



**Ohio Association of  
Community Action Agencies**

**Ohio Association of Community Action Agencies  
Board of Trustees Meeting  
November 15, 2013  
Sheraton Columbus Hotel at Capitol Square  
Columbus, Ohio**

**Members Present:** Gwen Robinson, President; Robert Chilton, Second Vice President; Janice Warner, Secretary; Ruthann House, Treasurer; Joe Devany; Tim Donnellan; Judith Barris; David Shea; Gary Obloy; Rodney Reasonover; Malcolm Costa; Wayne McLaughlin; Ken Kempton; Al Norris

**Members Excused:** David Brightbill, First Vice President; Jacqueline Middleton; Tom Reed; Gary Ricer; Bambi Baughn; Cheryl Thiessen; Robert Hamilton; Deb Gerken

**Staff Present:** Philip E. Cole, Executive Director; Colleen Stoker, Communications Director; Greg Bollenbacher, Fiscal Director; Josh Summer, Development Director; Lorie McClain, Program Manager; Neva Dunn, Office Manager

**Guests Present:** Jim Mermis and Paul Kudlak, Junto Company; Randy Hunt, Melissa Stanford and Sharon Smith of DSA; Larry Price, Price Consulting; Ron Rees, COAD

Ms. Robinson called the meeting to order and asked for a moment of reflection.

Ms. Warner called the roll. A quorum was established. Ms. Robinson stated that District 1 needs to appoint a new representative as Greg Hopkins is no longer with EOPA.

Ms. House moved to approve the agenda. Mr. Devany seconded. The agenda was approved.

Mr. Devany moved to approve the minutes. Mr. Shea seconded. The minutes were approved.

**ODSA Report: Randy Hunt**

Mr. Hunt reported that HEAP winter crisis launched November 1 and that it was a good, smooth launch. He congratulated everyone for that. He also reported that HEAP claims are down this year. This has been a trend since PIPP Plus was revised and encourages people to stay current and not go into disconnect status. This is a good thing. He said they received a letter from HHS with a HEAP allocation at 90 percent, which takes into account the sequester. He passed out a press release from the National Energy Assistance Directors Association that discusses the cuts

to HEAP due to the sequester. He said that they are looking at having a kaizen to improve the HEAP application process. Next year HEAP applications will be in OCEAN and that will hopefully help, but currently the process takes too long. They want to involve agencies and other stakeholders to help improve the process.

Mr. Hunt also reported that they have filed their rate case for the universal financial fund for PIPP and EPP. The PIPP rules revisions have been delayed because of issues with PUCO, but they are now on track and hope to have those finalized by January.

Mr. Hunt said that they received a letter from HHS regarding CSBG funding for the first quarter of 2014. Applications are due November 25. Since the last application process two years ago enhancements have been made to OCEAN. Board members discussed that they are still having problems, such as getting rejected and items entered disappearing. The composite part is better though. Ms. Stanford said that they are working on the issues and doing testing. She said agencies should contact her directly with problems.

DSA has completed their response to the IG report on HWAP and should be submitting it shortly. Most of the issues have already been addressed with OCEAN, but there will be a handful of policy changes proposed in the next state plan, such as a second review of high value homes.

Mr. Hunt said that he met with the re-development office who is working with a company that is remediating and re-marketing several sites in Ohio to create jobs as part of the GM restructure. They want to identify local partners to assist with facilitating public meetings and would like to work with Community Action Agencies. Mr. Hunt said he might be reaching out to some agencies in the applicable areas regarding this effort.

#### **Finance Report: Ruthann House**

Ms. House reported that there was nothing new with the dues summary and that it is one of the best we've had in years. She also said that there are no issues with the finance report and we have positive cash for the year. We do expect to spend some of that before the end of the year. Mr. Devany moved to accept the financial report. Mr. McLaughlin seconded. The motion passed.

#### **President's Report: Gwen Robinson**

Ms. Robinson reported that she attended the Head Start regional conference. She thought it was interesting and the sessions were intense. There were several new agencies because of recompetition. She spoke with Barb Haxton about having a statewide or regional symposium with Head Start and Community Action. Ms. Haxton was supportive of the idea. Ms. Robinson asked Mr. Cole to follow up on this. Mr. Devany also attended the conference and commented that what he took away was that HHS is saying we should not be afraid to cut kids to maintain quality because of the funding cuts. Mr. Kempton commented that his Head Start representative mentioned a session focused on home-based rather than center-based education, which is very different. There was discussion on the difficulty of cutting kids.

