

## COVID RELIEF SUBCOMMITTEE MINUTES

May 28, 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, Phil Skaggs, Jim Talen, and Robert Womack

MEMBERS ABSENT: Commissioner Roger Morgan

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 26, 2020

Mr. Talen moved to approve the minutes from May 26, 2020 as presented. Supported by Ms. Brieve. Motion carried.

### III. PRESENTATION BY LATINXGR

Chair Bolter welcomed Guillermo Cisneros and Adnoris (Bo) Torres. Mr. Cisneros and Mr. Torres gave a presentation on COVID-19 in the Latinx community. They addressed the needs and goals of LatinxGR and explained the benefits of La Lucha Fund.

Chair Bolter offered support to ensure this organization has adequate connections with the local healthcare systems. She also asked where improvements can be made to make sure communication is happening with community action agencies. Mr. Cisneros welcomed those connections.

Vice-Chair Stek agreed that improved communication with different organizations such as the Health Department and Network180 will need to continue.

Mr. Womack noted an eligibility required for La Lucha Fund which states no adult in the household can already be receiving other federal aid. He emphasized that federal aid stretches farther than just direct financial assistance, such as insurance. Mr. Torres stated through the application process, there is a method to direct individuals to different types of assistance they qualify for.

Mr. Talen stated that the issues raised about access to resources are not new and they are ongoing, and not totally related to COVID-19. This is an opportunity to utilize the resources in the community and break through some of those access issues.

Chair Bolter asked how to make sure the messaging for assistance gets to as many individuals in the community as possible. Mr. Torres answered that it is thanks to the trust between different organizations, networks, and coalitions that they can make sure the accessibility is there. Mr. Cisneros added that there are great connections within the different groups in the community who reach out to one another.

Chair Bolter thanked Mr. Cisneros and Mr. Torres for their presentation and time to answer questions.

IV. GR AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE SMALL BUSINESS RELIEF SUPPORT

Chair Bolter welcomed Mr. Andy Johnston and Mr. Dante Villarreal to present more information on the Rapid Response Economic Relief Fund. They discussed some of the processes that will be needed to assist local small businesses in the near and distant future.

Chair Bolter stated that the preliminary allocation for small business assistance was \$10 million. She expressed concern that \$10 million might not be enough and she asked the group for their opinions. Mr. Villarreal agreed it should be more. While there are more businesses that have access to resources now, there is still a great need for assistance. Mr. Johnston concurred and stated \$15-\$20 million could help the program be more impactful.

Vice-Chair Stek stated that the magnitude of need for all businesses that fit the profile seems like it far exceeds even \$15 million. Mr. Johnston answered that while that may be true for all businesses, that is why it will be important to identify what businesses need it the most right now, for example the businesses working on low capacity or those that cannot open at all. Mr. Villarreal added that businesses that have already received aid cannot apply.

Vice-Chair Stek also asked what needs can be addressed to make the most impact in the community. Mr. Villarreal stressed the importance of employee size. He also stated that zip codes, the lifecycle of the business, or if they were stable before COVID-19 could be useful areas to look at. They found it useful to ask business owners how vital it is their business remains open and what they do for the community.

Vice-Chair Stek then asked, assuming the funds are allocated, how long it would take to identify and distribute. Mr. Villarreal stated that if they started on Monday, they could be prepared for outreach by Friday. He also suggested two phases of outreach, first with partners to look at communities and identify the places that haven't received aid yet, then second to the general public for applications. The biggest delay would be in deciding who is on the review committee.

Mr. Talen emphasized that businesses on the ground that are doing the work should be compensated.

Ms. Jones indicated that "business interruption" due to COVID-19 seems like a component that many businesses have experienced. Mr. Villarreal agreed that it is the majority of businesses, which means that it is a component that qualifies many for the utilization of such funding. The grants must be used in response to the challenges of working under COVID-19 conditions, and not for debt or existing projects.

Ms. Jones also asked how many businesses have between five and 25 employees in Kent County. Mr. Villarreal answered he can follow up with that information.

Mr. Skaggs asked about some of the additional criteria they are considering for the application process. Mr. Villarreal stated a business size of one to five employees, because they have had more difficulty connecting to other resources. He also recommended to give fewer points to those who have already accessed other funds or PPE. Technical assistance will also be critical. There will be 30, 60, and 90 day follow ups to establish the use of the funds. He also advised they look for individuals who broadly represent Kent County, and an equity lens should be used.

