NOTICE

The Board of Directors meeting of the Tri-County Opportunities Council will be held on Wednesday, September 23, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. at the Tri-County Opportunities Council, 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 625-7830 or 875-6064 or 1-800-323-5434.

TRI-COUNTY OPPORTUNITIES COUNCIL
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
Tri-County Opportunities Council
1005 N. Main St.
Princeton, Illinois
Wednesday, September 23, 2009
(815)-875-6064

1. Call to Order

2. Roll Call

3. Approve Minutes of August 27, 2009

4. Action on Treasurer's Report of July 2009

5. Treasurer's Report for August 2009

   Fiscal Report – Dawn Robertson

6. Program Reports

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

7. President's Report – Sandra Julifs

8. Old Business

9. New Business

10. Next Meeting – Thursday, October 22, 2009 in Dixon

11. Adjournment

TRI-COUNTY OPPORTUNITIES COUNCIL
BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING
AUGUST 27, 2009

Chairperson Ken Krogulski called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., and circulated the committee sign-up sheets. He then noted that Joan Sheridan was home recuperating from a hospital stay.

The roll was then called, and a quorum was present.

Members present: Jim Barnes, Sue Britt, Loretta Brown, Sally Childers, Bill Gaston, Edythe Geiger, Laura Gonzalez, Albert Harmon, Mary Healy, Sharon Heath, Grace Hunter, Julie Jacobs, Marlin Jones, Ken Krogulski, Juanita Randklev, Don Romes, Ruth Sabin, Marvin Williams, Jerry Wolens.

Members absent: Sandi Billard, Dee Biagi, Herman Bruns, Susan Bursztynsky, Dorothy Carver, Bernene Dahl, Donna Hess, Lynne Kilker, Mary Klopcic, Travis McGlasson, Carlos Munoz, Barbara Nelson, John O'Neill, James Passero, Fred Phillips, James Robison, Peggy Sargent, Joan Sheridan, Patrick Sloan, Kary VanDeVoorde, Mark Wilt, Christina Wyss.

Others present: Judy Fiste, Terri Lawrence, Dorothy McBride, Carol Razo, Debra Ritchey, Dawn Robertson, Tammy Saenz, Wayne Thompson, Dawn Troupis.

The minutes of the July meeting had been mailed to all members. There were no corrections or additions. Ms. Randklev moved to approve the minutes as mailed; Ms. Heath seconded, and the motion carried.

The June treasurer's report was presented for action. There were no questions or comments. Ms. Britt moved to file the report for audit; Ms. Brown seconded, and the motion carried.

The July treasurer's report was distributed to the members. Dawn Robertson, Fiscal Operations Manager, reported that the financial statement for July has an ending balance of ($715,433.15), which is solely because of the Homemaker Program. The program's accounts receivable balance was ($724,252.11) as the State of Illinois was three months behind in reimbursing the agency. Ms. Julifs submitted a hardship request to the Comptroller's office.

The Edward Jones' investment account made $6,919.67 in July. In the minutes it was noted that the interest rate would be 6% to borrow $83,202 from that account, but no money was borrowed at this time. The Homemaker Program income statement, however, showed a July gain of $23,765.23 with a reserve fund of $110,523.47. The reimbursement rate for the Department on Aging contact rose by $.91 to $16.23/hour, of which $.70 must be used for raises for the direct service employees retroactive to July 1, 2009. This will be paid on the September 4th paycheck. The remaining $.21 can be used for fringe benefits and overhead costs.

Ms. Robertson moved $62,848.57 from the Freedom Bank revolving loan account to Sauk Valley Bank's operating account to cover overdrafts. TCOC's current bank, Sauk Valley

Bank, declined to increase the line of credit, so Ms. Robertson contacted US Bank and Freedom Bank for proposals as to whether they can provide a $1,000,000 line of credit.

The plan to correct the significant deficiencies from the audit is right on target. Ms. Robertson hired an Assistant Fiscal Operations Manager on July 6th and she is doing the bank reconciliations currently along with signing the checks that are entered by a bookkeeper. The storage receipts are being posted by a bookkeeper as of July 1st. Ms. Julifs and Ms. Robertson are trying to get the line of credit raised or to change banks in order to manage the cash management deficiency from the Homemaker Program.

The corrected IRS 990 forms were mailed out this month.

Program Reports:

Before the program reports, Mr. Krogulski read an article to the members; it told of the LaSalle and Ottawa PADS homeless shelters and included a story of how TCOC helped a family leaving PADS. Ms. Childers talked about how much TCOC has helped the people at PADS, and Mr.Wolens noted that, with unemployment rates nearing 14% in Illinois more of these services will be needed.

