



**EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING**

**Monday, March 18, 2024  
10:00 a.m.**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

<b>ROSE BAILEY</b>	<b>LINDA MCDUFFIE</b>
<b>LEONARD BURSE, JR.</b>	<b>ETHELYN CREECH</b>
<b>MICHAEL GARVIN</b>	<b>WALTER GIBSON</b>
<b>BOBBY KENNEDY</b>	<b>SYNITA MATHIS</b>
<b>TINA SMITH</b>	<b>JOANN STRICKLAND</b>
<b>GLORIA PAULK</b>	<b>LEE LEWIS</b>
<b>CLARENCE WASHINGTON</b>	
<b>DAWN GARCIA</b>	
<b>BERNITA LEWIS</b>	

**MEMBERS NOT PRESENT: MARCUS MCCRAY, JAMES A. THOMAS, SR.  
KIM MORGAN, ANTHONY SIMMONS**

**MEMBERS: ONLINE – CATHY BENTON, MICHAEL-ANGELO JAMES,**

**HS POLICY COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON NOT PRESENT: SIERRA EASON**

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

<b>DIANE ROGERS</b>	<b>HAYLEY STEPHENS</b>
<b>PATRICIA A. CAIN</b>	<b>SANDRA MAIGNAN</b>
<b>CAROLYN BLACKSHEAR</b>	<b>LINDA STEEDLEY</b>
<b>JESSICA BLACKRICK</b>	<b>JOEY WILKES</b>
<b>ANGELA CARR</b>	<b>HUEY SPEARMEN</b>
<b>DEWAYNE MCCURDY</b>	
<b>AMY HEWETT</b>	

- I. CALL TO ORDER:** Leonard Burse, Jr., Executive Board Chairman, called the action pact Executive Board meeting to order at 10:07 a.m. at “Sarah’s in the City” restaurant in Baxley, Georgia.
- II. INVOCATION:** Sonja Eason, action pact HR Director gave an invocation prayer to start the board meeting.
- III. ROLL CALL:** Gloria Paulk, Executive Board Secretary, made the roll call. A quorum was established with a combined total of 16 Executive Board members present in person and 2 Board members virtually.

**IV. NEW BOARD MEMBER:** Leonard Burse, Jr., opens the floor for the seating of a new board member at the suggestion of Mr. Washington. Mr. Burse called for discussion to seat Mr. Lee Lewis, who is returning to the board from Appling County. The motion was made by Ms. Dawn Garcia to receive Mr. Lee Lewis as the board member from Appling, the motion seconded by Synita Mathis. All in favor said aye, there was none opposing. The motion was carried. Mr. Lewis is the board member from Appling. Mr. Burse stated that he was glad to have Mr. Lewis return to action pact.

**V. APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND BOARD MINUTES:** Leonard Burse, Jr. Executive Board Chairman, entertained for a motion to approve the agenda for today's meeting and the board minutes of January 22, 2024. Michael Garvin made a motion and Ms. Ethelyn Creech seconded the motion. The motion was carried to approve today's agenda, and the approval of the minutes from the Executive Board meeting held on January 22, 2024. All in favor said aye, and there was no opposing. The motion was carried.

**VI. OTHER BUSINESS: BIRTHDAY ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**A. Executive Board Birthdays:**

**Cathy Benton ----- March 19th**

**Bobby Kennedy ----- April 18<sup>th</sup>**

**Ethelyn Creech ----- April 25<sup>th</sup>**

**VII. OLD BUSINESS: COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS AND BYLAWS**

**COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS:**

Mr. Leonard Burse, Jr. Executive Board Chairman turns the floor over to Ms. Rogers. Ms. Rogers restates the excitement of having Mr. Lewis return to our board. Mr. Lewis is the Senior Vice-President of the Pineland State Bank, former Appling County Manager, and very active in the community. Mr. Burse asked for a motion to open discussion of the different committees within the board; Mr. Walter Gibson made a motion to open the discussion, the motion was seconded by Synita Mathis. All in favor said aye. The motion was carried.

