



GENERAL ASSISTANCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, January 12th 2022 at 2:00 PM

PRESENT: Erin Koehn, Renee Grummer-Miller, Aaron Terrones, Vicki Ellison, Monica Tate, Randy Knudson

STAFF: Ashley Balius, David Thielen, and Laura Brade

INTRODUCTIONS & CALL TO ORDER:

Ashley called the meeting to order at 2:00 P.M.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

GA Advisory Committee reviewed the minutes of October 12, 2021. Renee made the motion to approve and accept minutes as presented. Erin seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

BUDGET & DATA DISCUSSION

Ashley started by reviewing the year to date budget. She stated that it has continued to be an unusual year like the previous fiscal year. This is due to the many other resources available within the community and the enhanced level of coordination between the various assistance providers. Ashley stated the following is the current budget utilization so far in FY22 (July 2021 - November 2022):

- Total 366,709
- Actual 27%
- Expected 42% with anticipated surplus \$360,000

Ashley then provided a breakdown of how the budget has been allocated so far and is as listed below:

- Total Financial Assistance Expended: 24% (42% expected)
 - Rent: 21%
 - Lot Rent: 23%
 - Utilities: 40%
 - Gas: 34%
 - Electric: 36%
 - Water: 68%
 - Funeral: 42%

LINN COUNTY ERA 2 UPDATE

Ashley then reviewed the Linn County Emergency Rental Assistance Program with the committee:

- Up to 18 months
- 3 months of prospective rent
- Low documentation burden
 - Treasury encourages this and the use of proxies and self-attestations

- Some sort of financial impact since March 2020
 - Treasury encourages a self-declaration
- Assisted households, with an 88.8% acceptance rate.

Ashley stated that local funds were used for 160 households that were approved then denied through ERA2 due to lack of funding . As of 11am today the BOS approved \$175,000 in GA funds to cover back rent and 1 month future rent. HACAP will also be assisting and will cover all utilizes requested by the 160 households.

Ashley then reviewed a few statistics with the committee:

- **8/16/21 - 12/28/21**
 - 1,325 Linn County Households Assisted
 - \$4,420,986.78
 - Average paid per household: \$3,339.11
 - 4.38 months of rent
 - 1.27 months of utilities
- **Of the 1,324 Households Assisted:**
 - Under 30% AMI: 65%
 - Between 30% - 50% AMI: 24%
 - Between 50% - 80% AMI: 10%
- **Of the 1,324 Households Assisted:**
 - 43% White
 - 57%Non-White
 - 44% Black or African American

Collaboration at the end of ERA with Iowa Finance Authority state program has begun. Ashley reports that IFA made it happen quickly and began accepting applications on January 3rd at noon. They are holding off on payments to prevent a duplication of benefits with ERA2. Applicants can still contact Waypoint to see which funding sources will best meet their needs.

ONGOING HOUSING NEEDS

Ashley then stated that in the various meetings that she serves on housing has consistently been identified as a major issue - especially since the start of the pandemic and further exacerbated by the August 2020 Derecho. Given this, it was decided that there needed to be a larger overarching group to take a look at what is going on in our community as it relates to housing needs and identify reasonable steps to address these issues. With that, the group set out to talk to community to conduct a SWOT analysis and identify key issues as well as potential solutions. Ashley stated that through this effort she had 19 different conversations with different collaborative groups that have some sort of connection to housing. From those conversations four key issues were identified

Ashley is co-chairing this group with Linda Langston

External Workgroups chart was shared:

1. Housing Quality/ Energy Efficiency/ Resiliency
2. Housing Development
3. Access to Housing/ Homelessness,
4. Equity

Ashley explained the structure of how this group will work. It will leverage the existing work groups already engaged and doing this work to develop action plans on how we resolve the issues that we have in Linn County. The core Ongoing Housing Needs group will still meet (bi weekly) and function but will be focused on providing accountability, support and help

brainstorm solutions to barriers that are identified as the action planning groups execute their action plans.

Ashley stated that as progress is made through this group she will bring back updates to this committee!

MEETING SCHEDULE :

Members whose term with the General Assistance Advisory Committee will end in June 2022 will be contacted by Ashley about next steps.

Next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 13, 2022 at 2:00 p.m.

The meeting adjourned 2:34 p.m.