Community Services Block Grant – Dorothy McBride, Community Services Director – Ms. McBride, Ms. Robertson and Ms. Julifs attended the annual Community Services Block Grant Workshop on August 26, 2009. Topics included: quarterly reporting, ARRA (American Recovery and Reinvestment Act) requirements, the Community Action Plan, the importance of the tripartite board and the Elevate America program.

Using a handout, Ms. McBride explained that Elevate America is a program sponsored by Microsoft which offers free computer training. TCOC is one of the Community Action Agencies throughout Illinois that is distributing the vouchers which are needed to access both the courses and the testing. There are no income guidelines for the program. More information can be found at www.illinoisworknet.com.

Client surveys for the Community Action Plan have been completed, and the results were distributed. The survey was reviewed and the results discussed. Additional board surveys are needed to be completed, and they were distributed. The importance of the Board's participation in gathering information for the Community Action Plan was discussed.

With ARRA funds, the CSBG staff has hired two new employees. Staff is also circulating fliers containing information on the ARRA services throughout the nine counties. Some examples of the assistance that has been issued include auto repairs, CNA classes, gas vouchers and GED testing. These are designed to assist people to obtain or retain jobs.

Foster Grandparent Program – Sandra Julifs, President/CEO for Sharon King who was on extended medical leave - The Foster Grandparent Program held a back-to-school in-service on Friday, August 14th at the Whiteside County Senior Center in Sterling. There were 76 grandparents in attendance.

The speakers were Andy Anderson of Lutheran Social Services of Illinois who spoke about elder abuse and senior financial exploitation and Kyle Ackman, Principal of Dillon School in Rock Falls, who told of his personal experience with the Foster Grandparent Program and how he felt it had benefited his students and teachers. Wayne Thompson, of TCOC's Weatherization/Housing Program, gave a synopsis of the many programs available through his department. All the information from these gentlemen was well received by the grandparents in attendance. A lovely meal was enjoyed by all.

Ms. King's assistant, Lynn Scherer, is in the process of placing additional grandparents in the program and is looking for more people who meet the guidelines and who might want to volunteer their time to this wonderful program.

Head Start – Terri Lawrence, Program Director - Activities are in full swing for the start-up of the 2009-10 school year. Pre-service trainings have been going on for the past two weeks. The program was fully staffed as of 8/7/09, but there have been five resignations in the past two weeks. Staff will be interviewing for those positions shortly. The first day of school for the 5-day per week classes is September 3rd and all other classes will start on September 8th.

There has been no approval yet on the request for conversion of the two home-based slots and the Ottawa FD/FY class. TCOC has a new program specialist at the regional office and she keeps requesting more and more information in order to make the determination as to whether they will grant approval of our request.

There is no word yet on the grant proposals for program improvement funding and Early Head Start funding. We understand that the EHS funds should be awarded by the end of September; however, that is not official at this time.

In the handouts, Board members received both the Head Start and Migrant Head Start Program Information Reports (PIR). A PIR is an annual statistical overview of program operations for the previous year. Board members are asked to review the documents and bring questions to the September meeting.

The annual Risk Assessment meeting with the regional office will be held on September 8th. This year, staff is opting to do a phone conference meeting instead of traveling to Chicago. Ms. Julifs, Ms. Robertson and Ms. Lawrence and Head Start key managers and specialists will participate in this meeting; Mr. Krogulski has also been invited to participate to represent the Board of Directors.

The last day for Migrant Head Start for the 2009 season was on August 18th. The program served a total of 28 children during the season. An end-of-year potluck celebration was held on August 20th with a wonderful story teller/musician that both the parents and the children enjoyed. The Department of Human Services grantee staff will be doing TCOC's annual self-assessment for the migrant program on September 22nd. Board participation is welcomed.

There were questions asked about the educational requirements for staff in Head Start; Ms. Lawrence answered them.

Homemaker Program – Debra Ritchey, Program Director - In the month of July, the homemakers served 494 clients with 11,745.50 units of service for which $206,291.98 was billed.

Ms. Ritchey attended the Illinois Association of Community Care Program Homecare Providers (IACCPHP) meeting during which they reported no cuts in the Community Care Program, but other state senior programs took significant cuts of 10%.

A letter was received from the Illinois Department on aging (IDoA) that showed an increase of $.91 in the Community Care Program reimbursement rate raising it from $15.32 to $16.23 per direct service unit/hour. This is effective July 1, 2009. The new $.91 increase is a rate-based wage increase that requires at least $.70 to be paid to direct service workers as an increase in hourly wages. The insurance rate is also increased by $.13 changing the rate from $1.33 to $1.46.

