

**Commission on Community Action Agencies**  
**Minutes**  
**November 7, 2014 – 8:30 a.m.**  
**Mid-Iowa Community Action, Inc. – Story County Family Development Center**  
**230 SE 16<sup>th</sup> Street – Ames, Iowa**

**Commission Members participating:**

Kelly Busch – Chairperson	Anna Hilpipe	Marc Lindeen – via phone
Robyn Ormsby	Tom Quiner	

**Commission Members not participating:**

Brian Lauterbach	Anna Brown	Mary Whisenand
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**DHR Staff Participating:**

Bill Brand	Gwen Howe	Jerry McKim	Marcia Thompson	Greg Pieper
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**Others in Attendance:**

Tiffany Keimig – ICAA	Arlene McAtee - MICA	Clarissa Thompson- MICA
Sunny Thompson – MICA	Gloria Symons – MICA	Cristin Mechler – Legislative Services

**I. Call to Order**

Ms. Busch thanked Ms. McAtee and her staff for allowing the Commission to hold their meeting at their offices. The meeting was called to order at approximately 8:30.

**II. Roll Call**

Roll call was taken, quorum was established.

**III. Approval of August 15, 2014, Commission Meeting Minutes**

Ms. Busch asked if there were any changes or additions needed to the minutes of the August 14, 2014, meeting. There were none. There was no discussion. Mr. Lindeen moved that the minutes be approved as presented. Ms. Ormsby seconded the motion. All Commission Members participating voted aye. The motion carried.

**IV. Approval of the Agenda**

Ms. Busch stated that Mr. Lindeen was available for a limited amount of time so it is necessary to move the Legislative Committee Report and the Commission Schedule towards the front of the meeting. There was no discussion. Mr. Quiner moved that the agenda be approved as revised. Ms. Ormsby seconded the motion. All Commission Members participating voted aye. The motion carried.

**V. Legislative Committee Report – Ms. Robyn Ormsby**

Ms. Robyn Ormsby, Ms. Mary Whisenand, and Ms. Kelly Busch comprised the Legislative Committee. Ms. Ormsby reported that the Committee worked along with ICAA in the preparation of the Legislative Committee Recommendations. A handout of the recommendations was distributed.

- The Committee is recommending an increase to FaDSS by \$750,000 towards expanding some services and hopefully serving some additional families and allowing to serve current families a little longer on the program to help them achieve their goals. She asked to add the word “additional “ to the final paragraph between the words provide and services, and to strike “an additional 240 families” to keep it a little bit more generic to allow the agencies to do what they want to do.
- The Committee is asking for \$200,000 for IDA accounts. There is a waiting list of 200 savers currently and the program is currently closed.
- The Committee is asking to increase the affordability of broadband technology for low-income lowans.
- The Committee would like to support a 10% increase in FIP payments.
- The Committee is also supporting a \$1,000,000 in funding (a \$400,000 increase which would allow two additional agencies to participate) for the state’s Early Head Start programs.

- The Committee is also supporting a state investment of \$1,800,000 to assist community action agencies to improve and advance their infrastructure.
- The last committee recommendation is to support legislation to exempt non-profit organizations from title fees and taxes if they operate a program by which donated vehicles are inspected and given to working Iowans who have low-incomes.

Mr. Lindeen stated he appreciated the work of the Committee and moved that the Committee's Legislative Recommendations be approved. Ms. Busch asked if there were any questions or discussion. Mr. Quiner asked how the amount of \$1,800,000 to assist community action agencies improve and advance their infrastructure was arrived at. Mr. Brand stated he thought it was arrived at by giving \$100,000 to each of the 18 agencies. ICAA conducted a survey of the agencies asking what their needs were and they identified the kinds of things that were listed on the handout. Mr. Quiner also asked about the exemption to non-profit organizations from title fees and taxes on donated vehicles, he asked if the vehicles are inspected or not inspected. Ms. Busch stated they would not be inspected, the vehicles are up and running, not salvaged titles, and it would be a regular title so there would be no inspection needed. It would just be the cost of transferring the title from the individual, who would receive a tax write off of the gift law, and the non-profit agency would not have to pay the sales tax on the gift. Mr. Brand stated the committee did spend a fair amount of time on their recommendations and also asked Ms. Ross from ICAA to participate in one of the meetings. Ms. Ormsby did a lot of work in getting the draft ready. Mr. Brand appreciates their hard work.

Ms. Busch seconded the motion. All Commission members present voted aye. The recommendations were adopted.

