

Downeast Community Partners (DCP)
Meeting of the Board of Directors, February 25, 2020

Called to Order: 5:00 PM		
Roll Call and introductions		
Roll call: Betsy Fitzgerald, John Harris, Martha Beathem, Grant Lee, Barbara Clark, Jonathan Thomas, Ruth Sousa, Charley Martin-Berry, Katie Clough, Dorthea Crowley, Lori Schnieders, Charlie Harrington, Quorum present Staff Present: Mark Green, Kevin Bean, Melissa Mattes, Hook Wheeler, Sarah Nugent, Anne Ossanna, Cheryl Robbins, Ida Bagley, Lee Hardison Guests: Jane Thomas		
Presentations		
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Board Member Introductions – Elaine Abbott POSTPONED2. Presentation – HEAP Program – Lee Hardison Home energy brochure to share. How the process works – applications by appointment only, either on the phone at a preset time, or in person. The phone applications are easier due to the geographical area, gives them extra time to get paper work in. In person at Bucksport Road, Ellsworth or VIP Drive in Machias. We tell you what to bring, hopefully you bring it all. Have 30 working days to process the application. Either accepted or denied. If denied, they get a letter, have 15 days to change that outcome. Approved, the benefit is sent to the fuel vendor, sits there to apply to the account, good until the following April. Emergencies are treated differently – work with client, vendor, and local volunteers to get the application completed in an expedited manner. If THAW funds are available, and the client hasn't utilized that fund in the past 12 months, can do 100 gallons. Funds are very low now, restricted to households with either an elderly person or an infant under 24 months. If Lee can't help them, then she calls in Ida and the CARE Fund. Question: What happens to the vendors who upfront the fuel but then have to wait for a long time to get paid? Lee highly recommends that the vendor calls her to get approval before delivering oil. Done about 3100 applications since September 4. Down a bit from last year, increased intake time from 20 minutes to ½ hour because clients were feeling rushed. But between the changes to the system and the changes at ME Housing, this is working well for clients. Think that the numbers will even out in the end of the season, which is longer this year.		

Not a lot of fraudulent activity in the program, but if there is, Maine Housing deals with it.

Question: What is the biggest issue with the program, and what can ME Housing do to fix it?

The problem could be solved by having enough money to hire enough people to do the data entry required. Me Housing has done fabulous changes – took away a lot of the excess “mandatory” paperwork. Biggest challenge is getting the people to submit the required paperwork.

Working to open the program year round, but they are sorting out two different budget years.

Question: If everyone turned in a good application, how many would be served?

Used to be 8,000 households. Last year about 3700 households were served. Need to reach the other eligible people, encouraging them to apply.

Question: How much more money would you need in the THAW fund to fill all the requests?

Hard to answer. Turn people away every day. More when it's colder.

Question: Where do those people go?

Town offices, local churches, other local funds, like Dolly Fisher, Maine Seacoast, Catholic Charities.

Question: How long does it take to get approved?

Thirty WORKING days from the date of application. This discounts weekends and state shut down days.

Question: Is there a way to speed it up?

Have enough money to hire more certifiers. DCP has 3 full time certifiers. A simple one takes about 30-45 minutes – time to do the calculations, and then enter it in the new system. Once it is certified and in the computer, roughly a week to ten days later the vendor gets paid.

A few questions and concerns – following up on how long it takes to

get an appointment. Hearing it in the community – it is too long a process. People are throwing their hands up in the air, and they are cold. Board could have a deeper discussion on how to get you the people you need to shorten up the times.

CCC has a conduit to the community service providers, what is the best message we want them to get and when? There are people who are desperate, juggling their own fuel, bleeding their own fuel lines, a dangerous situation.

If they have done their application, but are in that emergency situation CALL US! We pull a certifier off to process them immediately, and get them their benefit.

If someone is scheduled way out, but getting near the end of their fuel, we ask them to call as often as they want, and we will put them in to a cancellation spot. Will not put a new appointment spot ahead of all the people who are waiting.

Software should, long term, make things better. Maine Housing is working hard to improve things. We have also added three full time employees this year. We previously only had two, but trying really hard to improve things, and we have made progress.

3. Presentation Supportive Services – Ida Bagley

All of our programs aren't in the brochure, we recently got the elder services navigator, is now in supportive services.

Regular Supportive services – RAP – determine families goals, outline steps. Within that electric bill program. Six modules, for each one they complete, they get \$50 credit on their electric bills.

MCH – work with women who are expecting or just had their babies – might be wellness checks, or might have medical needs.