The fundraising raffle netted $538.00

Staff was confused as to whether approval had been given by the Board to apply for senior tax levy funds in the four counties served by the Homemaker Program. So, approval was sought to apply for the following tax levy funds: Carroll ($18,000); Lee ($14,800); Ogle ($26,000) and Whiteside ($25,500). Thus far, the allocations for Lee and Whiteside counties have been set as above; Carroll and Ogle are unknown as yet. A question was asked as to why staff is not applying to the other five TCOC counties for senior tax levy funds. Ms. Julifs replied that she doesn't believe that those counties have passed senior tax levy funds, but, in any case, only the Homemaker Program has ever applied for any of these funds, and TCOC does not operate the program in the other five counties. Ms. Geiger then moved to apply to all four counties for senior tax levy funds; Ms. Gonzalez seconded, and the motion carried.

Also concerning the tax levy funds, Ms. Ritchey and Ms. Julifs attended the Lee County meeting held on August 8th and will attend the Ogle County meeting on August 28th.

Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) – Tammy Saenz, Program Director - The summer has come to an end with temperatures being much cooler. The cooling program ended on July 31st with a fairly good turnout; however, the entire grant was not spent in the time allotted..

At this point, Ms. Saenz has hired all the LIHEAP employees back for the first week in September and added a new employee who will join the staff.

The heating program will begin with September being set aside for the elderly and disabled. October is set aside for elderly, disabled and disconnected households. November is open to the general public. The LIHEAP department will no longer be taking Ameren hardship and bill assistance applications due to those programs ending soon. Applications for the Com Ed hardship program will continue until further notice. If more information about the LIHEAP or the ComEd hardship programs is desired, people can call the main office at 1-800-323-5434 for times, dates and sites to apply.

Weatherization/Housing – Wayne Thompson, Program Director - The 2009 Weatherization Assistance and the Energy Conservation and Home Repair (ECHR) programs have officially ended and all closeout materials have been sent in.

The 2010 program grants have been executed and homes are already being weatherized. Over 50 homes have been approved on the system, and the contractors are completing homes with regular Weatherization grants. Homes have not been started in the DOE-ARRA (American Recovery and Reinvestment Act) grant as those homes require the workers to be paid prevailing wage and Mr. Thompson does not yet have the wage determinations from the Department of Labor. Ms.Robertson and Mr. Thompson recently attended a prevailing wage conference in Chicago and Mr. Thompson will be attending more classes on the subject in Philadelphia at the 2009 annual Community Action Partnership convention. It is hoped that Illinois' wage determinations and reporting requirements will be finalized in the next month. Also, the Ottawa Weatherization Program office is opened and staffed. It is located at 1613 W. Norris Drive in Ottawa (phone: (815) 313-5610).

The Single Family Owner Occupied Rehabilitation (SFOOR) Program has two homes complete and three that are in progress. The Homebuyer Assistance Program has three families that have closed on their homes, one that has been approved and is out looking at homes, and three that are in the process of receiving their first mortgage lending. In the Home Modification Program, four clients have been approved and bids are out to their contractors. Finally, there are two vacant units in our regular rental-housing program.

President's Report – Sandra Julifs, President/CEO – Mrs. Julifs told of a scholarship coincidence that occurred recently. While making hotel reservations, the woman helping Ms. Julifs said that her name sounded so familiar and asked if she worked for Head Start. Ms. Julifs explained that the agency she worked for had a Head Start program and gave the name of the agency. The reservations clerk then mentioned that she had worked for Head Start in the past as a teacher assistant in Streator. Her daughter had also been a scholarship recipient, and she wanted to let us know that her daughter had graduated from the University of Illinois and is now the vice-president of marketing for a firm in Minneapolis.

Ms. Julifs also noted that she had given a presentation about the agency to the Rochelle Golden K Kiwanis Club of which both Mr. Gaston and Mr. Romes are members. It was very interesting to see all the good work that club does and that it was fun to see so many people she knew from when they lived in Rochelle.

During the day before the meeting, Ms. Julifs, Ms. McBride and Ms. Cox attended the annual Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) workshop. This was mandatory for CEOs as they talked about the ARRA grants and reporting. They also stressed board participation and involvement. When there are board vacancies, efforts to fill them need to be in the minutes as it is essential that we fill empty seats. At present, TCOC has only one vacancy, that of Barbara Smith who retired. So, someone to represent the low-income of Whiteside County is needed. Some "feelers" have been put out, and the outreach staff is looking for a good candidate. Ms. Julifs also asked the members to let her know if they have someone in mind.

During the week before Labor Day, Ms. Julifs will be attending the national Community Action Partnership's annual conference in Philadelphia. Mr. Thompson and Ms. Robertson will also be going. It appears that there will be many timely and relevant workshops this year and plenty of ARRA information to be had.

Old Business: There was no old business.

New Business: The next meeting will be held on September 23, 2009, at the Princeton office.

As there was no further business to come before the Board, Chairperson Krogulski adjourned the meeting at 8:18 p.m.