Ms. Robinson also reported that EOPA is doing very well thanks to the work that Mr. Cole and OACAA provided. She then discussed the success of an event held by her agency where she

showed the film “American Winter” and encouraged other agencies to do the same. She also said that a few of our members are sick and we need to keep them in our thoughts and prayers.

### **Social Enterprise/Marketing Report: Robert Chilton**

Mr. Chilton reported that a survey was sent out to members to identify who has a social enterprise. Once they identify those agencies, they will dive deeper. They have only received nine responses to the survey so far. Of the responses, those that do not currently have a social enterprise are interested in learning more about programs that involve food service, home repair, childcare, and family wellness planning. Those that do have a social enterprise offer a variety of programs including a fee-for-service workforce development or placement program. They were given a \$30,000 contract and raised \$70,000 in profit. Another rehabs single family homes. One agency is managing four tax credit properties. Another purchased a building supply company that acts a for-profit. Mr. Chilton commented that there are some innovative things being done, but we need to hear from more agencies. He hopes to have a comprehensive report from the survey results at the Winter Conference. At the request of Ms. Robinson, he said he would send the responses he has so far to the board to stimulate thought.

### **Public Relations Report: Janice Warner**

Ms. Warner deferred to Ms. Stoker. Ms. Stoker reported that an email was sent out November 1 to all agencies requesting a success story for the “50 Best Things About Community Action” campaign where we will showcase the 50 best things about Community Action by highlighting Ohio’s 50 Community Action Agencies with one success story per agency each week throughout 2014 posted on our blog and social media sites and emailed to our full email list. She reminded the board that the deadline for submitting stories is December 13. Ms. Robinson shared a success story from her agency.

Ms. Stoker also reported that the anniversary toolkit is almost complete and will be emailed to agencies shortly with event ideas, sample press releases, letters to the editor and talking points. She commented that there is concern about people using the anniversary of Community Action to say that it isn’t working and told members that it is important to have success stories of real people that have been helped to combat that.

Mr. Chilton asked if we should be increasing our advocacy efforts and/or supporting policy, such as income inequality. Mr. Cole said yes and explained how he recently attended an event for the governor and the governor wanted to know more about what we do. He explained to the governor that we’re not about making poverty more tolerable, but about getting people out of poverty. We want to advocate that and work with this and future administrations. Mr. Costa commented that we need to educate people about all of the programs that were part of the Great Society program and broaden our approach.

### **Training and Development Report: Robert Hamilton**

Ms. McClain reported in Mr. Hamilton’s absence that there are five on-site trainings scheduled from now until the end of the year. Any new training requests will be scheduled in 2014. Ms. McClain said that if anyone needs training they should let us know. She also reported that at the Summer Conference, David Bradley will be doing a workshop on the history of the War on Poverty.

### **Legislative Committee and Executive Director's Report: Phil Cole**

Mr. Cole reported that things are going well with EOPA. They have a strong board that is working together and good leadership. They are going through a re-branding effort, as we suggested. Mr. Cole commented that strong leadership is important because they have to make the decisions; we can make suggestions, but they have to make the decisions.

CLS had a board training that went well. There were good interactions with some disagreement, but they reconciled in the end. The board chair called Mr. Cole and told him that it was a good training and he appreciated it. They are making good changes, but they have a ways to go. Mr. Hunt commented that they submitted a quality improvement plan. DSA commented on the plan and returned it to them. DSA has received the second version within the required timeframe, but he has not looked at it yet. They are on reimbursement and are working through that with fiscal.

Mr. Cole also reported that there is a new executive director at HHWP. He has a strong background in workforce. He is excited about the position and wants to do some entrepreneurial things. Mr. Cole commented that he thinks the agency is in good hands.

Mr. Cole said that regarding Operation Warm, the governor decided he wanted to go through Community Action and he chose the counties. This is a good opportunity for us. He also discussed the VETS program with them and they are looking into helping us with funding. Mr. Mermis commented that he spoke with the head of the Governor's Office on Faith-based and Community Initiatives after she spoke with the selected agencies. She said she had never seen such a "can-do" attitude. This is a great seed that will enable us to grow.

