

COVID RELIEF SUBCOMMITTEE MINUTES

September 10, 2020 – 10:30 a.m.

<https://kentcountymi.zoom.us/j/94655855698>

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: None.

Chair Bolter called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m.

I. WELCOME

Chair Bolter welcomed the group and thanked those who joined the meeting. She announced that Commissioner Stan Ponstein will be replacing Commissioner Roger Morgan on the subcommittee.

II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF AUGUST 27, 2020

Commissioner Brieve moved to approve the minutes from August 27, 2020 as presented. Supported by Commissioner Stek. Motion carried.

III. SMALL BUSINESS RECOVERY PROGRAM UPDATE

Mr. Dante Villarreal and Mr. Andy Johnston from the Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce provided updates about the Small Business Recovery Program. They also shared details about a proposal for an additional \$5 million to support businesses that remained closed as of August 1, 2020.

Commissioner Jones noted the “other” category of business sectors seems high and asked for a more thorough breakdown of what it includes. Mr. Villarreal stated that it comes down to how the businesses identified themselves during the application process.

Commissioner Stek asked why the number of manufacturing category appears low. Mr. Villarreal stated that some of those businesses may have already received funding or perhaps they weren’t shut down very long. The number of employees also affects the eligibility of the business for this funding, so that could be another reason some may not have applied.

Commissioner Ponstein asked what surprises the Grand Rapids Chamber has noticed throughout this process. He also asked what they have learned from this that can be used moving forward. Mr. Villarreal stated the duration of negative impact on the community has been one area of surprise. For example, restaurants that attempted to move business outside for social distancing are now having to figure out other dining options for when it gets too cold.

Commissioner Stek asked what qualified businesses this additional funding is intended for. Mr. Johnston noted they increased the employee count for eligible businesses and gave some examples, including bowling alleys, indoor theaters, arcades, and indoor gyms.

Commissioner Skaggs asked what will happen if they cannot spend the entire \$5 million. Chair Bolter stated the subcommittee will be discussing this in more detail at their next meeting.

Commissioner Skaggs then asked how many businesses have received citations from the Health Department. He suggested that they ask applicants to check a box and sign indicating if they have been in compliance with the law. Mr. Johnston said he does not know the specific number of citations. He stated they can add that option to the form.

Commissioner Skaggs gave an example of a business that received \$10,000 from the Small Business Recovery Program when they had expressed a need for \$20,000 in their application. He asked if those businesses will have their applications looked at again to reassess if they can receive further funding. Mr. Villarreal stated he doubts there will be funding leftover to re-examine applications again. At this point applications will likely be taken for another four weeks.

Commissioner Skaggs also asked if the numbers presented for childcare seem appropriate. Mr. Villarreal stated they have had very intentional outreach to childcare providers. They will also be holding in-person and virtual clinics in English and Spanish.

Chair Bolter asked if the denied applicants are notified and given their reason(s) for denial. Mr. Villarreal answered yes.

Commissioner Skaggs moved to allocate \$5 million from the reserve fund to use to support businesses that remain closed during the pandemic.

Support by Commissioner Stek.

Commissioner Talen stated he would like to discuss this subject further after they look at the rest of the agenda so they can put it in the context of other needs.

Yeas: Stek, Brieve, Jones, Ponstein, Skaggs, Talen, Womack, Bolter – 8

Nays: 0.

Motion carried.

IV. NOT-FOR-PROFITS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM UPDATE

Ms. Linda Howell summarized the progress on spending allocations for the Kent County Non-Profit Organization COVID-19 Grant Fund. Mr. Matt Nelson of Warner Norcross & Judd LLP gave an update on the Childcare Grant Program as well as homelessness assistance.

Commissioner Talen discussed a concern he brought up at the previous meeting. There are organizations that have provided COVID relief services for the county but then became ineligible for other assistance. Mr. Nelson stated that specific organization has received a grant to make up the difference. Other organizations that have aided the county will be eligible too.

V. ASSISTANCE TO LOCAL UNITS OF GOVERNMENT UPDATE

Chair Bolter gave an update about assistance to local units of government. The group discussed ways they could split the funding in a fair and equitable way across the county. It was discussed that they could format this program similarly to the school assistance program. This way, the requirements are explained, the

liability is put on the entity, and then money could be allocated on the front end. The dollar amounts offered could be based on population and number of COVID-19 positive cases. The group also discussed that public safety costs should also be considered.

Commissioner Skaggs requested to see the formulas that would be used if they proceed with this method.

Mr. Jeff Dood, Fiscal Services Director, recommended to allocate the \$15 million based on population first. A second allocation would be done with the remaining amount based on other needs such as case count.

Commissioner Talen requested information on the formulas being used and the Sheriff's allocation process before the next subcommittee meeting.

Chair Bolter clarified this subject will be discussed further at a future meeting. She also clarified that this funding is not the only support they are providing for the people of these municipalities. It is for the actual municipal government.

The group agreed to look deeper into this subject at the next meeting.

VI. WIFI ACCESS POINTS UPDATE

Ms. MaryBeth Vantill, Strategy and Performance Manager, shared new information regarding WiFi access points throughout Kent County and welcomed Mr. Tim Mroz from The Right Place who is providing assistance on this project.

VII. CARES FUNDING ALLOCATION PLAN

Mr. Stephen Duarte summarized the CARES Funding Allocation Plan through September 8, 2020.

VIII. OTHER (SUBCOMMITTEE DOCUMENTS/CORRESPONDENCE)

None.

IX. MISCELLANEOUS

Commissioner Talen requested a written update about what work is being done for the mitigation of homelessness.

Commissioner Jones requested that the meeting next week be focused on funding for local units of government and focus on other regular agenda items the following week.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

X. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business for discussion, Chair Bolter adjourned the meeting at 12:57 p.m.

ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVAL FOR DISTRIBUTION Pam Van Kenen