

COVID RELIEF SUBCOMMITTEE MINUTES

Tuesday, May 19, 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 10:04 a.m.

I. WELCOME

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

II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF MAY 14, 2020

Mr. Stek moved to approve the minutes from May 14, 2020 as presented. Supported by Ms. Brieve. Motion carried.

III. REPORT ON BUSINESSES IMPACTED BY COVID – AREA CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

Chair Bolter welcomed Bob O’Callaghan (Wyoming/Kentwood Chamber), Heather Schaedig (Grandville/Jenison Chamber), Margie Leanau (Walker Chamber), Jennifer Lukezich (Byron Center Chamber), Sandy Williams (Caledonia Chamber), Megan Dean (Rockford Chamber) and Amy Zeilenga (Cutlerville/Gaines). The chambers reported on their activities over the last several weeks related to COVID-19 as well as their current and future needs.

Mr. Talen asked whether there is an anticipation of need for childcare for employers.

Mr. Womack asked if they have gotten funding.

Mr. Morgan stated they need to improve their networking with other chambers so that they have first line access to the help that is available.

Ms. Brieve shared information about local companies who offer PPE. She indicated further information can be found at <https://kentcountybacktowork.com>.

Chair Bolter thanked the group for their presentations.

IV. AREA FOUNDATIONS & UNITED WAY RESPONSE TO COVID & IMPACT ON LOCAL NON-PROFITS

Chair Bolter welcomed Julie Ridenour (Steelcase Foundation), Michelle Van Dyke (HW United Way), and Diana Sieger (Grand Rapids Community Foundation). The group reported on the impact of COVID-19 on local non-profits and how these foundations have taken action so far.

Chair Bolter noted that before the COVID-19 crisis, inventory was an issue for foundations such as these. She asked how this will be addressed moving forward. Ms. Van Dyke answered that inventory is still an issue, and unfortunately there is no one-size-fits-all solution. However, there are some units available for rapid rehousing.

Chair Bolter also asked what the process is for rental assistance. Ms. Van Dyke said it depends on the need, but most will go through a coordinated entry process. Salvation Army is their entry point, and if there are other resources, they will match them.

Vice-Chair Stek thanked the group for their presentations. He noted that while this is a housing issue, this crisis also highlights an existing systemic set of issues and furthermore aggravated it. For example, mental health has been an issue for a long time, but this crisis highlights where the deficiencies are and increases the need for help. He asked how their sector has been responding to the specific and unique needs in addressing behavioral health. Ms. Sieger stated they have been focusing funding that helps those who are most vulnerable, the people who have been suffering for many years. They are focusing mental health funding and support to organizations like the Family Outreach Center. Ms. Ridenour added that the Kent Schools Services Network has shown how intricate this is to success in the school realm. Children who suffer trauma are less likely to succeed in school if there isn't a mental health intervention. She added this is a crisis point and that crisis won't be going away anytime soon. Ms. Van Dyke also noted that this reinforces the important work of the Kent County Family and Children's Coordinating Council.

Mr. Talen observed that the foundations have advocated for coordination of community actions. He asked what their thoughts are about that coordinated effort. Ms. Ridenour stated that has always been an area of concern for them. For example, she hoped that KConnect will be able to address homelessness with a coordinated system of entry. Ms. Van Dyke added they are always interested in improving collaboration. She stressed the importance of the Continuum of Care and making sure the voices of those in need are heard. Ms. Sieger also added that out of crisis comes greater cooperation. The challenge for everyone now is how to maintain and strengthen bonds of collaboration.

Chair Bolter noted that when families were first being moved from shelters to hotel spaces for purposes of social distancing, these foundations were the ones covering those costs. She confirmed that there is a hard deadline for continuing to cover the costs.

V. UPDATE ON COVID-19 EXPENSES AND INTERNAL KENT COUNTY COVID-19 SOURCES & USES OF FUNDS REPORT

Mr. Jeff Dood, Fiscal Services Director, presented a report which included expenses through May 13, 2020. Further, footnotes were added as requested by Vice-Chair Stek.

Chair Bolter requested that a flowchart be provided to show what is covered by different funding sources all on one page. Vice-Chair Stek added that it would be helpful to compartmentalize this information into larger groups. The subcommittee will have to start to identify subsets, so if requests can be broken down into areas such as business, housing, mental health, etc. it would be helpful for the group.

VI. OTHER KENT COUNTY COVID-19 SOURCES & USES OF FUNDS REPORT

Mr. Dood reported on other external sources and uses of funds for COVID-19 relief funding.

VII. OTHER (SUBCOMMITTEE DOCUMENTS/CORRESPONDENCE)

Mr. Britt reviewed correspondence that has been received regarding COVID-19 relief funding. One document was a letter from the Black Impact Collaborative and another from Experience Grand Rapids.

Mr. Britt also explained that staff is exploring ways to give the Board access to various documents that are shared with subcommittee members. Further information about this will be available soon.

VIII. MISCELLANEOUS

Mr. Talen asked for a timeline of what is coming up. Chair Bolter explained that a PPE plan and the looming shelter bill will be the immediate deadlines to be addressed on Thursday, May 21, and a municipal report will also be presented on Thursday or the following Tuesday.

Vice-Chair Stek asked if there is further information on the COVID-19 Relief Fund guidelines. Mr. Britt said that an executive summary was created using the information provided from a federal level. Information is also being pulled from other counties. This information will be ready to share soon. Chair Bolter added that they have been hearing the needs of the community and need to move forward with understanding legal options and formalized agreements with different groups.

Mr. Womack asked how some of the groups have been hearing about Kent County's action regarding the CARES Act and if they can use that to get more information. Chair Bolter said she hoped Experience Grand Rapids can help with that.

Ms. Jones asked when the group will be voting and if these items will go to the full board. Chair Bolter responded that she would like the group to vote on the PPE proposal on Thursday. She also indicated this may be the first of multiple PPE requests, though that is not known yet. The items the subcommittee votes on do not have to go forward to the full board due to the process that was approved in the late March resolution.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

X. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business for discussion, Chair Bolter adjourned the meeting at 11:37.

ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVAL FOR DISTRIBUTION

Pam VanKemen