Ms. Rogers stated we are looking to appoint an Ad-HOC committee to investigate certain things such as Salary Structure. Ms. Rogers explained what each committee was responsible for and asked if anyone would like to volunteer to serve on any committee; also, if those that were already on a committee would like to continue serving. Committee assignments were discussed, with the Executive Committee already set. The Finance and

Audit Committee, Human Resources Committee, and Planning and Fundraising Committee were reviewed for member updates and potential changes. The Finance/Audit committee remains the same except for the addition of Ms. Bernita Lewis from Bacon County. The HR committee added Mr. Clarence Washington. Ms. Tina Smith asked to step down as Chairperson of the Planning/Fundraising committee, added to this committee is Ms. Dawn Garcia, Ms. JoAnn Strickland and Mr. Lee Lewis. Ms. Rogers will contact Mr. Marcus McCray to see if will serve on the committee. Concerning Ad-Hoc Committees. Ms. Rogers stated the purpose of the Transition Committee and that it was still active and will conduct a follow-up in six months. The Board Chair will convene the committee and select members as needed. Ms. Rogers explained the purpose of the Strategic Planning Committee. The strategic planning committee will soon be formed to assist with agency planning over the next three years. Board participation is crucial in the strategic planning process to ensure the agency's vision is reflected. An updated copy of the bylaws will be emailed to all members for review and feedback. Volunteers are essential in spreading out the workload and ensuring effective committee participation.

The Ad-Hoc By Laws committee will review the Agency's By-Laws, Ms. Bernita Lewis has volunteered to serve on the committee. Included on the committee is Ms. Synita Mathis and Mr. Leonard Burse, Jr., the Board Chair. Ms. Diane Rogers stated that she was sure that most of the meetings could be done virtually and that it would cut down on a lot of traveling if that were the case. Plans were mentioned to review the salary structure with Mr. Garvin and involve the attorney Mr. Hugh Spearman in reviewing bylaws. Burse thanked all the board members that volunteered to serve on committees. The board chair then called for the Head Start report.

#### **VIII. NEW BUSINESS:**

- **Head Start Program Report: Angela Carr, Head Start Director,** Ms. Carr included financial updates, enrollment status, Recruitment updates that include efforts to address staff shortages and monthly credit card usage.

##### **Monthly credit card usage:**

- WEX – December \$1,834.32
- Visa--- December \$8,275.31
- WEX- January \$1,776.97
- Visa----January \$7,038.71

**Information from the Office of Head Start:**

- Ms. Carr states that they have officially started their Full Enrollment Initiative (FEI) plan. It will last until February 2025. Head Start must be at 97% enrollment by February 2025.

**Enrollment/Recruitment Updates:**

- Current funded enrollment as of 11/01/2023: Head Start- 515 Early Head Start-320
- Actual enrollment as of 12/22/2023: Head Start-464, Early Head Start-215
- Hiring events have been successful in addressing staff shortages, like the one in Waycross where eight staff members were hired on the spot.
- Future hiring events are planned in different counties, including Jeff Davis, Appling, and Ware.
- Board members, such as Clarence Washington, expressed interest in participating in hiring events to support the recruitment efforts.
- Angela Carr explained the process for requesting waivers for educational requirements for Head Start teachers, which takes about a month for approval.
- The Full Enrollment Initiative is being flexible with waivers for educational requirements, on a case-by-case basis, to address staffing shortages.
- Ware County and Candler County are experiencing challenges in hiring staff, especially in rural areas like Candler County.
- The Head Start program has started accepting applications for the upcoming school year and is preparing for the annual self-assessment process.

**Program Updates:**

- Head Start is currently preparing for their annual self-assessment. Ms. Carr stated that she may be calling on some of the board members to assist them with this process.
- One of the central air/heating units caught on fire in one of the classrooms in Coffee County, this caused the center to be closed for two-weeks. There was smoke damage and a professional cleaning service had to be called in the center was closed on 2/5/2024 and reopened on 2/20/2024.
- The City of Douglas received a CDBG grant for an expansion project at the Coffee County Head Start facility, but the bid came back higher than expected. Additional funding has been requested from Head Start as a one-time quality improvement grant to help fund the project.
- Angela Carr requested approval to amend the one-time quality improvement grant amount for the Coffee County site to meet the grant threshold from \$396,520 to \$250,000 after learning that Head Start will not consider requests larger than \$250,000.

