

| Called to Order: 5:00 PM   | Via Zoom |  |
|--|----------|--|
| I. Roll Call and Introductions   |          |  |
| <p><b>Roll call:</b> Charley Martin-Berry, Martha Beathem, Ron King, Betsy Fitzgerald, Charles Rudelitch, Jonathan Thomas, Grant Lee, Nicholas MacDonald (<b>Quorum NOT Present – The Executive Committee voted on and approved items requiring Board Action in lieu of a quorum due to a time-sensitive item on the agenda.</b>)</p> <p><b>Staff Present:</b> Rebecca Palmer, Kevin Bean, Kate Pielmeier, Becky Guyton, Sharon Catus, Melissa Mattes, Donna Zdanis, Dale Basher, Cheryl Robbins, Rose Honders, Lee Hardison</p> <p><b>Guests:</b> None</p>  |          |  |
| II. Items for Board Action   |          |  |
| <p>1. Resolved, to approve the Board Meeting Minutes from 4/26/2022.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><b>Discussion:</b> N/A</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><b>Action:</b> Martha Beathem put a motion on the floor to accept the minutes as is. Ron King seconded. <b>Motion passed</b> via Executive Committee – Nicholas MacDonald, Betsy Fitzgerald, and Charley Martin-Berry.</p> <p>2. ECE COLA/Quality Funding Notice of Award – Melissa Mattes</p> <p>Head Start put out a notice of award to increase funding. The staff received a 2.28% cost of living raise as well as \$10,000 in quality funds. We have to decide how we are going to use the COLA and how we want to use the quality funds. The recommendation is to start for June 25. This allows us time to prepare so that everyone can receive a cost of living increase at the same time. Folks are getting the 2.28% and the market rate adjustments. The 10K isn't enough to start a new initiative or to hire another person, so we will use it to continue the trauma and resiliency work we started in the last few years.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><b>Discussion:</b> Charles asked how the COLA funds can be used for the current cost. Why is the 2.28% not higher? Melissa was not sure. Ukraine impacted a lot of things federally and it seems it has also impacted Head Start funding too.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><b>Action:</b> <b>Approved</b> via Executive Committee. Johnathan Thomas made a motion and Ron King seconded.</p> |          |  |
| III. Policy for Review:  |          |  |
| <p>1. DCP Office Pet and Service Animal Policy – Donna Zdanis</p> <p>There have been some complaints about pets brought into the office recently. We didn't have any pet policy in place previously, so we have written up a policy (attached in the BOD Packet). There is information about service and therapy animals as well.</p>  |          |  |

**Motion:** Grant made a motion, and Nicholas MacDonald seconded.

**Action:** Approved via Executive Committee.

**Discussion:** Johnathan Thomas asked how many animals are around DCP, and is it an issue with the dogs interacting with one another or something else? Donna replied it's mostly an issue of dogs being let loose in the office. There are a few animals in each DCP location currently (excluding the ECE buildings). The policy states that "owners must have full, continuous control over the animal" at all times. Charles asked how long dogs have been allowed; Donna said there have been dogs as long as she has been with DCP. There have been a few issues with nipping or making messes in the past.

IV. Presentation:

1. "Community Service Block Grant (CSBG) and EmpowOR 101" – Kate Pielmeier

CSBG stands for Community Services Block Grant, which is one of the biggest funds we have access to as a Community Action Agency (CAA). There are stipulations to how and when we use CSBG funds, and we have standards to adhere to and uphold as a CAA to comply with CSBG. Kate reviewed some of the more important Organizational Standards (there are several – too many to comfortably review in one meeting). Please see the Organizational Standards list (sent via email to the BOD) for the specific language of each standard and how often each standard needs to be confirmed or reviewed.

Here's where EmpowOR comes in. EmpowOR is an online database (it can be accessed with the URL on any device) used to track and monitor CAA work. EmpowOR is how agencies, including DCP, are entering, storing, monitoring, and reporting on data such as the direct services our staff provide as well as the outcomes our participants achieve. This is crucial because EmpowOR is somewhat "tied" to CSBG Reporter. Through EmpowOR, we "pull" our quarterly numbers into CSBG Reporter. From there I can manually edit the numbers to add in our programs not yet tracked in EmpowOR (Transportation, At Home, Friendship Cottage, etc.). Once I've incorporated those numbers, I submit all of DCP's quarterly data to the State via CSBG Reporter.

