



EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

Monday, July 15, 2024
10:00 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

ROSE BAILEY WALTER GIBSON
LEONARD BURSE, JR. LEE LEWIS
MICHAEL GARVIN CATHY BENTON
CLARENCE WASHINGTON
MARCUS McCRAY
GLORIA PAULK
TINA SMITH
DAWN GARCIA
ANTHONY SIMMONS
MICHAEL-ANGELO JAMES

MEMBERS NOT PRESENT: B. KENNEDY, S. MATHIS, L. McDUFFIE, K. MORGAN
J. THOMAS, SR., J. STRICKLAND, B. LEWIS, E.
CREECH

MEMBERS: ONLINE – SIERRA EASON

HS POLICY COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON PRESENT:

OTHERS PRESENT:

DIANE ROGERS HAYLEY STEPHENS
PATRICIA A. CAIN SANDRA MAIGNAN
CAROLYN BLACKSHEAR LINDA STEEDLEY
JESSICA BLACKRICK JOEY WILKES
ANGELA CARR HARRY ZEIGLER
DEWAYNE MCCURDY HUEY SPEARMAN
AMY HEWETT SONJA EASON
DESTINY BRADSHAW
RENAE WASHINGTON

- I. **CALL TO ORDER:** Leonard Burse, Jr., Executive Board Chairman, called the action pact Executive Board meeting to order at 10:10 a.m. at “Sarah’s in the City” restaurant in Baxley, Georgia.
- II. **INVOCATION:** Ms. Angela Carr, action pact Head Start Director gave a prayer to open the Executive Board Meeting.

- III. ROLL CALL:** Gloria Paulk, Executive Board Secretary, made the roll call. A quorum was established with a combined total of 13 Executive Board members.
- IV. 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 May 20, 2024. Michael-Angelo James made a motion and Rose Bailey 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 May 20, 2024. All in favor said aye, and there was no opposing. The motion was carried.
- V. OLD BUSINESS:** With a quorum being established, Mr. Burse relinquished the floor to Mr. Huey Spearman, the agency lawyer. Mr. Spearman continued his presentation from the meeting of March 18th concerning the agency's Grievances and Complaint procedures, he stated that there were no substantial changes made to the by-laws, most of the changes were to complete the grievance procedures. See below for key changes:
- ✓ Flow chart updated, the position title in the flow chart changed from "Development Director" to "Operations Director."
 - ✓ Remote participation in the board meetings shall only be allowed subject to approval by the board chair, instead of the board itself.
 - ✓ Time frame for replacing board vacancies was extended from sixty days to ninety-day period.
 - ✓ A reminder was issued regarding the recording of meetings (audio/video) alongside handwritten minutes.

Employee Complaint and Grievance – Changes noted:

- ✓ 5-19 grievance procedure the word employee has been added to make it clear, that this is the employee grievance procedure.
- ✓ Definition was added for grievance: an official statement regarding perceived wrongs or unfairness by an employee against the employer.
- ✓ The scope of grievance eligibility was expanded to include any adverse employment actions, not just suspensions or terminations.
- ✓ Employees can retrieve grievance forms from the action pact employee portal/website or through HR.
- ✓ Types of grievances were given. There were six steps given for the employee to present their grievance.
- ✓ Definition was added for a complaint to make the distinction from a grievance.
- ✓ Procedures were given as to how an employee can submit a complaint.
- ✓ The scope of grievance eligibility was expanded to include any adverse employment actions, not just suspensions or terminations.

Clarifications

Clarence Washington raised concerns about monitoring the email for grievances. Diane Rogers responded that the committee email will be forwarded automatically to the committee chair to ensure timely responses. Huey Spearman emphasized that the outlined steps provide clear instructions and deadlines for employees filing grievances. Mr. Leonard Burse, Jr. added the importance of diversity on the HR committee to prevent bias in handling grievances, reinforcing the integrity of the process.

Clarence Washington inquired about the example complaint form in the packet and if it would be the same for grievances, to which Huey Spearman confirmed that it would be different form. Sonja Eason agreed to include it in the next packet for the September meeting.

Next Steps/Action Items:

- ✓ All changes to bylaws, and to the grievance and complaint procedures will be finalized.
- ✓ Once finalized, the updated documents will be distributed to all board members in preparation for the September board meeting.
- ✓ Complaint form to be added in the next meeting packet.

