

**Social Services Advisory Board members present:** Yajaira Balcarcel, Katherine Hawkins, Dheeraj Jagadev, Brenda McMahon, and Council Member David Farajollahi. These members constitute a quorum.

**Members Absent:** Larry Cain, Tony McGhee, Cristina Mehrabani

**Staff present:** Anita Brown, LaTanya Buckhalter, Michele Childs, Michele Gehr, Jessica Moise, Tanya Robinson, Kalisha Spence and Remona Thompson

Call to Order: At 6:37 pm, Michele Gehr, Director DSS convened the Social Services Advisory Board regular meeting held via Google meet on Thursday, March 25, 2021.

Public Present: None

Additions to Agenda: None

Welcome:

Review of Minutes:

- The minutes from January 28, 2020 meeting were approved without correction. Motion to approve minutes: 1<sup>st</sup> – B. McMahon 2<sup>nd</sup> – K. Hawkins. Motion passed without opposition.

PRESENTERS: None

**DIRECTOR REPORT:** Agency report March 2021 (emailed to members previously) (attachment a, 3pgs.)

**Benefits:** The Benefits unit has seen an increase in applications for assistance and increases are expected to continue. The agency requested 2 ½ positions, one of which was to make a current part-time benefit worker full time and this will help. Currently there is a vacant Self-Sufficiency position that will be moving into the Benefit unit as the work done by this position is solely dedicated to Workforce development that is tied to those individuals receiving assistance. The position will be advertised as an internal posting only. The Child Care subsidy program will also be moving under the Benefit Unit.

**Services:** The Services unit has seen an increase in CPS calls and workers are gearing up as children head back to in school instruction. Recruitment has begun for foster parents. The state has placed new emphasis on Kinship placements for children who come into foster care. It is a known fact that children do better when placed with family. Issues arise when the family is Spanish speaking and there no trainers currently who are bi-lingual and able to provide training to these families.

**Customer Service:** It is our plan to open the lobby back up beginning Monday, March 29<sup>th</sup>. Clients will still be required to wear facemasks and practice social distancing.

**Housing:** A meeting was held with Liz Via-Gossman. She is in charge of the Community Development department in the city. Ms. Gossman wanted to know more about the Housing Program.

**Administration:** The Class and Compensation plan for the agency has been completed and submitted to the City. The agency has requested that the city accept the plan and implementation guidelines as were given.

The agency received word that the Portner Fund is being transferred to DSS and would no longer be administered by the Community Foundation. The Portner fund consists of money from Robert Portner, who established a trust fund charged with caring for the poor, with a provision that one-third of the money should go to “the poor colored citizens.” The funds are to be utilized to assist clients who are in-need and staff have been working hard to identify recipients.

The Equity and Inclusion Task force has begun the listening sessions for the public. Information about the sessions are found on the city website and on the City’s Facebook page. Sessions are being offered in both English and Spanish.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

- a) Interfaith Council-Preparation is underway for a fund raising project. The project would raise funds to assist city school age children with school supplies and other items such as hygiene products, and the like. Councilman Farajollahi is working with the schools to work out the liability questions and solidifying the goal. More information will be forthcoming and anyone else interested in participating in this endeavor.
- b) Classification and Compensation – this was covered previously.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

- a) Budget FY21-This information was touched on in the Director’s report. The City has scheduled multiple budget sessions and these sessions can be accessed on-line. The final budget session will most likely be at the end of May.

Next scheduled meeting is May 27, 2021.

**ADJOURNMENT** With no further business to discuss, meeting adjourned at 7:23 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Anita Brown