EmpowOR was built with CSBG in mind, so all of the specific language CSBG uses for services and outcomes is used. Each program (currently about half of all of DCP's programs) in EmpowOR has a specific set up that makes staff data entry simple. Each program has different services and outcomes listed that staff can select and record for each household or individual. Each program has some CSBG "worded" services and outcomes, but some programs may also have more DCP-specific services or outcomes listed. In cases where a grant or funder has specific questions in mind (Breakthrough Youth is a great example; this program helps educate teenagers and young adults on finances, safe sex, and other topics not traditionally covered in school – but the grant is also curious about whether or not

students are graduating on-time or having an unplanned pregnancy. These are super specific and CSBG does not require this type of data. EmpowOR also allows us to add and track these program-specific data points as well.) You can select services for just one person in the household, for several but not all, or for the entire family. For example, ERA provides rent relief. Everyone living in the house benefits from ERA payments, so the entire household is “enrolled” in ERA. That means each individual in the household is counted towards CSBG rather than just one unit of the one house.

Once the rest of DCP’s programs are also in EmpowOR, reporting and monitoring will be much easier. We will be able to quickly pull certain numbers without having to consult each department head for their data from their offline spreadsheet. This also means we can ask more questions and do some actual data analysis to evaluate DCP’s performance. We will be able to better understand what works and what doesn’t so we can be as efficient with CSBG funds as possible.

**Action:** N/A.

**Motion:** N/A.

**Discussion:** There were a few clarification questions raised around why we use EmpowOR specifically and whether or not EmpowOR is the “right choice”. Rebecca Palmer clarified that all of the Community Action Agencies bought into EmpowOR and made the decision together, this was not a DCP-specific decision. Kate also clarified a few things centered on the linkage between CSBG and EmpowOR: Essentially, EmpowOR also hosts CSBG Reporter, which is a separate entity. However, we have to access CSBG Reporter through EmpowOR, so we do need full access to and usage of EmpowOR. In addition, DCP only has about half of its programs IN EmpowOR utilizing it fully. This is mostly Ida’s Supportive Services Division (nursing, Whole Family Coaching). This fiscal year Kate has been focusing on getting Bobbi’s Housing and Weatherization Programs into EmpowOR. Jenny Reese’s Foreclosure Program will be next, and Transportation will likely be last due to the vast amount of data involved with Transportation.

Finally, Kevin clarified that the Organizational Standards are part of the CAA’s Self-Assessment process. Kate and Kevin go through the Organizational Standards to make sure DCP is on track and updates policies when required. Kate submits the Organizational Standard Self-Assessment (which includes a lot of “proof” that we adhere to each standard – proof can include copies of agency policies, BOD Meeting Minutes, copies of customer satisfaction surveys, etc.) to the State. From there, the State reviews what we have submitted, and if there are any questions or concerns, they are addressed in a meeting with Kate, Kevin, Rebecca if applicable, and usually Jaimi Clifford from DHHS. Jaimi gives us a score on our compliance based on the Organizational Standards. Our last review resulted in an A+ score.

V. Development Committee Report

1. Sharon Catus

The SEED money results by location are in the packet. We were also nominated for a grant through the Machias Savings Bank for a potential \$5,000 award. Board members, please vote for DCP for the Machias Savings Bank grant! Folks are allowed to vote once per day during the voting period. There may be additional votes allowed for additional IP addresses (multiple devices such as laptops and iPads) but we are not sure. Lastly, purchase (or help us sell) raffle tickets for Friendship Cottage!

**Action: N/A.**

**Motion: N/A.**

**Discussion: N/A.**

VI. Executive Director's Report

1. Rebecca Palmer

Maine Housing and ERA are a bit of a mess right now. It was a predicted crisis but it came sooner than expected. The original message was to hurry up and spend the money, but now they are telling us to slow down and conserve. They also just changed the limit from 18 months to 12 months. Some folks were already receiving ERA benefits past the 12 months. They have been given a two month grace period. There are some issues with tenants in hotels. If they have been in the hotel for 28 days or longer, they are considered a tenant, not a guest, so they cannot be kicked out. They cannot evict tenants without due notice, but 51-80% are not eligible to receive ERA anymore. Folks will have to be given notice and time to plan if they are no longer eligible. This is somewhat political as well; no one wants people homeless during an upcoming election.

We have to pay back about \$7,000 as a result of the audit with Maine Housing and ERA. They cherry-picked some files to go through for the audit. There was some discrepancy about the certification of some payments. There are also arrears for hotels too, and we are scrambling with payments to hotels as well as landlords. We need to potentially NOT enroll any NEW people in ERA until we can reconcile this and make sure we can pay everything we have currently committed to off. Hotels are a bit upset because they have to accept the government rates rather than higher seasonal rates for rooms. The hotels were fine with the lower rate back when they needed the business during the off-season, but now that it is tourist season again, some of the hotels are a bit miffed at the loss of income. All agencies are struggling through this. There were finite funds from ERA and the end is now upon us sooner than expected.

