NOTICE

The Board of Directors meeting of the Tri-County Opportunities Council will be held on Wednesday, March 25, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. at the Tri-County Opportunities Council Office, 1005 N. Main Street, Princeton, Illinois. (815-875-6064)

Julie Jacobs
Secretary

You are reminded that our by-laws require the presence at any Board of Directors meeting 33% of the current members to constitute a quorum. Your presence is urgently needed.

If you need transportation, please call 1-815-625-7830 or 1-815-875-6064 or 1-800-323-5434.

In case of bad weather, please tune to the following radio stations.

WAJK – LaSalle	WSDR – Sterling	WRHL – Rochelle
WCCI – Savanna	WSSQ – Sterling	WIXN – Dixon

TRI-COUNTY OPPORTUNITIES COUNCIL
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
Tri-County Opportunities Council Office
1005 N. Main Street
Princeton, Illinois
Wednesday, March 25, 2009
(815-875-6064)

1. Call to Order

2. Roll Call

3. Approve Minutes of February 24, 2009

4. Action on Treasurer's Report of January 2009

5. Treasurer's Report for February 2009

   Fiscal Report – Dawn Robertson

6. Program Reports

   CSBG/Economic Development – Sandra Julifs
   Foster Grandparent – Sharon King
   Head Start – Terri Lawrence
   Homemaker – Debra Ritchey
   LIHEAP – Tammy Saenz
   Weatherization/Housing – Wayne Thompson

7. President's Report

8. Old Business

9. New Business

10. Next Meeting – Thursday, April 23, 2009 in Dixon

11. Adjournment

TRI-COUNTY OPPORTUNITIES COUNCIL
BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING
FEBRUARY 24, 2009

Chairperson Ken Krogulski called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. He announced that there will be a new member from the Marshall County Board, but his letter of appointment has not yet been received.

The roll was called and a quorum was present.

Members present: Jim Barnes, Sandi Billard, Sue Britt, Loretta Brown, Herman Bruns, Bill Gaston, Edythe Geiger, Laura Gonzalez, Albert Harmon, Mary Healy, Sharon Heath, Ken Krogulski, Barbara Nelson, Fred Phillips, Ruth Sabin, Joan Sheridan, Barbara Smith, Jerry Wolens.

Members absent: Dee Biagi, Susan Bursztynsky, Dorothy Carver, Bernene Dahl, Deborah Gaughan, Donna Hess, Grace Hunter, Julie Jacobs, Marlin Jones, Lynne Kilker, Mary Klopcic, Gary Kroeschen, Carlos Munoz, Frank Niewinski, James Passero, Juanita Randklev, James Robison, Patrick Sloan, Kary VanDeVoorde, Marvin Williams, Mark Wilt, Jerry Wolens.

Others present: Judy Fiste, Sandra Julifs, Sharon King, Terri Lawrence, Carol Razo, Dave Ridenour, Debra Ritchey, Dawn Robertson, Tammy Saenz, Wayne Thompson.

The minutes of the January meeting had been mailed to all members. There were no corrections or additions. Ms. Geiger moved to approve the minutes as mailed; Rev. Harmon seconded. Motion carried.

The November and December treasurer's reports were presented for action. There were no comments or questions. Ms. Gonzalez moved, with a second by Mr. Bruns, to file the reports for audit. Motion carried.

The treasurer's report for January was distributed. Dawn Robertson, Fiscal Operations Manager, reported that the book balance is in the red; however, with the continuous cash flow from LIHEAP and Weatherization, the operating account hasn't been overdrawn. By the time the vendors cash their checks, new money will have been deposited into the bank.

On page 4a of the financial statements, the revised December Homemaker statement shows a loss of $1,373.16. The accrued leave total had been calculated and was more than anticipated.

On page 4 of the financial statements, the Homemaker statement for January shows a gain of $9,705.32. The November reimbursement from IDOA was received on January 26, 2009. It is hoped that the insurance reimbursement retroactive to July will be coming soon. This report shows a gain because of the insurance reimbursement, so if the money never comes then this program would be running a deficit.

