning, developing program priorities, justifying the need for funding, and ensuring agency work/efforts align with the CSBG goals of addressing and alleviating poverty. A motion was made by Jordan Hill and seconded by Tami Barnes to accept the 2025–2027 Community Needs Assessment/Report. The roll call vote was as follows: Yes 18; No 0; Abstain 0. The motion carried. The Voting Record is attached (Item O).

Kathy James, Senior Program Planner, provided a Board Training/Programmatic Report over the Victim Services Programs and a review of the Mission Statement (Organizational Standards 5.7 and 5.9). James gave an overview of the Victim Services Programs' Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault and Stalking Recertification process and upcoming Site Visit with 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. The programs under the certification 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). Additionally, James reviewed with the Board the Mission Statement of the Victim Services Programs to ensure it aligns with current standards and practices, confirming that it is documented as required.

Kathy James, Senior Program Planner, requested the Board's consideration, discussion, and vote to approve the Victim Services Programs Philosophy of Service Provision, Annual Program Goals, and Policies and Procedures Manual (Organizational Standard 5.7). James explained that these approvals are a requirement for the agency's Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, Stalking Victim Services Program Certification through the Oklahoma Office of the Attorney General. She reviewed with the Board 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. James then explained that goals are approved for the individual Victim Services Programs (Court Appointed Special Advocates, Safe Place Healing Hearts, Safe Place Healing Hearts Too, and Victim Advocacy Services) typically in conjunction with various grant applications at different times during the year. However, this action approves more generalized annual goals for each program, consistent with the existing goals and activities/work being conducted. She then reviewed the proposed revisions to the Policies and Procedures Manual, which was last approved by the Board in July 2024. The proposed revisions are necessary to reflect current practice/ procedures and revised standards. James then discussed the various components of the Manual with the Board. After approval, the Philosophy, Goals, and Policies and Procedures Manual will be disseminated to staff and volunteers, and made available to the community and clients. After review and discussion, a motion was made by Brad Burgett and seconded by Jordan Hill to approve the Victim Services Programs Philosophy of Service Provision, Annual Program Goals, and Policies and Procedures Manual. The roll call vote was as follows: Yes 19; No 0; Abstain 0. The motion carried. The Voting Record is attached (Item Q).

Kathy James, Senior Program Planner, provided the Board with the Policy Council Report for the December 17, 2024 meeting (Organizational Standards 2.1 and 5.9).

Rebecca (Reynolds) Porter, Executive Director, recognized Taylor Dunn (Director, Second Chance Reentry Program) as the January 2025 Employee of the Month.

Rebecca (Reynolds) Porter, Executive Director, recognized Adora Morris (Lead Teacher, Early Head Start Program) for Ten 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); Head Start/Early Head Start Programs' Change in Scope – Enrollment Reduction Amendment Approval; EHS-Child Care Partnership Program Change in Scope – Enrollment Reduction Amendment Approval; 2024 Holiday Food Basket Report; AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP Match Waiver Approval; National Stalking Awareness Month; and Dolly Parton Imagination Library Launch Event (Organizational Standard 5.9).

There being no other business to come before the Board, a motion was made by Brad Burgett and seconded by Tami Barnes to adjourn the regular meeting. The roll call vote was as follows: Yes 19; No 0; Abstain 0. The motion carried. Voting record is attached (Item W).

The Regular Meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

Brad Burgett

Brad Burgett, Secretary/Treasurer