#### **VI. Set Commission Schedule for 2015 – Ms. Busch**

Mr. Brand stated that the Department of Human Rights is planning on a number of events on February 26, 2015. A Legislative Breakfast will be held from 7:30 to 9:00 with all Commissions and DHR Board members being invited to participate. This will be followed by Commission meetings of each of the DHR Commissions. These would be followed by the regularly scheduled Department of Human Rights Board Quarterly Meeting from 1:00 to 3:00. The Department of Human Rights would then hold its annual Open House. People would be invited and welcomed for the whole day but would not necessarily be expected to stay for everything.

A discussion was held. Mr. Quiner moved that the Commission meet on the following dates:

- February 26, 2015, in conjunction with the DHR Legislative Breakfast and DHR Day
- June 2, 2015, in conjunction with the ICAA Annual Training Conference at the Holiday Inn on Fleur Drive in Des Moines.
- August 11, 2015
- November 6, 2015

Ms. Ormsby seconded the motion. All Commission members present voted aye. The motion carried.

Mr. Brand reminded the Commission that the FaDSS Day on the Hill is scheduled for January 14, 2015, and all are welcomed to attend this inspirational day.

#### **VII. Presentation by MICA – Ms. Arlene McAtee**

MICA's five county service area includes: Hardin, Marshall, Poweshiek, Story and Tama Counties but provides various services in 31 counties with 41 programs. BITCAP began in 1965 with one program which was Head Start. In 1972 the community action agencies were realigned and MICA began with Hardin, Marshall, Poweshiek and Tama Counties. In 1980 the Story County Supervisors came to MICA and asked if they could join with MICA.

MICA's annual budget is about \$14,600,000. They have about 195 regular staff and 40 to 60 active casual staff depending on the time of year. Their tri-partite Board of Directors is made up of 12 members. They have the Community Services Block Grant, LIHEAP, Utility Customer Contributions, Weatherization, Disaster Assistance, Tenant Based Rental Assistance, FaDSS, WIC, Breastfeeding Peer Counseling, Maternal & Child Health, Iowa Nutrition School Grants, Hawk-I outreach, I-Smile, Energy Saver Project with Alliant, Child and Adult Care Food Program, Home Provider Program, Head Start, Early Head Start, Emergency Food Programs, Living with HIV Case Management, Earned Income Tax Credit, Volunteer Tax Assistance, Pell Care Nurse Consultant, Spread the Word, teen pregnancy prevention, advocacy, community forums, plus many more.

This meeting was held at the Story County Family Development Center. Directly across the parking lot from the Center are MICA's Health Clinic and Dental Clinic. After a video presentation by Arlene a tour was conducted of the Family Development Center, Health Center, and Dental Clinic. The tour was enjoyed by all and everyone was

impressed with the facilities, staff and programs. The Commission wishes to thank MICA for hosting the meeting, the tour of their facilities in Story County, as well as their wonderful work with Iowa's low-income families.

Mr. Brand thanked Ms. McAtee for her presentation for the Commission so they can learn what the community action agencies really do in Iowa. It is always educational, informative, and awe inspiring.

