

COVID RELIEF SUBCOMMITTEE MINUTES

Thursday, May 7, 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 AND SUBCOMMITTEE CHARGE

Chair Bolter welcomed the group and thanked those who joined the meeting. She addressed that this subcommittee has an accelerated schedule and it will be important for the group to be aware of how much is being done and when to act on certain steps.

II. SUMMARY OF FUNDS SPENT AND COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH COVID-19 ACTIVITIES

Mr. Britt welcomed Mr. Jeff Dood, Fiscal Services Director, and Mr. Stephen Duarte, Assistant to the Administrator, to present information regarding funds spent and costs associated with COVID-19.

Mr. Duarte summarized the county's costs and outstanding purchase orders, which form a grand total of roughly \$2.5 million with more to come.

Mr. Talen asked what the difference is between payroll cost and essential worker compensation. Mr. Dood answered that essential worker compensation refers to employees who are required to work on-site.

Mr. Talen also asked if there will be a single source for reimbursement or if it will come from various sources. Mr. Britt explained that different sources of funding are being tracked, such as the CARES Act, FEMA, and other grants.

Vice-Chair Stek asked if there are expenditures the county has yet to capture, and if other departments' information will be coming from separate reports. Mr. Dood answered they have been updating their information every week and it will capture all expenses of the county. Other specific estimates will also come, such as from the Health Department and Sheriff's Office.

Mr. Womack asked if the money spent on wages is for new employees and/or overtime. Mr. Dood answered it is not for new employees, but there have been a few new hires that are grant funded and have been approved. There is also some overtime which mostly comes from the Health Department. Overall, the wages are mostly for existing employees.

Mr. Womack also asked how the county's homeless response costs have been tracked. Mr. Britt answered that facilities costs, nursing staffing, professional and contracted services, and other components are all being tracked.

III. REVIEW OF AVAILABLE COVID-19 FUNDS (IE FEMA, CDBG, ETC.)

Chair Bolter explained that there has been talk of various funds available and hopefully more information will be coming in the next week or so. It will be important for the county to be able to coordinate

how funds will be spent in the right places. A worst-case scenario would be one business receiving three grants while another does not receive any. Contact might be made with different DDAs within the county as well.

Mr. Britt stated that information is being gathered from the philanthropic and community foundations. That information will be distributed in the future.

Mr. Duarte listed an overview of funding identified so far, including funds that have already been received or ones that the county is in the process of bringing to the Board. Some sources identified were ESG, CSBG, FEMA, CDBG, and the CARES Act. Mr. Duarte continued that a software called eCIVIS has been utilized that allows various available grants to be identified and sorted through filters. This program will continue to be worked with and updates provided at the next meeting.

Chair Bolter asked if business loans could be added to this list. Mr. Britt answered yes.

Vice-Chair Stek wondered if there might be a way to identify loan sources and ways to flag what recipients are receiving from other sources so that relevant and sound decisions can be made when making allocations. Mr. Britt stated that information can be compiled. Local units of government have been asked where they are receiving sources of funding, and that will be followed more closely and can include small business and non-profits as well.

Mr. Skaggs asked if the funding coming from FEMA is known, even broadly. Mr. Britt said that Lt. Lou Hunt, Emergency Management Coordinator, might be able to answer that more precisely.

Ms. Jones asked if individuals will be considered when determining what qualifies for COVID-19 Relief. Mr. Duarte answered that the county can provide some direct aid, but first they need to know how much of these funds are needed to cover county expenses, which are currently estimated to be roughly \$30 million.

Chair Bolter noted the CARES Act funding seems less restrictive. She asked if more restrictive funds will be brought down first before using CARES funds. Mr. Britt agreed with that line of thinking.

Mr. Duarte added it is better to spend more restrictive funds first, followed by the less restrictive ones.

Mr. Stek asked for a more detailed explanation from staff about who qualifies under CARES funding and for more detail on the range of needs the county can cover. It seems unclear about who qualifies. Mr. Britt answered there is an FAQ sheet and guidelines that have been established that cover these topics specifically and will work to clarify any specific questions that need to be sorted out.

Chair Bolter asked that everything be sent to the board members and if staff could provide an executive summary or briefing on it. She also asked that legal counsel be engaged as well. Looking at what other counties are doing might be helpful in finding creative ideas they haven't thought of yet.

IV. FUTURE MEETING SCHEDULE / NEXT STEPS

Chair Bolter stated the goal is to have a plan by the end of the month. Beyond the Tuesday and Thursday meetings, various organizations should be contacted about their processes with handing out funds as

well as essential needs such as food and rent assistance. Chair Bolter also cautioned the group about spending the money as soon as possible. There could be future concerns in the fall, so short-term and long-term planning will need to be discussed along with future meetings and next steps.

Mr. Womack asked if messaging concerning the CARES Act has been discussed. Though it is a fund that has been put out publicly, the details are obscure, and individuals have different ideas of the amount of funding that will be available. Mr. Britt answered yes, communication will go out covering that topic.

Vice-Chair Stek agreed that they make sure there is a news release or fixed message about the process. Many commissioners have already had inquiries about funding needs, so it will be helpful to have a clear response to those messages.

Ms. Jones clarified that the funds cannot be used for lost revenue, so that parameter will need to be made clear to people looking for relief.

Chair Bolter stated that there has been good communication with local mayors about this topic, and the county has done well with reporting information out. It will be important to get municipal costs for all of Kent County. There have been concerns about small businesses that won't be able to open anytime soon, or if they can open, their operations will vastly change. It isn't clear yet what that will represent, so it will be good information to have moving forward.

Mr. Talen noted Ms. Jones point that lost revenue cannot be covered for governmental units and asked for clarification if that is also true for lost revenue in small businesses. Mr. Britt answered that clarification can be provided.

Chair Bolter stated that if there is anyone the subcommittee should hear from, to let Mr. Britt know so arrangements can be made as soon as possible.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT

An individual asked how the homeless prevention funding from ESG is being spent and on what activities. Mr. Britt answered some of those dollars were spent on the homeless shelter with Guiding Light Mission, the second location at Catholic Central High School, and The Manor. Mr. Duarte added that more funds will be coming to help with overdue rent.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business for discussion, Chair Bolter adjourned the meeting at 11:03 a.m.

ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVAL FOR DISTRIBUTION

Pam VanKemen