Mr. Spearman stated that the changes would be easier to follow once we get the finalized copy. Mr. Burse thanked Mr. Spearman for the thorough review and explanation of the procedures. He acknowledged the efforts of the by law committee and thanked them for taking the time to go through it because "every now and then you need to revisit, revise and update the documents as we live in a very transitional world, and things change, and as board members it is our responsibility to keep up with the changes."

VI. NEW BUSINESS:

A. Executive Board Birthdays: As for the Executive birthdays for the month of June, Ms. Rogers stated that Mr. Burse birthday was the June 5. Ms. Joann Strickland, who was not present, her day was June 22nd. Ms. Rogers said that she hoped that she had the right dates. Mr. Burse stated that some people are just born in the right month and June was that month.

B. Head Start Report: Angela Carr, Director, Ms. Carr gave enrollment and recruitment updates, financial reports, and monthly credit card usage. Ms. Carr made one correction to the credit card usage, replacing the month of March with April.

Monthly credit card usage:

- WEX- April \$2,059.01
- Visa- April \$2,317.60
- Monthly personnel reports

- Angela Carr mentioned the completion of a self-assessment to prepare for the Focus Area 2 review.
- Findings from the self-assessment were shared, with a focus on creating plans of action to address any issues discovered before the federal review, expected to occur in October.
- Special attention noted for areas related to:
 - Eligibility
 - Recruitment
 - Enrollment
 - Selection
 - Attendance

ERSEA:

- ERSEA deals with the selection of children for enrollment, which has been a significant area of concern due to staff changes.
- The focus is on compliance with legal requirements, such as proper income and age verification.
- Current findings indicate that while there were no fraudulent cases, folders were not organized according to required file order. Training has been scheduled to address this issue.
- Partnerships have been identified as a weak area, emphasizing the necessity for parent-led initiatives.
- Family Advocates are being trained to enhance partnerships, aiming for at least 50% engagement, with current rates at approximately 25%.

IN-KIND:

- In-kind contributions are also a concern; the agency is currently looking for creative ways to generate the required contributions, which total around \$1 million short this year.
- Educational activities will be prioritized to ensure they count toward in-kind requirements.
- Mr. Leonard Burse, Jr. raised concerns about low male involvement in the program. Angela Carr acknowledged the need for more male volunteers and suggested that outreach to board members could help recruit participation.
- Diane Rogers highlighted that board member time counts as in-kind contributions, encouraging participation in activities like reading to children.
- Angela Carr suggested that board members could leverage their professional skills to provide services to parents, which would also count as in-kind.

Ms. Carr indicated that more staff was needed in the Head Start Department. The FA 2 review will include both onsite and virtual components, with interviews of Board members and parents. Training for Family Advocates are being implemented. Ms. Rogers introduced Renae Washington to the board as the new Assistant Head Start Director.

Program Updates: See Program Summary

GRANTS/AWARDS FOR BOARD APPROVAL: YES

Continuation Grant Application for 2024-2025 in the amount of \$12,509,924

OTHER ITEMS FOR BOARD APPROVAL: YES

Head Start 2023-2024 Program Self-Assessment

Head Start short- and long-term goals.

Mr. Leonard Burse, entertained a motion to approve the Head Start 2023-2024 Program self-assessment, Ms. Cathy Benton made a motion to approve the self Assessment and Mr. Michal Garvin seconded the motion, Mr. Burse called for discussion, hearing none he called for a vote, all in favor let it be known by saying aye the motion is carried. Mr. Burse then entertained a motion to approve the Head Start short and long-term goals, Michael Garvin made the motion to approve it was seconded by Walter Gibson. Mr. Burse called for discussion, hearing none, he calls for a vote all in favor said aye, none opposing, the motion was carried. Mr. Leonard Burse, entertain a motion to accept the Head Start report given by Ms. Angela Carr, a motion was made by Ms. Dawn Garcia and seconded by Ms. Rose Bailey, Mr. Burse call for discussion, hearing none he calls for a vote, all in a favor say aye the motion carries to accept the Head Start report.

