

## COVID RELIEF SUBCOMMITTEE MINUTES

Tuesday, May 12, 2020 – 10:00 a.m.

<https://kentcountymi.zoom.us/j/7625970792>

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Mandy Bolter; Vice-Chair Stan Stek; Commissioners Emily Brieve, Diane Jones, Roger Morgan, Phil Skaggs, Jim Talen, and Robert Womack

MEMBERS ABSENT: None.

Chair Bolter called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

I. WELCOME

Chair Bolter welcomed the group and thanked those who joined the meeting.

II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF MAY 7, 2020

Mr. Talen moved to approve the minutes from May 7, 2020 as presented. Supported by Mr. Stek. Motion carried.

III. REPORT ON COMMUNITY HOMELESSNESS NEEDS

Mr. Britt welcomed Courtney Myers-Keaton, Wende Randall, Cheryl Schuch, and Vera Beech to present information they had assembled regarding community homelessness needs. The group shared processes that are helping address homelessness and mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

Ms. Brieve asked how many people are anticipated as needing these services and how much the numbers are projected to increase. Ms. Schuch answered there can be a maximum of 60 families per night at any given time and there are currently 57 in the shelter. The projections are through the end of the year, and they need to be at least that far out because there are not many other options available for people facing these challenges.

Ms. Brieve also asked what the community foundations are doing for homeless and sheltering issues at this time. Ms. Schuch answered that those foundations were able to provide the immediate support needed for sheltering because their funding is relatively flexible. However, the understanding in place was that the funding would eventually move to other sources, such as FEMA B.

Mr. Stek noted that some funding through FEMA B is direct reimbursement of actual costs, so he asked why that source would not cover more or all the actual costs.

Ms. Schuch stated that FEMA B has restrictions on their funding such as only being for people who are infected, symptomatic, or COVID high-risk. The FEMA B dollars are also a 75/25 split. They reimburse 75% of the actual cost, and a 25% match needs to be provided. Using data over the last two years, it was determined that between 45-47% of those sheltered have outlying health conditions that make them COVID high-risk, so only the costs from those families would be offset.

Mr. Stek asked if CARES Act funds can be used for that 25% match. He also asked if any of the funds will be used for costs retroactively since March. Ms. Schuch said no, another federal source cannot be used as a match. The funds can only be used from May 1 forward.

Mr. Stek also noted that \$1.6 million was approved for Kent County Community Action (KCCA) recently, in part for housing assistance. He asked if there will be any overlap in that funding for these projects.

Ms. Susan Cervantes, KCCA Director, answered that approximately \$217,000 is being used for homeless prevention with rent and mortgage assistance and approximately \$400,000 for utility assistance. There is also about \$500,000 for homeless prevention from ESG funds which are processed by KCCA.

Chair Bolter asked if the "60 families" number could be documented. She wanted to be sure the CARES Act funds are for current existing shelter issues. Chair Bolter also asked what the estimates are for the future because there could be another surge in the fall.

Ms. Schuch stated that with the traditional shelter model, there are no expenses incurred for the space because they are using existing spaces within the community. The hotel costs are 100% related to COVID-19. It is projected that a surge in the fall would not surpass the numbers they have prepared for.

Chair Bolter also asked what the liability is for the county, shelter or hotel regarding COVID-19 risks for individuals using these services. Ms. Schuch stated the issue of liability has been discussed in other major cities, so it should be reviewed with legal staff to be sure of proper action.

Chair Bolter thanked the group for their presentation.

IV. SUMMARY AND EXAMPLES OF ELIGIBLE COVID-19 COSTS

Mr. Stephen Duarte presented a summary of potential uses for CARES Act funds and examples of expenditures incurred.

Mr. Stek asked if these categories are for expenses incurred by government, nonprofits, corporations, and individuals alike? Mr. Duarte answered yes.

Mr. Stek also asked if the funds can be used to reimburse expenditures or if they are only for prospective expenses. Mr. Duarte answered the funds must follow the guidelines and take place after March 1. He also stated that the funds cannot be used for something that was already budgeted.

Chair Bolter asked if a line item was budgeted for a certain amount but then went up drastically due to COVID-19, could the funds be appropriated for that? Mr. Duarte answered that if the difference in cost meets the guidelines due to COVID-19, it is eligible.

V. REVIEW OF AVAILABLE COVID-19 FUNDS (I.E. FEMA, CDBG, ETC.)

Mr. Britt presented a summary of the different funding sources available to Kent County to date.

VI. UPDATE ON COUNTY COVID-19 COSTS

Mr. Jeff Dood, Fiscal Services Director, explained that there have been COVID-19 tracking codes set up and there are dedicated staff who watch the expenses daily.

Mr. Britt stated that they are waiting to hear back from some communities about what their current COVID-related costs are.

Chair Bolter stated there has been a lot of pressure from the community to move quickly, and it is difficult to move forward without first gathering cost information. She asked if a deadline of one week to respond would be acceptable. The subcommittee agreed.

Mr. Womack asked if the subcommittee could also receive information about the funds those groups have already received to make sure there isn't double dipping.

Mr. Talen requested that as the cost spreadsheets continue to be updated, if there could be a column showing which funding pot these expenses are being pulled from.

Mr. Stek also said that the addition of a key to this document indicating what is included would be helpful.

VII. REPORT ON WHAT OTHER CARES COUNTIES ARE DOING

Mr. Britt presented examples of what Oakland County and Wayne County are doing with their funding.

Chair Bolter asked if information is being pulled from the Michigan Association of Counties (MAC) or National Association of Counties (NACo) as well.

Mr. Britt said yes, and information is being pulled from across the country as well.

Chair Bolter asked what the plan is for future meetings.

Mr. Britt answered that on Thursday, May 14, various area Chambers in the County will provide a presentation about what they are experiencing and how they have responded to COVID-19. The Grand Rapids Downtown Development Authority will also present on Thursday. Meetings have been held with the Right Place to provide insight about what is happening in the business community. After that, the information will be built upon and assembled for the following meeting on Tuesday, May 19. Other city and county models are also being observed to look at how to use these dollars.

Chair Bolter noted that this is going to be a large undertaking and it is compartmentalized in two major sections. First is the immediate need, such as homelessness, and second is economic development when things start moving again. Kent County will need to engage with its economic partners for guidance and long-term strategies.

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business for discussion, Chair Bolter adjourned the meeting at 11:11 a.m.

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ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVAL FOR DISTRIBUTION Pam VanKemen