

COVID RELIEF SUBCOMMITTEE MINUTES

September 24, 2020 – 9:30 a.m.

<https://kentcountymi.zoom.us/j/92506151953>

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: Commissioner Robert Womack

Chair Bolter called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m.

I. WELCOME

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

II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 17, 2020

Commissioner Talen moved to approve the minutes from September 17, 2020 as presented. Supported by Commissioner Brieve. Motion carried.

III. CONVENTION ARENA AUTHORITY (CAA) PROPOSAL

Mr. Richard MacKeigan of the Grand Rapids-Kent County Convention/Arena Authority summarized a reactivation plan for the Van Andel Arena, DeVos Place, and DeVos Performance Hall.

Commissioner Ponstein asked what the feeling is in the industry about people starting to go to events again. Mr. MacKeigan explained that safety protocols being implemented will help Kent County be more competitive in the future. He shared a statistic referenced by Live Nation which said that of the customers who were offered refunds, about 86% chose to keep their tickets. Furthermore, those who bought more expensive and multi-day festival tickets chose to retain their tickets for the following year at about a 60% rate. There is a lot of scheduling work continuing behind the scenes to make sure the county is prepared to entertain people safely.

IV. HEALTH DEPARTMENT ADDITIONAL NEEDS

Dr. Adam London provided an update about the work that has been done by the Health Department and what work still needs to be done. He summarized what their CARES Act funds have been used for thus far and what options are available for continued and expanded assistance. Dr. London explained that an additional \$2 million could help the Health Department make testing readily available in schools, add testing locations throughout the county, expand mental health care, and strengthen communication.

Commissioner Brieve asked what type of capacity the county has for rapid testing. Dr. London answered they are looking at a saliva test that could have a turnaround time of about 24 hours. They are also looking into the nares test which will be easier for some individuals. He also mentioned that transport time can cause delays with labs. Dr. London stated that they are confident they can have results in 36-48 hours.

Commissioner Stek asked if the Health Department anticipates more reassessments with funding. Dr. London stated it's possible, but they feel confident with the resources they are receiving now.

Commissioner Skaggs asked for a cost breakdown of the \$2 million. He also asked if they think this will cover all the Health Department's needs. Dr. London listed the second mobile unit, additional testing locations, a media purchase for communications, the extension of TriWest for the mental health crisis system, and some infrastructure projects within their clinic, annex, and laboratory. Dr. London stated yes; they feel very comfortable about the funds covering the needs, but the bigger concern will have to do with staffing.

Commissioner Talen asked whether they are considering gun violence as a significant public health issue. Dr. London said yes, violence is a public health priority. Specific improvements include crisis centers, mobile crisis units, a 24-hour call center, and making sure that no one is turned away due to an inability to pay.

Commissioner Talen also asked Dr. London what his thoughts are on a Cure Violence's model. Dr. London stated Cure Violence offers one of many ways to approach the issue. An important area they will need to keep in mind is sustainability and how well the solutions work long-term for the community.

Commissioner Stek asked if Cure Violence is being actively looked into by the Health Department or Kent County. Dr. London has had conversations with the group but there is not something actively ongoing. Mr. Britt stated staff has engaged in discussions with the organization over the past few weeks.

V. CARES ACT REPORTING REQUIREMENTS/TIMELINE

Mr. Jeff Dood, Fiscal Services Director, reviewed CARES Act reporting requirements that will need to be followed.

Commissioner Talen asked about estimates that need to be completed per state or federal guidelines. Mr. Dood stated they submitted that data on September 21.

VI. NON-PROFIT/UNITED WAY UPDATE

Mr. Matt Nelson of Warner Norcross & Judd LLP gave an update about the Non-Profit Organization COVID-19 Grant Fund. At this point the group is confident they can get the funds out in time.

Commissioner Talen asked if any checks have gone out yet. Mr. Nelson answered \$3.7 million in checks have been issued so far. An additional \$1 million in grant agreements are waiting to be returned and excused. Of the remainder, \$1.2 million are in the process waiting for feedback and about \$270,000 are being prepared now.

Commissioner Jones asked if grantees are legally compliant with the CARES Act spending requirements. Mr. Nelson answered yes; they ensure the requests are for permissible, eligible expenses.

VII. WIFI HOTSPOTS UPDATE

Mr. Tim Mroz of The Right Place summarized the progress of the WiFi Hotspot project since the subcommittee's last meeting.

Chair Bolter expressed concern about municipalities which may have declined the offers to date, especially in areas where broadband internet access is already limited. She asked if the reason some

municipalities are declining is because they do not want to pay the monthly services fees after the year ends. Mr. Mroz stated that is possible, but he can follow up to be sure.

Commissioner Skaggs asked if the cities are the ones contacting school districts. Mr. Mroz answered they have not been reaching out to the school districts yet. Commissioner Skaggs asked the same of the Kent District Library. Mr. Mroz stated that most municipalities know the capabilities of the libraries. He also stated most libraries are set up to have their WiFi reach their parking lots too.

Commissioner Skaggs asked if the funding for this program is enough. Mr. Mroz answered that they should not need additional funding, and they might not need to spend all they currently have.

VIII. GRAND RAPIDS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE UPDATES

Mr. Dante Villarreal provided an update on the Kent County Small Business Recovery Program. He shared demographic information, industry information, and noted they have now received almost 3,000 applications.

Commissioner Stek asked if the funding criteria and funding allotments for the new program are the same as the Small Business Recovery Program. Mr. Villarreal answered they are somewhat aligned. The new program also includes non-profits and there is no employee cap. The allotments are also slightly different, with grant amounts being \$10,000, \$20,000, \$30,000, and \$40,000.

Commissioner Jones stated local chambers have been given money to help spread the word about the Small Business Recovery Program, but there are still some businesses saying they have not heard about the program. She asked for more details about accountability and what they have done. Mr. Villarreal stated they can do that follow up.

IX. CARES FUNDING ALLOCATION BUCKETS REVIEW AND RESERVES OPTIONS

Mr. Stephen Duarte summarized the CARES Act bucket allocations as of September 22.

Chair Bolter asked for more information about the additional \$2 million for small business grants/loans and technical assistance. Mr. Britt explained there is not a specific proposal yet, but the Chamber is available to answer questions.

Commissioner Stek asked if \$500,000 will be enough for the youth violence category. Mr. Britt stated there are some other programs and non-profits that help with this subject too.

Commissioner Skaggs asked what they are looking to accomplish on this item today. He also asked if the plan is to get reserves down to \$0. Chair Bolter said she would like to proceed with at least the Convention-Arena Authority, youth violence and crime prevention, Family Promise, and the Health Department and look closer at the small business item at the next meeting. Mr. Duarte recommended not taking the reserve fund all the way down to \$0 and instead bring it down to \$2 million - \$2.5 million to cover year-end costs that may come up.

Commissioner Skaggs made a motion to move \$1 million from the Mental Health bucket to Unallocated Reserve and to approve the allocations for Convention Arena Authority, youth violence and crime prevention, Family Promise, and the Health Department.

Support by Commissioner Stek.

Yeas: Stek, Brieve, Jones, Ponstein, Skaggs, Talen, Bolter – 7

Nays: 0.

Motion carried.

Chair Bolter discussed upcoming meeting dates and topics. Subjects to be covered include additional assistance for schools, a small business proposal, what else can be done for the county with unallocated reserves, and additional information about the youth violence item.

X. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business for discussion, Chair Bolter adjourned the meeting at 11:45 a.m.

ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVAL FOR DISTRIBUTION Pam VanKemen