Chair Bolter asked how soon they could have that component done. Mr. Johnston said as early as Monday, June 1.

Mr. Skaggs stated that some businesses are small, but not necessarily struggling in the same way. For example, some businesses have not had to furlough employees, or they can work from home. There are some other small businesses that cannot open at all. Mr. Skaggs asked for more absolute numbers of businesses and their employees. Chair Bolter suggested including a component asking how many employees they have had to furlough and how many they can bring back.

Chair Bolter asked if the subcommittee members would be comfortable putting in a number as a placeholder and giving the Chamber permission to proceed, then on Tuesday they can formalize the criteria. There was unanimous approval of allowing the Chamber to proceed, but different ideas of funding numbers which would be further investigated later. \$10 million was the agreed minimum funding amount.

Chair Bolter thanked Mr. Johnston and Mr. Villarreal for their presentation and time to answer questions.

V. UPDATE ON COVID EXPENDITURES

Mr. Britt presented Kent County's expenditures related to COVID-19 to date.

VI. CARES ACT ALLOCATION STRATEGY (PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS)

The subcommittee reviewed the preliminary allocation recommendations.

Mr. Skaggs asked what specifically the \$12.7 million for public safety and the correctional facility, the \$2.1 for contact tracing, and \$4.9 million in testing will be used for. Regarding testing, he asked if it is getting the county to the levels it needs to be. Mr. Britt answered they can provide a more detailed response at the Tuesday, June 2 meeting. Furthermore, a request will be sent to Mr. Adam London, Administrative Health Officer, and Sheriff Michelle LaJoye Young to hear more details about the requests of the Health Department, Sheriff's Office, and the Correctional Facility.

Chair Bolter stated that many of the services being requested by the public are Health Department services. It will be important to keep track of what that department is already doing. Mr. Britt answered they will ensure there is no duplication. She also asked that further information regarding the funding amount for Return-to-Work PPE be provided to the subcommittee.

Chair Bolter noted that the funding for homelessness prevention could be captured from a source other than the CARES Act, and in that case would make more funding available within the CARES Act for other purposes. Mr. Stephen Duarte, Assistant to the Administrator, agreed after noting that as funding amounts are raised in some categories, it may take dollars away from the initial \$20 million target reserve for second wave funding.

Vice-Chair Stek asked how \$20 million was determined to be the recommended amount for reserves in second wave funding when there are so many immediate needs within the community. Mr. Duarte answered that the number was suggested based on what other local governments are setting aside. The number

could be changed if the subcommittee would like. Vice-Chair Stek stated he would like the number in reserves to go down. He agreed it is good to be prepared, but it is essential that local businesses are stabilized.

Vice-Chair Stek also asked how many are being helped with the proposed \$10 million in funding for homelessness compared to \$10 million for businesses. Mr. Britt answered he will follow up with that answer.

Mr. Talen requested additional work be done with the City of Grand Rapids' request for funding. He agreed that they need to be reimbursed for their costs related to COVID-19. Chair Bolter answered communication is being done between the City of Grand Rapids and Kent County and more follow up will be done with the group soon.

Chair Bolter requested that more work be done on the municipality submissions and it be investigated to a more granular level.

Ms. Jones stated she would like the group to consider addressing the needs of the John Ball Zoo.

VII. SUBCOMMITTEE DOCUMENTS/CORRESPONDENCE

Mr. Britt shared correspondence that has been received from United Way/2-1-1, Kent Child Care Crisis Response Team, the Right Place, Gaines Township, and the City of Grand Rapids.

VIII. MISCELLANEOUS

Vice-Chair Stek stated if the group starts looking into the zoo, the museum should be included as well. Ms. Brieve gave support of connecting with the museum.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Allison Colberg helped draft a letter from the Grand Rapids Organizing Team. Several institutions worked together to organize key issues and where there may be funding to cover specific costs.

Mr. Cisneros state he would like to continue supporting the grassroots efforts of the Hispanic Chamber and Hispanic Center. He said their group would appreciate the financial support to help those in the heart of the community.

X. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business for discussion, Chair Bolter adjourned the meeting at 12:44 p.m.

ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVAL FOR DISTRIBUTION Pam VanKemen