Up to 5 nurses in both counties, with a passion for the work.

Joe Connors, Financial Coach – does a lot of work in both counties, does a lot of outreach, letting folks know what we do. He also handles the FDA program – matched savings program.

Elder Navigator in Washington County, Blanche does great work with folks, all over the county. Sends us a report each month on the stories and successes. She is good at helping people apply for benefits and services to improve their income.

Building Family Futures – 6 housing vouchers for people in unstable housing.

Resource Advocate in Washington County just left, will be hiring a new one.

Question: What are you looking for in Washington County job? I have several graduating students who might be interested.

Ida will reach out to Lori to learn more.

Challenge with the housing vouchers program is finding landlords who will participate. Very disheartening to do the work to get the voucher, then can't find a home to rent.

4. EmPower program – Stacy Brown – postponed, Stacy ill

III Items for Board Action

1. Resolved to approve the Board Meeting Minutes from 1/28/2020

Discussion: None

Action: **Katie** made the motion to approve the minutes, **Martha** seconded. **Motion passed.**

2. Resolved, to approve amendments to the policy entitled “Early Care and Education Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, and Enrollment Policy”.

Discussion: Policy was in your packet, no major changes, cleaned up some language, changed some position titles.

Is substance abuse syndrome considered a disability?

It's a diagnosis, not a disability.

Action: **Katie** made the motion to approve the updated policies. **Lori** seconded. **Motion passed.**

IV Reports

1. Development Committee – Barbara Clark

Seed is busy! Sue Unger has left; the job is posted. Reviewed goal to increase program donations, worked on Goal 5 to increase private foundation donations. Barbara is “like a broken record” about newspaper advertising.

Lisa has put together a winter fundraising event, Christmas tree auction.

Barbara is putting together a small art show with paintings for sale at July gathering.

Raffle is up to 118 tickets. Ticket will be drawn July 15 at FC party (5-7)

5K race went well – about 60 runners, 3 board members helped out, several staff volunteered. Raised about \$2500 for THAW.

2. Executive Directors Report– Mark Green

Want to mostly talk about the two primary deficits in ECE and FC. Mark has been meeting with directors weekly to work on this. Particularly ECE is a very complex budget, not as simple as cutting \$50,000 out of the budget. Our goal is to stop the deficit from increasing. Unlikely that we will make up the past month's deficits. But important to not add to the deficit. In ECE we are looking at the structure of everything, redoing the budget looking at staffing levels. Infant/Toddler is fully enrolled.

On FC side, remains a challenge, identified a number of saving and revenue increases, looking at alternate staffing plans. Will come back in March and be further down the road.

Comment – Finance Committee really wanted to emphasize that we need to stop the bleeding.

Some of the expenses, especially in ECE were, made to set us up to be in a better place going forward.

3. Finance Directors Report – Kevin Bean

The month of January was a busy month, cash took a big nose dive by \$450,000; had a large payroll accrual sitting on the books, paid that out. Also utilized some of the cash on hand for contracts, increased ARs. Also used some of the cash from private donors, sitting in temporarily restricted. Put a little more money into work in process (housing related) than billed out.

Cash is still a little over a million. ARs up a bit. Revenues are 3% over budget; expenses are 1% under budget.

Surpluses/Deficits – Transportation now in a surplus, compared to last year they were in a 30K deficit. 124K deficit in ECE child care. 16K deficit in FC. AH \$13,000 surplus (surprise). Energy –s light surplus. Admin 72K surplus, primarily because of seed, we are half way to our goal. Received in January, an ongoing donation for operating costs. Housing – the deficit within their division is directly related to properties – expensive time of year – heat, salt, plowing, etc. Expect it to level out in the spring. Don't expect to transition to surplus for these. Quite a bit of money put into Elm street property prior t the loan from ME Housing.

4. Head Start Director's Report – Melissa Mattes

See report – mentioned that we are getting some quality funds - \$40 – 50K, less than we hoped but still grateful for all funds. Getting together with staff to do the application.

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Excited about private providers partnering – Early Head Start Child Care Private Partnership.		
5. Parent Policy Council Minutes from 2/12/2020 Went over a few policies with Kevin, found one snafu that will be redrafted and presented to the board and policy council in the future for approval.		
Business meeting adjourned at 6:30 pm		Katie made the motion to adjourn. Martha seconded
Respectfully submitted, Sarah Nugent, Manager, Communications and Resource Development		

Join Zoom Meeting Information
<https://zoom.us/j/199366788>

Meeting ID: 199 366 788
One tap mobile
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