**GRANTS/AWARDS FOR BOARD APPROVAL: NONE**

**OTHER ITEMS FOR BOARD APPROVAL: Amendment of One-Time Quality Improvement Grant amount for Coffee County expansion project.**

**OTHER PROGRAM UPDATES: See Program Summary**

- Chairman Burse then entertained for a motion to approve the one-time grant amount of \$396,520 to be amended to \$250,000. Dawn Garcia made the motion to approve the one-time grant. Walter Gibson seconded the motion. Mr. Burse called for discussion. hearing none, he called for a vote. All in favor said aye, and the motion was carried.
- Leonard Burse, Jr. entertained for a motion to approve Head Start report as given by Angela Carr. Michael Garvin made a motion, Ethelyn Creech seconded the motion. Mr. Burse called for discussion. Hearing none, he calls for a vote. All in favor said aye, and the motion was carried to approve the Head Start report.
- **Fiscal Report--- Hayley Stephens, Fiscal Director:** Ms. Hayley Stephens presented the fiscal report, detailing the organization's financial position, revenue, and expenses. Leonard Burse raised questions about current assets, deferred revenue, and self-insurance losses, which Hayley Stephens clarified were due to timing differences and high claims.

Ms. Stephens reported that the Fiscal team is making final year-end adjustments and will spend the next several weeks preparing the financial statements, notes and other supporting audit schedules. Auditors will be onsite at the Waycross office the week of March 25<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Stephens stated that although the agency is audited each year, there is a portion of the audit, referred to as the single audit, where our auditors select specific grants and programs and review them in greater detail. The single audit consists of reviewing reports, client eligibility, etc. this year, our auditors have selected to review LIHEAP and Weatherization, including HHS, DOE, and infrastructure. Ms. Stephens noted the need for board approval of a Corporate Banking Resolution, detailing the individuals who are authorized to sign action pact's accounts. The agency's Attorney, Mr. Hugh Spearman asked if documents require two signatures, Hayley answered yes. Hayley Stephens requested the board to release \$250,000 from the self-insurance reserves to cover losses from high claims, which was approved.

Leonard Burse highlighted the challenges of self-insurance, emphasizing the unpredictable nature of insurance claims and the need to manage financial risks effectively.

**Grants/Awards approval: None**  
**Other items for Approval:**  
Corporate Banking Resolution  
Use of self-insurance reserve

**Other items of report: See Program Summary**

Leonard Burse, entertained for a motion to approve the release of \$250,000 from the self-insurance reserve, a motion was made by Walter Gibson and seconded by Dawn Garcia. Mr. Burse called for discussion, hearing none, he called for a vote. All in favor said Aye, no opposing, motion was carried. Then Mr. Burse entertained a motion to approve the Corporate Banking Resolution, Ethelyn Creech made a motion, it was seconded by Walter Gibson. Mr. Burse called for discussion, hearing none, he called for a vote. All in favor said Aye, no opposing, motions were carried to approve the Corporate Banking Resolution.

Mr. Burse entertained a motion to receive the Fiscal report as given by Ms. Stephens. A motion was made by Michael Garvin and seconded by Tina Smith Mr. Burse called for discussion, there was none he called for a vote. all in favor said aye, no opposing the motion was carried to receive the Fiscal Report.

- **Human Resource Report----- Sonja Eason, Human Resources Director:** Ms. Eason, distributed wage scales (old and new) to be compared by the board. Ms. Eason presented the Human Resources (HR) report, highlighting updates to the wage scale. The new wage scale reflects a minimum starting wage as the old starting wage of seven dollars per hour is no longer applicable.

Ms. Eason mentioned the expected reimbursement from the First Nonprofit organization for unemployment claims, estimated at \$20,000 to \$30,000 for the 2023 year. The organization also received \$15,072 reimbursement from the wellness fund, which goes back into programs. The search for a human resource clerk was mentioned, with the position posted internally and externally, including an estimated hiring wage.

Burse expressed satisfaction with the increased participation in the retirement plan, noting that 76% of employees are now active participants out of a total of 332 full-time employees.