#### **VIII. Administrator's Report – Bill Brand**

An emerging development is occurring at Red Rock Community Action Program and the City of Des Moines Community Action Agency. The executive director for Red Rock retired last summer. He had some initial discussions with the City of Des Moines about a possible sharing of services between the two agencies. Red Rock has hired an interim director, John Wilson. John has been directing Red Rock's board and agency through an exercise of looking at who they are and who they would like to become. They have looked at a wide range of options. They have come to a conclusion that they would like to remain an agency, they want to become a strong agency, they would like to expand the current service delivery service area, and believe working with the City of Des Moines would present some opportunities for the agency to really build, strengthen, and expand. At the same time, the City of Des Moines has been looking at similar issues and Doug Romig, their director has taken his leadership through a process of looking at the pros and cons of continuing on as they are or engaging in some discussions with Red Rock about it sharing or merging. Part of the City's motivation is the recognition that as a public entity they have some challenges as a community action agency that a private non-profit doesn't have. That is around things such as the ability to raise funds from the community and the ability to establish partnerships with other entities in the community. It is difficult in identifying and addressing the needs of the low-income citizens in the City as effectively as they would like. Perhaps through a merging with Red Rock, that Red Rock would be in a better position to serve people in the City of Des Moines. Staff from the City of Des Moines has put together some pros and cons documents for the Des Moines City Council to take a look at and consider and recently the Des Moines City Council took action to basically instruct its staff to explore a transition plan with Red Rock toward a merger between the two agencies with the City of Des Moines giving up its designation as a Community Action Agency and become part of the service delivery area for Red Rock. Now the City of Des Moines has taken formal action to begin the discussions. They have certain conditions they are concerned about. They want services preserved for the citizens of Des Moines. They have staffing concerns, people who work for the City at this point. Red Rock has certain concerns around suddenly the City of Des Moines being the "big dog" in the agency, are there rural/urban issues to be concerned about, those kinds of things. A number of issues would have to be worked out between the two entities for a merger to actually happen. John Wilson has been communicating with Bill Brand regularly and with the City of Des Moines and ICAA, taking things one step at a time and making sure that everyone is comfortable and clear about what they want to do and how it will benefit the citizens served. John Wilson is helping to facilitate the discussion between the two agencies and identifying what needs to be done for a transition to happen and a merger to result from that. Issues range from software systems differences, pay scales, services offered governance issues, etc. We have not seen a merger between agencies happen for many years. It is a new thing for us to deal with. Both agencies are committed to working with us to see that if they decide to proceed with this plan that we are on board with it and everything is according to the rules/regulations etc. If the merger takes place the services could be expanded by being able to tap into corporate sponsorship/partnerships/ fundraising that is not possible at this time because of the City of Des Moines Community Action Agency's structure. Mr. Brand will keep the Commission informed of the happenings.

The FaDSS program was able to use \$13,000 of unspent FaDSS dollars to engage the services of some consultants who do a lot of work in program evaluation. One of the FaDSS' program's short comings has been to conduct some sort of evaluation of the program and the outcomes it achieves. It needs to look at what we measure and how we measure it and how we can do that better. An organization that does that is Hornby Zeller. They are familiar with Iowa and the kinds of issues that FaDSS deals with. We had a short term contract with them over the summer that has resulted in a report recently issued. We wanted someone to look at the program and how the services are delivered to give us some concrete information about the evidence base that exists for the model used in that program. One of the things we needed from them was to document the evidence base that supports the FaDSS program and how it is delivered. The other piece that they looked at was to evaluate the outcomes measures and the tools and instruments that we use to measure the outcomes within the program currently and are they right measures, are we collecting the right data, are we using the right instruments to collect the data, and analyze it and give us some recommendations on what we might consider doing differently. We just got the report recently and the FaDSS Council is taking the lead on it. The FaDSS Council has an Outcomes Committee and it is going to be the entity that will take this report and try to turn it into an action plan and set some direction for the FaDSS program that will help us continue to strengthen that program to demonstrate its effectiveness and outcomes to be able to show people concrete outcomes. One of the conclusions of the report was that FaDSS has a very strong foundation in evidence and outcomes measured.

There are still things that we can and should do. We have come to the conclusion that our technology and our IT and data collection systems in place really are not going to be adequate for what we need to do. We have put minimal resources into the development of those systems over time and it is going to require us to invest in building those systems.

Since two of our Weatherization Experts retired from our program over the summer we are trying to replace one of those employees. We have recruited and have conducted some interviews. Hopefully we will be able to hire someone soon to provide training and technical assistance to our weatherization programs through our system.

## **VIII. Bureau Chief's Reports**

### **1. Weatherization Bureau – Gwen Howe**

Ms. Howe had prepared a report which was distributed. We didn't have a lot of people apply for the vacant weatherization position.

It is almost time for the Department of Energy to issue grant guidance. If we receive it in a timely manner, our State Plan will be due on January 30, 2015. If it is on time we will have a telephone Commission meeting to approve the plan before that date. 2015 is year three of our three year DOE grant cycle. We will probably have level funding (possibly a slight increase).

In the past we have discussed the Quality Control Inspector (QCI) certification. The state of Iowa now has two who have passed all of the tests. Both are employed by North Iowa Community Action Organization. We have several more taking the exam in November and December. Several have passed the written test but not the field test yet. They must travel somewhere to take the test. Most are going to Bourbon, Missouri, or Kansas City, Kansas. The field test requires having a house with a gas fired appliance, a natural drafting appliance, a gas cook stove and oven, insulation, access to the attic, a basement, a combustion air zone, etc. It is easier to go to a testing site even though a three and a half hour test turns into a two day trip. By April 1<sup>st</sup>, every house that is reported to DOE has to be inspected by a QCI certified inspector. States that have testing sites are moving along very quickly, those without testing sites are moving very slowly.