As mentioned at the last meeting, the Department on Aging, in its revised rules, is requiring that an organization or business that wishes to be a Community Care Program (CCP) provider must, when applying for funds, "Submit proof that it is fiscally sound ... by verifying assets ... sufficient to cover 90 days of CCP operating expenses, as defined by the agency business plan." To accumulate that type of reserve, staff is looking at putting the insurance reimbursement money, when and if received, into a special fund for that purpose. That might amount to about $150,000 - $160,000 a year providing all the criteria are met. Ninety days expenses normally total about $440,000, so this would take about three years to accomplish, but could be combined with unrestricted funds if needed sooner. The line of credit could also be used to meet this requirement, but, as happened last fall, the state was so far behind in payments that our line of credit was exceeded. A lengthy discussion was held as to whether or not to establish a reserve fund. One of the problems is that none of the money has been received, and the present administration may change this whole approach. A number of comments were made both before and after Rev. Harmon moved to establish a reserve fund with extra money from the insurance reimbursements or other funds. Ms. Heath seconded, and the motion carried.

The auditors from Lindgren, Callihan and Van Osdel started Wednesday, February 18, 2009. A new team member will be starting, Robbie Minor, who will work part-time. The anticipated date to have the fieldwork completed will be some time in March.

Program Reports:

Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) – Homeless Services – Sandra Julifs, President/CEO – Ms. Julifs welcomed Dave Ridenour, TCOC's CSBG grants manager from Springfield.

Approval was needed to apply to the Continuum of Care for $138,600 in Homeless Prevention Program funds. This is the same amount as for this current year (7/1/08-6/30/09), but it could be increased as the State will be receiving more funding from the federal stimulus funding. A handout brochure was used to explain the services and of the program.and eligibility for the program. Of the amount requested, all but a small portion goes to rental/mortgage assistance, security deposits and utility assistance for people who would otherwise become homeless. The question was asked as to whether all the money has been spent this year; it has not but the year does not end until June 30th. Mr. Phillips then moved to approve applying for these funds; Ms. Brown seconded, and the motion carried with 17 affirmative votes and one abstention (Rev. Harmon). (**Ed. note:** Due to a reallocation of funds by the Continuum according to the need in various areas, TCOC's amount was reduced to $118,600).

Ms. Julifs also reported that the stimulus bill includes money for the CSBG program. Estimates show Illinois to be receiving $47 million dollars. Illinois' allocation of the regular CSBG funding is about $30 million, so this new money would be a 157% increase or, for TCOC about $900,000 over 18 months-two years. The parameters are not yet known, but as

CSBG is a "local needs" program, Ms. Julifs asked members for ideas of what's needed in the various communities.

Foster Grandparent Program (FGP) – Sharon King, Program Director – Ms. King distributed the 2009 annual *FGP Newsletter*. This is the sixth yearly newsletter that has been written and is used to recruit and publicize the program throughout the communities and to keep the schools that presently have grandparents up-dated about the program.

Ms. King also distributed copies of four assessments showing the impact of the Foster Grandparents in the improvement of the childrens' academic performances, self-confidence, knowledge of the alphabet, and age appropriate reading abilities. One example of an assessment was also included on the back of the state critique.

A new grandparent orientation and information session was held on Tuesday, February 12th. One new grandparent started in Lanark at the Eastland Preschool, and two grandparents who have been ill hope to return to their classrooms in March. Presently, Ms. King's assistant, Lynn Scherer, is in the process of visiting all the grandparents at their sites.

Three small group in-service sessions are being held. Friday, February 20th was the first session which was held for 29 grandparents at Muffins n' More in Rock Falls. Friday, February 27th, is the second in-service session which will also be held at for 33 grandparents at Muffins n' More in Rock Falls. Twenty grandparents from LaSalle/Peru, Princeton, Henry, Ottawa, and Streator will be attending the in-service on Thursday, March 12th at the Maples in Peru. Leslie Neal and Judy Fiste from CSBG are/will be the presenters for these in-services. The focus of these sessions is to acquaint the grandparents with available resources in their areas and also to discuss possibilities that might extend their monthly incomes.