C. Fiscal Report: Hayley Stephens, Director: Ms. Stephens gave an overview Of the agency's assets and liabilities.

Statement of Financial Position:

- Total Asset: \$10,350,000
- Total Liabilities: \$5,072,000
- Total Net Assets: \$10,350,000

Statement of Activities:

- Total Revenue: \$18,029,000
- Total Expenses: \$17,600,000
- Agency Gain: \$346,000

General Admin Expense:

- Total: \$1,092,000
- Self-Insurance Loss: \$77,000 (not a current concern)

Discussion:

Leonard Burse, Jr. raised a question regarding a decrease in federal grants. Hayley Stephens explained that the budget was reduced due to the end of Covid-related funding. Leonard encouraged further questions but noted no additional inquiries were raised.

For other Program Updates: See program summary

Mr. Burse, entertained for a motion to accept the Fiscal report as given by Hayley. Mr. Lee Lewis made the motion to accept the report, the motion was seconded by Mr. Michael Garvin. Mr. Burse called for discussion, hearing none, all in favor let it be known by saying aye, the motion carries.

D. Human Resource Report: Ms. Sonja Eason, Director: Ms. Eason Addressed the board stating that the Department of Labor, has a new rule concerning the Fair Labor Standard, the rule came into effect July 1st stating that all salaried employees were to make at least \$43,000, at the time we had about seven under that in the Head Start program. Since the cost-of-living raise has been implemented there are only four that fall under the guidelines. Ms. Eason said that she and Ms. Carr are working to rectify that.

On the Policies and Procedure Manual, we along with Mr. Spearman, added two directors to the Organizational Chart, they are Ready2Connect Director and Georgia Ship Director. Ms. Eason also stated that due to insurance recommendations, the following policies were added:

- Code of Conduct Policy
- Abuse Policy
- Distracted driver policy
- Drug test policy

The above policy updates were shared with staff prior to this meeting and are included in the meeting packet for board review.

We along with Mr. Spearman, added two directors to the Organizational Chart, they are Ready2Connect Director and Georgia Ship Director. Ms. Eason also stated that due to insurance recommendations, Code of Conduct Policies were added to the manual.

The floor was open for question, there was none.

For other Program Updates: See Program Summary

Mr. Burse entertained a motion to accept the Human Resources Report given by Ms. Sonja Eason, a motion to accept the report was made by Ms. Rose Bailey and seconded by Mr. Michael Garvin. Mr. Burse called for discussion, hearing none, he calls a vote, all in favor let it be known by saying aye, the motion carries.

E. Ready2Connect Program Report: Destiny Bradshaw, Director- Ms. Bradshaw stated that she was incredibly happy to be back under the action pact umbrella and thank Ms. Rogers for bringing her back to the fold. Destiny stated that she looks forward to increasing R2C's capacity to empower individuals facing barriers due to unemployment and underemployment in designated action pact service area. She gave an in-depth description of Ready2Connect activities and partnerships and the work that is done to help families.

- Renewal of the contract with Savannah State University
- Back to school-to-school blow-out powered by action pact (coming out and rebranding of Logo)
- Blow out event being held at the state fairgrounds in Statesboro.
- The event aims to serve 1,500 students this year, up from 263 in its inaugural year.
- Emphasized that this event is a community collaboration, providing families with access to various resources as they prepare for the school year, including free physicals from the hospital, nutrition and dental services, and information about LIHEAP and Action Pact services.
- Orientation for Career Development being held on August 11th.
- Secured a grant from United Way for transportation assistance, including gas vouchers, oil changes, and tire support for individuals in the program.

Destiny explained the Ready2Connect program, which focuses on holistic support for individuals and families. The program emphasizes collaboration with other agencies such as Workforce, Goodwill, and Legacy Link. The program includes a 12-week case management process, where individuals attend classes three days a week, focusing on financial literacy and emotional wellness. Destiny highlighted that effective holistic case management combines these elements, enabling participants to earn credit hours for each class attended and requiring them to "give back" through work-related tasks when receiving assistance. Destiny shared insights into the budgeting process, emphasizing its necessity even for those currently unemployed, as bills continue to accumulate. She underscored the partnership with banks, which helps participants understand their financial needs and set realistic employment goals based on living expenses. The program follows a three-phase approach: the first three months focus on building trust and openness, the second three months involve class participation and job placement, and the

final phase includes post-program follow-up and ongoing case management to ensure sustained success.