### **2. Community Services Bureau – Greg Pieper**

Mr. Pieper prepared a report for the Commission which was distributed. The focus has been on the 2015 applications and contracts being issued for FY 15. Fifteen of the applications have been approved and contracts issued. We have received some funding from the Continuing Resolution that funds the program for three months.

We are again beginning to work on the Needs Assessment survey with customer satisfaction questions which will be sent out next spring. The On-site reviews are completed for fiscal year 14 and there were not any major findings or issues found at any of the agencies.

The CAA's are submitting their year end reports and the annual federal report will be prepared from this material in March. There were no questions or discussion.

### **3. Energy Assistance Bureau – Jerry McKim**

The Bureau has received its first award letter based on the Continuing Resolution which is \$48,432,911. The OCS was able to release 90% of the funds up front at the first funding level. The point value was set the same as last year, (benefits are based on the point system). Last year the point system and the available funds resulted in an average benefit of around \$450 per household. We currently have the same amount of money contracted out. If the same number of people sign up for benefits, it should be about the same. Coming out of last winter, there was about \$1.7 million left over which was used as start up prior to October 1<sup>st</sup> which was used in administration and some in crisis funding. There was \$3.5 million in pre-purchase propane. We were able to get the vendors to lock in prices this year for about \$3 million of that. Currently propane is about \$1.65 a gallon. The Continuing Resolution funds the programs until December 11, 2014.

Last year in the crisis – emergency delivery of propane – all of that stuff that was going on; we had contracted \$3.6 million for crisis. We only have \$2.2 million this year contracted out. If we don't see more than a 2% increase in participation, and we receive the funding that we believe we will be getting, we will be in a position next year to start at the same level we began at this year.

Natural gas, which about 70 to 75% of lowan's heat with, is projected to be 15% higher this winter. They are required by law to notify a Governor of an affected state if the five year average for storage of the fuel is below the five year average. Governor Branstad got notified that natural gas storage is below the five year average. The only thing we can hope for is a milder winter than last year because costs probably won't be going down. The LIHEAP benefit at an average of \$450 per household is just not adequate.

**IX. ICAA Activities Report - Tiffany Keimig**

Ms. Keimig distributed a report prepared by Lana Ross as a summary from ICAA's Annual Training Conference in July. The ICAA Board met in October and discussed the vision mission of ICAA and some strategic themes they would like ICAA to focus on during the upcoming year. The top five were advocacy, training and technical assistance, marketing and media, research and study, and leadership development. The ICAA training conference will be held at the Airport Holiday Inn in Des Moines on June 2-4, 2015. Results of the Iowa Individual Assistance Grant Program (IIAGP) was explained. Another \$1 million has been contracted out to the Community Action Agencies to assist households. The Embrace Iowa campaign will begin on November 15<sup>th</sup> along with the Des Moines Register. Last year \$193,893 was raised for the Embrace Iowa Campaign. Mr. Quiner asked if there was any connection with Face book for promotion and marketing of Embrace Iowa.

**X. OTHER ITEMS**

**1. DHR Board Report – Anna Brown**

Ms. Brown was absent from this meeting due to the death of her Aunt. Mr. Brand stated that the DHR Board has approved the budget recommendation for the Department of Human Rights to the Governor's Office. It is basically status quo. It doesn't affect our Division since we don't receive state money for our programming. Having a status quo budget for our Administrative Services Division does have a direct impact on us in terms of our fiscal staff, office space, etc. for our Department.

The DHR Board is also taking on an issue to focus its activities around our Division of Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning, working on a federal grant that will involve disproportionate minority contact. It involves everything from school disciplinary things to juvenile court things, to adult correctional issues and they will be bringing together their expertise from the correctional field, the judicial field with judges, law enforcement, education, and others to look at how systems operate in Iowa and why there is disproportionate rates of contact with certain minority groups. Trying to find out what is behind these numbers, is there something that can be done about it. The DHR Board is interested in this because it affects so many offices and divisions within the Department.

**XI. Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held on February 26, 2015, in conjunction with DHR Day. It is anticipated that the meeting will be held in the small conference room in the Judicial Building, 1111 Court Avenue, Des Moines, Iowa.

**XII. Adjournment**

Ms. Ormsby moved that the meeting adjourn. Mr. Quiner seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at approximately 11:30.

Respectfully submitted,

Marcia Thompson