Head Start – Terri Lawrence, Program Director – Approval was needed to apply to the Head Start regional office for $1,270 to cover the costs of sending two staff to attend the January CLASS training. CLASS stands for Classroom Assessment Scoring System and is a new monitoring instrument for teacher/child interactions; this is a pilot now, but probably will be required in a year or so. Costs will be reimbursed to the agencies sending people to the training. Mr. Barnes moved to apply for this reimbursement. Ms. Geiger seconded, and the motion carried.

The Head Start Program is beginning its annual self-assessment process for the 2008-2009 school year. Teams have been developed with wide representation from the Board, staff of the program and grantee and the community. The new Office of Head Start (OHS) 2009 monitoring protocol document is being used as the guide. There are several questions related to program governance, so some of the members might expect calls. The self-assessment results will provide direction for setting goals for the 2009-2010 year in order to insure compliance with all regulations. Training will be held in February, a meeting to report findings will be held in April or May, team leaders will summarize results of their assigned areas in May, and the management team

will meet in June to analyze data and develop the report to OHS. Ms. Lawrence also asked for at least one Board member to participate at the June meeting.

After many years of struggling financially, it appears that Head Start will be receiving some significant dollars. There is a $234 million dollar increase in the FY09 federal budget and $2.1 billion in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (the stimulus bill). Of the stimulus money, $1 billion is for regular Head Start and $1.1 billion is for Early Head Start. The Head Start dollars will follow the regular funding formulas for cost-of-living, quality improvement, teacher qualifications, and T/TA. The Early Head Start dollars will be for total expansion. When the money is released, there will be a short turn-around time to get proposals submitted, so planning needs to begin now.

The Board is required to approve the enrollment and selection criteria for Head Start students. This was distributed to the Board. Ms. Lawrence explained that all of the eligibility criteria are in federal law while the selection criteria are program-developed. The Policy Council had already approved the policy. She asked members to review the criteria prior to the next meeting when the policy will be brought for action.

Also in the handouts distributed at the meeting were the second collection of child outcomes completed in February and a report on overall program progress.

Homemaker Program – Debra Ritchey, Program Director - In the month of January, the program serviced 490 clients and used 11,267 units of service for which the program billed $172,715.77. There was a small decrease in the number of clients and units due to the ending of TCOC's service to Pinnacle Place in Savanna.

The State license has been received from the Illinois Department of Public Health. This allows the program to serve people on Medicare, long-term insurance and self-pay.

In addition to the need for 90 days of operating funds, some of the other Community Care Program rules have now changed or are new. Service hours are now to be Monday-Friday from 7a.m.-8:00p.m. and weekends from 8:00a.m.-8:00p.m. There needs to be an on-call supervisor available during working hours and a 15 minute response time for clients and homemaker in case of the need for information, assistance or direction as related to the client's status of their health or welfare. One-hour segments are to be available when needed to meet client's need.

Also, the rules specify that there be an Emergency Disaster Plan for medical, weather, at the client's home or site related.

Polly, the Sterling-Rock Falls supervisor has taken another job, so Ms. Ritchey is in the process of hiring a new supervisor for the area.

Ms. Ritchey then displayed the United Way plaque that was received for a 40% increase in giving over last year.

Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) – Tammy Saenz, Program Director -The LIHEAP Department is still going strong with applications to be processed. At this time last year, people were being laid off for the rest of the program year.

This has been a very interesting year with job closures here in Illinois. The need for help has been ongoing since the program started. The program has spent more than $100,000 in furnace money, either repair or replacement. On the last regional call, the grants manager said that the program has spent 80% spent in both of the budgets; staff is trying very hard to become 100% spent. Staff is about 40 days behind in verifying applications, and this is with everyone still working overtime. Ms. Saenz noted that she is very lucky to have such a great staff with which to work. The State did try to improve the computerized system by expanding the servers, but this did not make the system go any better or faster.

Staff has also been working very hard on the Ameren and Com-Ed programs.