The Property Committee hasn't met since last month, but we have opportunities. We will be meeting again soon to discuss. Dale will talk to us about some potential revenue-generating aspects to DCP's services. We did learn that we would not have to make a for-profit branch under our non-profit regarding this as long as the funds are going back into the DCP Mission. Efficiency Maine is the group we have an opportunity with. We could be doing repair work for profit to help make more money towards the non-profit repair work. We would charge the for-profit repairs a higher rate.

Dale Basher's portion of the presentation:

Dale was at two conference recently and spoke with Meg Hannan from MeCAP. Contractors that we already work with use these programs such as rebates for solar or heat pumps. We could also make a work force to make money, and this creates a job market too. We could employ people who cannot go to secondary education currently but provide tuition reimbursement as incentive. We would only need a crew of three people at a fair market value wage to make a solid revenue. It could actually be very lucrative. We would be able to support the other repair and housing programs with the profits. Bobbi is supportive of this idea. This would also allow us to bring more people on because we can pay a higher wage. We are struggling to hire at only \$15/hour for Weatherization. This may be a way to work around that! And this would benefit the environment and our community. It turns DCP into a potential vendor which would be a game changer.

Back to Rebecca:

Kevin's resignation is a huge loss to DCP. We spoke with ACAP and they are willing to help us out if there is a gap in staffing. We already have a couple candidates and we are working to minimize the transition period. Kevin will work on the audit right up until he leaves, and we are hoping to get it in on time.

**Action:** N/A.

**Motion:** N/A.

**Discussion:** Charles commented and suggested that we think about outcomes beforehand. Braiding in the Efficiency Maine funds to this project makes a lot of sense!

## VII. Division Directors Reports (verbal and written reports – attached)

### 1. Finance Report – Kevin Bean

We have two positions open in fiscal still; we never filled Stacy's old position, really. However, we did have a recent hire (who was a former DCP employee who we are happy to have back). Once I leave, that still leaves two positions open in fiscal, not three. There are five paid fiscal positions (not including Kate or IT).

Investments aside, we had another normal month. Cash increased slightly by

about 2M (mostly from ERA payments). The AR's have slightly increased. We are not too upset about that, but it is a higher balance than what we would want to see. Usually there is some catch up going on with that. Operations are not fairing too bad either. There are some assets we can shift over, but we should wait until the final quarter for that. Some of the At Home and Friendship Cottage expenses are higher lately. We are also anticipating more expenses in June.

Agency revenue is 6% under budget. ERA payables were increased. We are able to bring it down to only 5% over budget. May should be better in that regard. Last week we paid out almost \$400,000 to hotels alone. New rates are coming up in the next month so that will help as well. ECE has a 50K surplus coming off of the support payments for COVID. Supportive Services is showing a 6K surplus even though they had a 15K deficit last month. SEED is doing well too! We are about halfway there with the 80K we usually receive for SEED.

Brining the investments back in... the investments have killed us. We lost \$219K in April. It's looking bad for FY23 and the crisis fund. We would have a \$140K surplus if it weren't for the investments.

2. HR Report – Donna Zdanis

We held back two of the three policies we were going to review tonight. We will do those other two another time. We have one candidate for Kevin's position and their interview is scheduled for next week. Betsy would like to sit in on the first round of interviews as well, not just the second round of interviews.

3. Supportive Services – Ida Bagley

Ida not present; see written report.

4. Transportation – Cheryl

Nothing to add. See my written report.

5. Housing – Bobbi Harris

Bobbi not present; see written report.

6. Energy Services – Lee Hardison

Makenzie has been talking with all six of the hotels that we have been working with. Five of the six were able to accept the new government rate. For ERA, there were 2,283 instances of assistance in the last month equaling 5.3 million that we paid out. ECIP (for emergencies) was utilized 120 times this last month. ECIP usage was all for fuel. We spent \$78,322 for ECIP. Each person/household got a fill up. Kerosene was almost \$9/gal recently but it has been dropping back down

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around \$6/gal. We also increased the total applicants from last year and we are still taking applications through July 15.

7. At Home – Rose Honders

There have been some exciting things happening! This Saturday is the volunteer appreciation event. Rose has been at DCP for almost three years but this is the first time with COVID that we have been able to have a volunteer appreciation event. September is the big tennis event and we have a steel drum band planned for August. We have also been able to keep staff at rates we can afford.

8. Friendship Cottage – Anne Ossanna

Anne not present; see written report.

9. Head Start – Melissa Mattes

The only thing I have to add is that we will email out the A1 reviews soon.

10. Parent Policy Report

See written report.

11. Development Report and associated documents (above with Development Committee Report)

Attached.

12. Maine 130<sup>th</sup> Legislature Session II Report

Attached.

VIII. Business meeting  
adjourned at 6:35 PM

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

Respectfully submitted by Kate Pielmeier, Community Services Block Grant and Database Specialist on June 21, 2022.