Mr. Cole also reported that he attended the NCAF Conference. One thing that was discussed was an effort for Community Action Agencies to manage low-income credit unions. It would take a great effort. Some agencies could work together to develop regional credit unions. The board discussed its thoughts on credit unions. Most were interested in learning more. Mr. Cole suggested he have people from the Bergen CAA come to talk with us and the board was interested in that idea.

Mr. Cole gave an update on HB 230. Cheryl Grossman has been caught up in the municipal tax bill, which was voted out of the House last week. Hopefully there will be hearings on HB 230 next week. David Bradley is also working on CSBG Reauthorization. He has four sponsors, two democrats and two republicans.

There has been some discussion about changing the name of the Best Practice Awards; some people say they're not really best practices, but outstanding programs. Mr. Cole asked if anyone had any thoughts about that and no one commented. Mr. Cole then asked if there was an interest in having OACAA do a salary survey. Mr. Devany made a motion that OACAA conduct a salary survey. Ms. House seconded. The motion passed.

Mr. Cole said that we need to make sure we have enough funds to support our political friends and encouraged people to join the OACAA PAC Century Club. He commented that things are

going well in Ohio and informed the board that he will be out until late December for shoulder surgery.

Mr. Mermis stated that the comment Mr. Cole made at the governor's event about not just making poverty tolerable but working to end it resonated. He said that we have an opportunity to show that Community Action is a unique anti-poverty network, especially with the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. We need to show that we are different; we get things done, while other social service agencies perpetuate poverty. There was a discussion on what makes Community Action unique. Mr. Costa stressed that involvement of low-income people makes Community Action unique. Mr. Kudlak said that the agencies participating in the Operation Warm project should let their area legislators know about it.

**Personnel Report: Tim Donnellan**

Nothing to report

**Veteran's Committee: Robert Hamilton**

Nothing to report

**Energy Report: Joe Devany**

Mr. Devany reported that testimony was put forth by OPAE regarding SB 58, which is about energy efficiency. David Rinebolt is greatly concerned about SB 58. It goes against SB 221, which has been successful. He wants to stop the passage of SB 58 and is encouraging OPAE members to contact their senators and speak against it.

**Partnership Report: Joe Devany**

Mr. Devany reported that the Partnership held a planning session in California in late October. At the session it was determined that the Partnership will develop a strategic plan and attempt to follow the standards that are being developed as far as they relate to the Partnership. The Partnership will be putting out a questionnaire to the membership after the first of the year and will be doing webinars to obtain membership input on what activities they would like to see the Partnership involved in the foreseeable future. During this discussion Mr. Devany made the board members aware of the request by the OACAA board for the Partnership to become involved in a national effort to stand up for Community Action in the face of an administration that has not been supportive. This was not a board meeting that was called, so according to the by-laws, action could not be voted on.

Mr. Devany also reported that Lil Dupree has left the Partnership. Also, at the time of the meeting, no word had been received from the administration regarding the proposed standards. It was felt that the government shutdown and the difficulties with the Affordable Care Act contributed to the delay in the anticipated response.

There was also discussion on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in Washington at the meeting. The Partnership is trying to line up some high-level dignitaries and to promote some of the innovative activities of Community Action Agencies throughout the country. They are anticipating a large CCAP class will be designated at the celebration.

Mr. Devany also reported that the Partnership's mid-year training conference will be held in Fort Lauderdale the first full week of January. Many of the sessions will deal with the activities necessary for the proposed standards. It is hoped that they will have a response from the administration regarding the standards by that time.

**Head Start Report: Rodney Reasonover**

Nothing to report

**CAPLAW: David Brightbill**

Nothing to report

**Agency/District Reports**

Nothing to report

**Old Business**

No old business

**New Business**

Mr. Rees said that the Ohio Weatherization Training Center received accreditation from the Interstate Renewable Energy Commission board, which is good for five years. Also COAD is having BPI training for Weatherization staff.

Motion to adjourn by Mr. Devany. Mr. McLaughlin seconded. The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Janice W. Warner, Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date