

<b>Called to Order: 5:05 PM</b>	<b>Via Zoom</b>	
I. Roll Call and Introductions		
<b>Roll call:</b> Ruth Sousa, Charley Martin-Berry, Martha Beathem, Ron King, Betsy Fitzgerald, Charles Rudelitch, John Harris, Jonathan Thomas, Barbara Clark, Walter Kumiega, Dr. H. Lori Schnieders, Grant Lee, Wayne Hanscom, Nicholas MacDonald <b>(Quorum Present)</b> <b>Staff Present:</b> Rebecca Palmer, Kevin Bean, Kate Pielmeier, Anne Ossanna, Donna Zdanis, Cheryl Robbins, Rose Honders, Bobbi Harris, Dale Basher, Lee Hardison <b>Guests:</b> None		
II. Items for Board Action		
1. Resolved, to approve the Board Meeting Minutes from 2/22/2021. <b>Discussion: None</b> <b>Action:</b> Lori moved to approve last month's minutes, Jonathan seconded. <b>Motion passed.</b>		
III. Policies for Review		
You have received a copy of the policies for review.  1. Resolved, to make an adjustment to the Gym Reimbursement Policy. – HR Director, Donna Zdanis <b>Action:</b> Johnathan moved to approve, Martha seconded. <b>Motion passed.</b>  <b>Discussion:</b> The policy isn't changing much, we are just adding one piece. Currently we reimburse up to \$25 per month for full-time employees if they go to their gym at least eight times a month. We are adding the additional requirement that the employee has been employed by DCP for at least six months.  <b>Action:</b> Johnathan Thomas moved to pass. Martha seconded. <b>Motion passed.</b>		
IV. Presentations		
<b>Auditor's Management Letters to Board of Directors</b>  1. Kevin Bean (Chief Financial Officer). Related documents (listed below) are in your board packet. Both documents pertain to the audit process. a. 2020 Governance Letter b. Management Letter  <b>Action:</b> N/A. <b>Motion:</b> N/A.  <b>Discussion:</b>		

Both of these letters are regarding the audit process. Estimates are usually used in the audit process and that's fairly common. However, there was one corrected misstatement from this fiscal year in the Income Statement section. Kevin and the auditor had a difference of one piece of the statement but it was cleared up. The letter also states this. We also already disclose certain information in our notes, but we have opted to also include this same information on the balance sheet to cover our bases.

The Management Letter is for internal use only whereas the Governance Letter can be used externally. The Management Letter, meant to strengthen internal control, includes recommendations from the auditor regarding things we could change or improve about our process. Only one of these recommendations is a required change, the rest are suggestions. However, we may make one of the smaller changes suggested. The auditor also wanted to see a line where an employee would sign off on any status change (regarding pay rates). This change is not necessary but we already obtain this information in the pay rate change process, so it's an easy extra step to implement. Kevin is required to disclose both letters to the board, but there is nothing to vote on.

One issue is regarding the journal entries and independent review. In the past, we had staff (Stacy Brown) who was able to review the journal entries as a second set of eyes. We do not have the staffing for this anymore. We are looking to add one staff member to the Finance Office so alleviate this issue. One current Finance employee has been taking on additional tasks to free up some of Kevin's time. Currently, only Kevin can do or review journal entries. In the future, someone else will be making the entries with Kevin reviewing them as Stacy used to. Grant had a question about the journal entry process; this is the proposed change but it is still in process. We still need to discuss this with Rebecca Palmer. Johnathan Thomas congratulated us on the audit process and recognized that it is indeed a strenuous process, but we handled it well.

Martha asked if we used the same auditor this time as the previous fiscal year. Kevin said yes this is the same auditor, they just have a different name now. The auditor sold the original practice and it's under a new name.

No further questions.

### **Development Committee Report**

1. Rebecca Palmer (Executive Director) with Donna Zdanis and Barbara Clark. This is for the replacement of Sarah Nugent's position which we are urgently trying to fill.