Leonard Burse, entertained for a motion to approve both the updated wage scale and the Human Resource Report as given by Sonja Eason, Michael Angelo-James made a motion to receive the Human Resources report as given by Ms. Eason, Synita Mathis seconded the motion. Mr. Burse called for discussion. Hearing none, he called for a vote. All in favor said aye, and the motion was carried to approve the Human Resource Report. Ms. Eason then collected copies of wage scales.

**OTHER PROGRAM UPDATES: See Program Summary**

**I. Program Reports:**

- **Education Talent Search ---- Carolyn Blackshear, Director:** Ms. Blackshear stated the following:
  - Enrollment numbers for ETS are almost full.
  - New counselor hired for talent search.
  - Awaiting parents to establish low income first generation.

**See Program Summary for more information:**

  - Ms. Synita Mathis - I have a question. I want our operations Director to tell me about this swag.
  - Mr. Leonard Burse - I wanted Ms. Sandra to say a few words about what she's been doing. And we're in good time. Just share about what she's been doing as the operations director.
  
- **INDIRECT OPERATIONS REPORT ---- Sandra Maignan, Director:** Ms. Maignan covered the following Key points:
  - Successful sales of sweatshirts generating income.
  - Fingerprinting process is working well and generating income.
  - Plans to advertise to the community using letter board. Waiting for materials for the letter board from the vendor.
  - Renting out Training and office space.
  - Donation to Brunswick Jobcorps.
  - Brainstorming with CASA on potential Projects underway to enhance volunteer recruitment efforts.
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**See Program Summary for more information:**
  
- **CASA ---- Jessica Blackrick, Director:** Ms. Blackrick covered the following key points:
  - Success story shared about CASA program participants.
  - On March 7-8, our volunteer coordinators will be attending a training in Augusta which will provide statewide peer connections and training that allows for maintaining best practices. We have two pending volunteers that will be finishing their court observation and background checks, and two additional volunteers signed up for training classes beginning mid-April.

**See Program Summary for more information:**

- **Executive Director's Report: Diane Rogers,**

Grants and Awards: Discussion on grants and awards, including CASA promoting Safe and stable families for \$75,000 and other programs in the community services department. Headshots for the Board Members: Request for head and shoulders pictures of board members for the website, with a

preference for a grayish background. Rubber Duck Race Fundraiser: Plans for the annual rubber duck race fundraiser in May, seeking sponsorships and ticket sales to raise around \$10,000. Ms. Rogers mentioned the fund raiser to be held in Statesboro, Georgia. She stated that Board support is needed to secure sponsorships and sell tickets.

- HUD Property Agreement: Update on the ongoing discussions with HUD regarding a property from the 1980s with a mortgage, currently at a standstill. Ms. Rogers informed us that the HUD officials are unable to locate documentation regarding the property in Coffee County. During our last correspondence, I requested information regarding the next steps.
- Community Services Department Restructuring: Discussion on the need to restructure the community services department due to its growth, complexity to reduce workload and considering the complexity of various programs, Decision to establish the Georgia SHIP Program as its own department to offer additional services, particularly focusing on addressing challenges related to senior health insurance Ms. Rogers advised that this change would take place during the next few weeks.
- Community Services Block Grant Funds: Proposal to convene the program committee to discuss the best use of CSBG funds to ensure they are utilized effectively to serve low-income individuals and communities in the 18 counties.
- Carryover Funds and Contract: Approval of nearly half a million dollars in carryover funds from the CSBG, with plans to reintegrate the "Ready to Connect" program into the CSBG and awaiting the contract, likely to be finalized by early May.
- Operational Details for Ready2Connect: Clarification that Destiny Bradshaw will work independently in her own space in Effingham, acting as an arm of the agency but not working directly out of the office or service center.
- Funding for Ready to Connect Program: Discussion on securing funding through fiscal year 2024 and the plan to use carryover funds for fiscal year 2025 to support the Ready to Connect program in Effingham County, with additional local funding and potential grants being sought. Ms. Rogers stated that the Ready2Connect program is included in the updated 2024 CSBG Budget. The budget amendment should be finalized by May 1<sup>st</sup> so services can begin under the action pact umbrella. Additional funding is anticipated from the 2024 rollover, for fiscal year 2025 that will help partially fund the project through 9/30/25. The balance of funding will be secured through small grants from (primarily) local organizations. Destiny Bradshaw's Work: Commendation for Destiny Bradshaw's impactful work in Effingham County under the "Ready to Connect" program, highlighting the positive effects on changing lives and the community.
- Organizational Standards: Review of organizational standards showing a ninety-one percent rating, with a discussion on areas such as the needs assessment, strategic plan, risk assessment, and ROMA training needing



attention to maintain a hundred percent agency status. The ones missed are detailed below:

- The 2021 Community Needs Assessment was not formally accepted by the board.
  - The Strategic Plan did not reference the needs assessment or address conditions of poverty.
  - The Risk Assessment was not presented to the board.
  - No ROMA training was held for staff.
- Risk Assessment: Explanation of the requirement for a risk assessment every two years, completion of the assessment, and plans to present it to the board after further evaluation.
  - ROMA Training: Acknowledgement of the need for ROMA training, with plans to ensure it is conducted for both board and staff members after it was postponed due to organizational transitions in the previous year.
  - Board Training Opportunities: Sandra providing a list of board training opportunities, with a focus on establishing a plan for out-of-area board training to ensure all members can participate in conferences and training sessions.
  - Board Member Conference Attendance Policy: Discussion led by Diane Rogers regarding the new policy allowing each board member to attend up to two conferences per year, with the agency sponsoring up to two board members for out-of-state conferences and up to four board members for the Georgia Community Action Association conference in Savannah annually on a first-come, first-serve basis. Diane shared her excitement to Mr. Lee Lewis returning to our board.
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- Statewide Board Retreat: Diane Rogers emphasized the upcoming Statewide Board Retreat in Peachtree City on April 18th-20th, focused solely on board training, with a deadline for confirming attendance by the following Monday.
  - Importance of Board Training: Board members highlighted the significance of attending training conferences for professional development, networking opportunities, and gaining a deeper understanding of their roles and responsibilities within the organization.

Leonard Burse, Executive Board Chairman entertained a motion to accept Executive Director's report, given by Diane Rogers, Dawn Garcia made

the motion was seconded by Ethelyn Creech. Mr. Burse call for discussion. Hearing none, he called for a vote. All in favor said aye, and the motion was carried to accept the Executive Director's report.

Leonard Burse, entertained a motion to approve:

1. Community Services grant from the Georgia Department of Human Services for the Regulated Marketer Referral Program (SCANA) in the amount of \$8,249.00, funding period 5/17/2024-9/30/2024.

2. LIHEAP in the amount of \$1,520.623, funding period 10/1/2023-9/30/2024 (Amendment#1)
3. CSBG in the amount of \$485,584.79, funding period 10/1/2023 (Amendment#1)

A motion was made by Walter Gibson and seconded by Dawn Garcia to approve the grants/awards. Mr. Burse called for discussion, none given. He called for a vote, all in favor said aye no opposing. The motion was carried.

**For more information See Program Summary**

**Announcements:**

- Diane Rogers suggested incorporating training into meetings to avoid separate training days and ensure board members fulfill training obligations. Emphasized the importance of attending training sessions to streamline processes.
- Leonard Burse expressed gratitude towards board members and staff for their commitment and sacrifices in community action efforts. Acknowledged successful meeting and thanked Lee Lewis for rejoining the board, highlighting the value of each member.
- Interest in mirroring successful programs IE: Ready to Connect in different counties for broader community impact.
- Carolyn Blackshear shared Ms. Gaines' induction into the National Community Action Hall of Fame. Described the experience of attending the event and the significance of Ms. Gaines' recognition.
- Huey Spearman highlighted an upcoming concert by the Foster Triplets, praising their talent and background. Encouraged board members to attend the concert on April 28th and purchase tickets from him.

**IX. ADJOURNMENT**

Leonard Burse, Jr. Executive Board Chairman declared the meeting adjourned at 11:56 a.m. Prayer rendered by Mr. Bobby Kenney for the agency and blessing of the food.

  
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Gloria Paulk, Corporate Secretary

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**Diane Rogers, Executive Director**