

FAMILY POLICY BOARD

Monday, October 5, 2020

Meeting Held via Zoom

12:00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Ann Kappauf, Barbara McPeak, Bridget Todd, Chris Crye, Heather Quackenboss, Heidi Odegaard, Isaac Hoffman, Jason Witt, Jodi Widuch, Karolee Behringer, Kristi Arenz, Lacie Ketelhut, Mandy Bisek, Mary Kay, Megan DeVore, Roberto Partarrieu, Stacy Smith, Sue Mathison, Tita Yutuc, Tracy Puent, Vie Matty, Melisa Myers, Catherine Kolkmeier, Barbara McPeak, Jane Klekamp, Jason Witt, Katie Berkedal, Melisa Myers, Nicole Brei

GUESTS/OTHERS PRESENT

Kahya Fox, Executive Director of La Crosse Area Habitat for Humanity

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Tita Yutuc called the meeting to order at 12:00pm

The meeting began with members taking the "How Are You Feeling Survey" by Mentimeter at the request of Catherine Kolkmeier. Mentimeter (<https://www.mentimeter.com>) is a company that provides real-time polling tools for groups. This poll showed a snapshot in time of how board members were feeling which could then be used to steer the meeting accordingly. Below are results for the instant feedback survey.



APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION by Jodi Widuch, seconded by Mary Kay Wolf to approve the September 14, 2020 minutes as presented.

Motion carried unanimously.

HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT AND BOARD UPDATES

HHS Board Update: Tina Tryggestad - No updates

HS Director Update: Jason Witt - The La Crosse County Board is currently focused on budget issues and Jason expressed that we have been very fortunate as a county to continue providing services at the current level despite everything that is going on. The state is undertaking its biennial budget process. The Family Policy Board will develop a list of things to advocate for and submit it to the state. As the county learns about specific proposals, they will be passed on to Family Policy Board.

Family and Children's Section Update: Tracy Puent – Tania Martinez will begin as the Community Coordinator with the Safe Babies Court on November 2. The Safe Babies court is a treatment court model like OWI and drug courts except that these cases are kept confidential. There is also a strong community component with stake holders involved in the planning. Court is anticipated to start by mid next year.

PRESENTATION:

Habitat for Humanity's Homeownership Program presented by Kahya Fox, Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity of La Crosse. Habitat for Humanity Home Ownership Program has been part of the community for over 20 years. Family selection typically occurs twice a year.

Family Requirements

- A need for safe, affordable housing
- 12 months residence in La Crosse, Vernon, Trempealeau or Houston county
- Be citizens or permanent residents of the United States
- Pass a Criminal Background Check
- Have the financial ability to pay a mortgage
- Be a minimum of 2 years bankruptcy free
- A willingness to partner with Habitat and put in "Sweat Equity"

Habitat has one of the lowest foreclosure rates of all lenders in the United States due to the Sweat Equity component and because they act as the lender in lieu of a bank. Sweat Equity means families help to physically build their own home and the homes of others, volunteer at a Habitat ReStore, and complete classes in personal finance, home maintenance and being good neighbors. Most lenders determine affordability by requiring a family income reach up to 80% of the county median income whereas Habitat will consider incomes between 30 and 60%. Acting as the lender allows them to offer mortgages at 0% interest. Families pay full property taxes and homeowners' insurance but do not have an interest payment. The home is sold to them at the FULL appraised value and anything that is not paid in the monthly mortgage payment is paid at the time of resale. Families who aren't selected get free credit counseling to help them identify why not, correct financial issues and then reapply.

SMALL GROUP BREAKOUT SESSION

Small groups discussed

1. In relation to the Family First Prevention Services Act:
What services or supports are most needed locally?
Do you have any additional questions about the Act?

2. In relation to the upcoming State Biennial Budget:
Are there specific proposals you are aware of that the Family Policy Board should advocate for?
Are there other issues that should be priorities for the Family Policy Board?

AGENCY ROUNDTABLE

October 7, Open House - Next Chapter La Crosse, 713 Ferry Street, from 2:00 – 6:00 PM

October 20, Resilient Communities Foundation Session. Register at <http://www.resilientcommunitieswi.com/>

ADJOURNMENT TO THE NEXT MEETING TO BE HELD MONDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2020, AT NOON

Chairperson Tita Yutuc adjourned the meeting at 1:00pm.

Approved November 2, 2020, Rachel Klistai, Recorder