For other program information: See Program Summary

Mr. Burse entertained a motion to accept a the Ready2Connect report given by Ms. Bradshaw, a motion was made by Lee Lewis and seconded by Micheal Garvin. Mr. Burse called for discussion, hearing None, he calls a vote. All in favor said aye, none Opposing the motion was carried to accept the Ready2connect report.

F. Georgia Ship State Health: Harry Zeigler, Director- Harry said that he was glad to announce that action pact would oversee his department for another year. One area where there is concern, getting and training volunteers. Harry stated that he will be traveling to Atlanta in September for training volunteers.

For other Program information: See Program Summary

GRANTS/AWARDS FOR BOARD APPROVAL: YES

OTHER ITEMS FOR BOARD APPROVAL: NONE

G. Community Care Services Program: Linda Steedley, Director – Linda Stated that the numbers for CCSP are going up. July 1st began a contract with Southern GA Area Agency on Aging to operate the Nursing Home Transition Program, which is part of the Money Follows the Person Program. Linda Steedley reported growth in Community Cares, including an increase in numbers served. A new assessment nurse is being added to the team due to the growth. Margie Fuller has been appointed as the Nursing Home Transition Coordinator. A replacement for Margie has been hired; Charlie Brown is expected to start next Monday. The program will support individuals transitioning out of nursing homes back into the community. The "Money Follows the Person" initiative can provide up to \$20,000 for essential items for those qualifying, funded by the state, not from the organization's budget. There is also a program that offers up to \$5,000 from the organization's budget for those who do not qualify for "Money Follows the Person," assisting with smaller needs like groceries.

For other Program information: See Program Summary

H. Community Services Program Report---Amy Hewett, Director: On the Nutrition side, plans are on the way for a new center in Jesup, floors are complete in the Toombs County kitchen, the painting has already started. LIHEAP program has been extended until August 20th, due to final funding arriving late. Amy Hewett announced that an on-site monitoring for CSBG LIHEAP is scheduled for the last week of the month. The team is preparing for this monitoring and is confident in their readiness. Nutrition Program Updates - The FY 24 closeout is in progress as of June 30th, with new contracts being prepared for the upcoming year. Recently started cooking for

Wayne County, transitioning from an outside food vendor. Staffing and space needs are being met, enabling efficient service between Long and Wayne Counties.

For other Program information: See Program Summary

GRANTS/AWARDS FOR BOARD APPROVAL: YES

OTHER ITEMS FOR BOARD APPROVAL: NONE

- I. Information Technology Report----- Joey Wilkes, Director:** Mr. Wilkes stated that things in his department are going on as normal and that they are running a T-Mobile test in Charlton County, it is working, but there are some problems with Tower issues. He has made several trips to Charlton and is becoming a little weary. Joey expressed concerns about the viability of the program unless improvements are observed within three weeks. Progress on the student program involving computer deployment is underway. A report was shared indicating a significant drop in numbers, attributed to the Head Start program being inactive during the summer. Anticipation of increased numbers upon the program's return was noted. A warning was issued regarding prevalent scams targeting personal computers and phones. Individuals were advised to verify any suspicious communications before providing personal information.

Action Items: Monitor the performance of the T-Mobile program over the next three weeks. Remain vigilant about potential scams and encourage verification of communications.

For other Program Updates: See Program Summary

Mr. Burse entertained a motion to accept the IT report given by Joey Wilkes. Walter made a motion to accept the IT report as given, Tina Smith seconded. Mr. Burse called for discussion, hearing none he calls for a vote. All in Favor said aye, no opposing, the motion carries.

- J. Education Talent Search: Ms. Carolyn Blackshear, Director----**Ms. Blackshear stated it is in your packets but went on to say that they had reached their goal for the year at 1055, 1021 was required. The Summer Enrichment Camp and there are about twenty students attending robots are being utilized by students, who have programmed them to navigate to specific locations and return to the conference room. Notable engagement from visitors, including Ms. Gaines, who expressed curiosity about the robots in action. Classes are being offered to address the emotional disconnect experienced by many student's post-pandemic. Recently received communication from the National Association regarding initiatives to assist with FAFSA. Challenges reported with the new FAFSA process have left many parents struggling to complete applications. On July 23rd, the program will participate in a

national effort to sponsor FAFSA nights in the community. Funding of approximately \$2,000 will be provided to support these events, aimed at helping families navigate financial aid. Event will include food provisions to encourage parent attendance and offer incentives for students (e.g., \$25 for completing the FAFSA).