A question was asked about an article regarding a $1,000 credit. Ms. Saenz explained that may have had to do with the Com Ed Hardship Program through which eligible applicants may receive up to $1,000. It might also have been related to the reconnection amount going from $750 to $1,000 in January; if so, it's possible that the state may retroact the difference.

Weatherization/Housing – Wayne Thompson, Program Director - In the Weatherization program, the big news is that word has been received that for the 2010 program (beginning July 1, 2009) and the 2011 program (beginning July 1, 2010), there will be substantial increases in funding. The preliminary figures at this point are $5,183,478.00 for 2010 and $6,428,758.00 for 2011. These figures represent 403% and 409% increases respectively.

Additional staff will need to be hired; at this point, it looks like five-six persons – three assessors, one inspector and one clerical staff at least. Also, more contractors will be needed, especially in the southern counties. Mr. Thompson interviewed three contractors very recently. Also needed will be office/warehouse space in the southern area. Mr. Thompson asked that anyone with ideas on space or contractors to please let him know; he would prefer contractors that are able to work in both the Weatherization Program and in rehab programs. There was some discussion as to the criteria for contractors.

This also will mean doing additional homes. The best estimates at this time are between 600-650 the first year and from 700-750 in the 2011 program. There is legislation to raise the income guidelines to 200% of poverty. And, it appears that the amount that can be spent per home will increase from a limit of $4,400 to $6,500. This will allow more work to be done per home, so that's good news. The bad news is that, at this point, the Department of Energy (DOE) will not raise the re-weatherization date. Currently, if a home was weatherized after September 30, 1993, it cannot be weatherized again.

This 1993 rule also makes it very difficult to get the 25 homes needed in the ECHR (Energy Conservation & Home Repair) program within the city of Savanna. Ms. Robertson, Ms. Saenz and Mr. Thompson will be attending the state Energy Conference in Springfield the week of March 10th and will work on getting the rule amended for ECHR Program as the rule is a DOE rule and not a Health and Human Services (HHS) rule.

After all the discussion finished, Board approval was requested to accept approximately $11,612,236 in Weatherization funds (from the Department of Energy, the stimulus bill and the Department of Health and Human Services) over the next two years. Mr. Phillips moved to accept the increased funding, and Ms. Heath seconded. Motion carried.

President's Report – Sandra Julifs, President/CEO – The 2008 *Fact Sheet* was distributed. Ms. Julifs explained that this is used as a promotional piece and can be reproduced and given to anyone. It shows TCOC's services and accomplishments for the past year.

The first strategic planning session was held on February 9th. About 28 people attended with Ms. Randklev, Ms. Heath, Ms. Brown and Mr. Krogulski representing the Board. There were also a wide variety of employees from all the programs plus two Foster Grandparents. The session identified issues relating to the theme of "Rooting Out Poverty." The next meeting will be held on March 17th when small groups will be working on the identified areas. Ms. Heath commented that she really enjoyed participating in the process.

Ms. Julifs also noted that she has been spending much time following the stimulus bill and its repercussions for TCOC.

Personnel Committee Report – Albert Harmon, Committee Chairperson – The Personnel Committee met at 6:20 p.m. in Dixon prior to the regular meeting. The committee recommended that Ms. Julifs' contract be extended for another year and to raise her salary by 7% (actual amount named). It was noted in the discussion that Ms. Julifs has been with the agency for 36+ years (25 ½ as the CEO). It was also mentioned that the committee used three salary studies while they were deliberating the salary increase. Mr. Wolens moved to both extend the contract and to award Ms. Julifs a 7% raise. Ms. Sabin seconded, and the motion carried. Ms. Julifs thanked the Board, on behalf of herself and the rest of TCOC's employees, for its generosity as this will become the standard raise for the agency for 2009, and she knows the staff will be happy. .

The committee had also evaluated Ms. Julifs independently. The combined scores averaged 4.8 on a 5 point scale. Ms. Julifs thanked the members for their confidence in her.

Old Business: There was no old business.

New Business: The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 25, 2009, at Princton. As there was no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 8:44 p.m.