**Action:** N/A.

**Motion:** N/A.

**Discussion:**

The job posting has been up for a while and we have interviewed one candidate. However, she declined the background check so we were unable to proceed. There are a three other potential candidates as well and those interviews have been scheduled. In the meantime, Rachel Decker is holding up alone in Development! With Rebecca's permission, Rachel is pausing the weekly DCP Newsletter to save time. Rachel has also been working 1:1 with Content Area Leaders and Program Directors. We did miss out on sending the SEED letters but we salvaged some of the work. Thank you to Charles for representing us at some of the town meetings. Some of the towns that did not receive a SEED letter still donated some funds too.

Charles wondered about the effectiveness of DCP staff making these smaller asks of only \$500 or \$1,000 of the towns. Is it worth the management staff time to spend efforts for a small amount of money here and there or are there other grants that would bring in a larger amount of money for the same or less effort? Charles also said it felt a bit out of place representing DCP while some of these smaller towns barely give to their local Little League and Library. Food for thought. Another point was that DCP is a LARGER non-profit. Are we bogarting funds from smaller groups in these towns? Rebecca agreed that there is room for improvement in the process.

Rebecca said it's at least worth being active in the community. The SEED process and our representation at town meetings reminds people that we are still here. This is more helpful in a marketing perspective than just the financial piece. We do usually net between \$80-120K from this process each year. Sarah used to calculate the amount to ask for from each town based on our data; she was always extremely conservative in her asks. We usually only ask for 5% of the actual total value of the services we provided in that town.

Bobbi said that Franklin does not normally support DCP but this year they did give the entire \$500 that we asked for. Some folks from Franklin came up to Bobbi after the meeting and thanked her. That was a big deal; people seemed more appreciative this year.

Rebecca agreed that this was a big step. We need to do even more work in marketing and outreach still! We are also open to suggestions to improve the SEED process or tailor the approach to each town more. We do not want to underrepresent our work (which perhaps we already do with our conservative asks) but we also do not want to ever overstep. Most important is getting Sarah's old position filled so that we can fully focus on an outreach and funding strategy.

No other questions.

V. Property Development Ad-Hoc Standing Committee – Charles Rudelitch

**Action: N/A.**

**Motion: N/A.**

**Discussion:**

There are a lot of loose ends in terms of the list of properties DCP owns. Some of these properties are costing us more to keep than they are bringing in. Can we sell some property or free up some of these resources that are just sitting there? Is there a way to use these resources (in the form of property/buildings) that can more directly help the DCP staff? Or can we try to use these properties to create affordable housing?

There are some rural areas who do not have existing housing authorities, so we may be able to fill a service gap there with properties. This is just something to think about for now. Creating affordable housing units seems like a good idea and a great way to help directly all while taking better advantage of DCP's properties and resources.

Rebecca noted that it's a bit of an elephant and we first need to build staff capacity before we take on a task like this. Let's look for funding to hire someone with expertise around this so we can make a timeline and plan ahead. Are we leading, partnering, or developing? All three? The end goal is to create affordable housing, but how do we get there? Do we want these to be rental properties or first-time homeowner opportunities for families to purchase? Maybe Maine State Housing can help as they do have a commitment to affordable housing. Let's at least turn over this stone and see.

VI. Executive Director's Report – Rebecca Palmer

**Action:** N/A.

**Motion:** N/A.

**Discussion:**

There is some stuff happening with MeCAP and there is some funding we could try going for. This would bring more resources to all the agencies in Maine. We obtained a grant writer for this. We are also still discussing LiHEAP and ERA (areas for improvement, thinking ahead for folks entering their 18<sup>th</sup> month expiry for ERA). A report is coming out in about a month.

MeCAP and Maine Housing may need to start thinking about going to other groups in addition to/outside of just the Community Action Agencies to fulfill all the intended work around HEAP and ERA. We have been trying to hire more staff so that we can deliver more funds and services faster...but hiring is difficult right now.

There is a lot of research going on in Maine now about how to more efficiently deliver services and to do more with less. We are also still petitioning for LiHEAP to be a year-round program to facilitate the delivery of more funds faster. We did a presentation on why it should be a year-round program and how those additional months would improve the program overall.

Finally, we are tightening up some of the general fiscal sponsorships that we have and used to offer. We will be letting some of them fly the nest. This is offered for some new groups (in the past) that do not yet have their 501c3 status. This helps them get on their feet and get the ball rolling. We are also looking at potentially cutting back on some duplicative services; if the service is offered in the area by another program, maybe we should stop prioritizing resources that way and focus on something else more needed. As Charles said we need to also make sure we are maintaining the costs of the properties so we are at least breaking even there.

Donna stepped in to mention that there are many staff vacancies currently... HR has gone over it but it's still a revolving door. We need a strategy for RETAINING employees. We are losing more people than we are hiring and we have about thirty positions open right now. The folks we do lose usually note that it's because of salary issues. Donna does do exit interviews when she can, but we need to try something else. Rebecca did note that we increased the mileage reimbursement to hopefully help retain any of our staff that do a lot of driving for their work.

No other questions.

## VII. Division Directors Written Reports, Brief Updates

### 1. Kevin Bean – Finance Report

We have had another unsettling month because of our investments. We have tanked and are showing an over 100K loss since the end of February. We are also showing deficits at Friendship Cottage still, from 5K last month to 10K now. At Home had a small surplus last month but now has a small deficit. Early Childhood Education has a 60K surplus, but that's from State subsidies. The Maternal Child Health contract was finally paid and some other payments from DHHS finally moved, so they're in good shape.

Energy Services currently has a surplus as well. The rental properties have a higher than expected deficit which is why we need to work to at least cover the costs of these properties. However, we had some unexpected maintenance to attend to such as bed bugs this month. For Transportation, those poor weather days in February may have affected their finances. Despite all this, it's still roughly how we expected things to shake out. The only part we did not expect was the investments going a bit south.

### 2. Donna Zdanis – Human Resources

Nothing else to add to what has already been said. See my report in your packet.

Barbara had a question about the sign-on bonuses and that timeframe. Is it working or helpful at all?

Donna noted that it seems to be helping some. We increased the sign-on bonus for some positions but it's still not good. Recruiting is still incredibly hard right now. We have thirty positions open at the moment. Barbara wondered if we were paying out the bonus and then losing the person shortly after as it's happened in the past with some employers she knows who offered sign-on bonuses. Donna says it does not seem like that is happening but she will track it.

Donna noted that some of the younger workers aren't looking at the money as much as other things. Younger workers want to be sure that they can develop and climb the ladder. They want their employer to care about their growth and improvement. No one has recently said they left DCP because of a lack of growth or benefits, though.

The idea of a "stay" interview rather than just an exit interview once they have already decided to leave was also brought up. Grant suggested that if folks want to try something else, maybe they can shadow another department at DCP so that we can retain the employee but still help them develop or change their career path. If we try to conduct periodic "stay" interviews, perhaps we can catch a potential reason for someone leaving DCP before it happens.

3. Ida Bagley – Supportive Services

Absent this meeting. Skipped.

4. Cheryl – Transportation

We have been getting applications for drivers which is good. We desperately need more drivers. We also recruited some volunteers recently. However, the starting wage for drivers is only \$14/hour, so Cheryl isn't sure we are pulling all of the potential drivers in the area.

5. Bobbi – Weatherization and Home Repair

The Weatherization Crew is really small and we still need to recruit. Please pass along this information to help us out!

6. Lee – HEAP

Nothing to add, please see my report in the packet. We just need to new staff members immediately!

7. Anne – Friendship Cottage

I only have two things to add. We have had two new admissions recently and lots of referrals. We are also doing a raffle to fundraise in May!

Downeast Community Partners (DCP)  
Meeting of the Board of Directors, March 29, 2022

8. Melissa Mattes – Head Start

Absent this meeting. Skipped. See the written report in your packet. Melissa was also going to cover the Parent Policy Report and Grant Report. Both are printed in your Board Packet.

**Scheduling next month's meeting –**

We agreed to do a hybrid in-person and Zoom BOD Meeting in April! Folks who still need to Zoom in can. We would rather folks attend via Zoom than not at all. We will try to hold it at Mano en Mano and Bobbi agreed to cook dinner for us again like she used to at our meetings before COVID-19.

VIII. Business meeting  
adjourned at 6:10 PM

**Johnathan** made the motion to adjourn and **Martha** seconded.

Respectfully submitted by Kate Pielmeier, Community Services Block Grant and Database Specialist on April X, 2022.