For Other Updates: See Program Summary

K. Weatherization: Mr. DeWayne McCurdy, Director--- Mr. McCurdy that he and his staff would be in Savannah attending a training session at the GCAA Conference. Weatherization will be receiving a new contract from DOE currently monitoring and awaiting the arrival of the DOE Contract.

For other Updates: See Program Summary

L. CASA: Jessica Blackrick, Director--- Ms. Blackrick stated that there was a person to fill the position of Community Outreach Coordinator, but the individual informed her that she was moving out of state. Jessica Blackrick announced the need to hire a new Community Outreach Coordinator. The position requires someone who can engage with the community, work one-on-one with Jessica, build relationships, and recruit volunteers. Everyone was encouraged to refer suitable candidates for this role. Jessica reported a delay in funding from Georgia Casa, but expressed confidence as there is enough rollover funding from the previous year to manage current needs. Currently, 75% of the funding is secured, with efforts ongoing to resolve issues surrounding the remaining 25%. The exact amount of funding to be received is still being clarified.

For other updates: See Program Summary

M. Indirect Report: Operations Director, Ms. Sandra Maignan----- Ms. Maignan had passed on speaking to the board, Mr. Washington asked her to explain the hours of operations. Sandra explained the four-day work week as being voluntarily done. Some staff would come at 7a.m. and leave at 5 p.m. They would pick alternate days to be off. She also stated that may not continue in the Waycross office, while Reidsville is likely to maintain the schedule. Diane Rogers noted that a key holder is required to maintain the schedule and mentioned that none of the key holders in Waycross are willing to work the extended hours. Sandra provided an update on a new initiative to install a kiosk in the lobby, allowing clients to access job applications and other hiring information. This initiative aims to assist those without home computer access and is currently under consideration, with cost evaluations underway. Updates will be shared once available.

For other Updates: See Program Summary

N. Executive Director Report: Diane Rogers--- Ms. Rogers informed the board that she is in contact with the National Housing Compliance Center regarding the property owned by Aesthetic Housing in Coffee County. Ms. Rogers informed the board that she is in contact with the National Housing Compliance Center regarding the property in Coffee County; because they are listed as the contract administrator for the original contract with HUD, Ms. Rogers says she hopes they will be able to connect them with the right organization to make sure no residents are displaced if/when the board decides to foreclose.

Ms. Rogers stated that she has spoken with CAPLAW attorney, Emily Center-Bregasi regarding the possibility of requesting Head Start funding to pay the mortgage payments on the Waycross administrative office, it was allowable, but we would need to start with the regional Head Start office to see if it is possible. If Head Start funds are used to pay the mortgage, the Federal Government will gain an interest in the property, affecting its future use and /or sale.

Strategic Planning

The initial strategic planning meeting was held on May 29th. Lead by Consuela Thompson, Executive Director of the Georgia Community Action Association, the session was engaging and informative. We should receive the preliminary results in August.

Programmatic

- The plans have been finalized for the new Senior Center in Wayne County. The Board of Commissioners elected to construct the facility themselves rather than going through the CDBG program which means we should be in the new center by this time next year.
- We are working with Brantley County to relocate the Service within the Head Start facility in Nahunta. This will provide more security for Center staff and make services more accessible to Head Start parents.
- We are searching for a contract grant writer to identify potential funders and package a winning proposal for Ready2Connect services.
- Ms. Bradshaw a funding request process with Senator Warnock's office. The request has made it over the first "hurdle" and will hopefully receive approval soon.

Ms. Rogers provided two dates for the board to remember, they Friday, September 20th, which will be the Annual Board Training from 10a.m. until 3p.m. at Jack Hill State Park in Reidsville in the group shelter, and Friday, November 15th – Annual Board meeting from 10:00 a. m. until noon at the Vidalia Community Center, 107 Old Airport Road.

Leonard Burse, Executive Board Chairman entertained a motion to accept the Executive Director's report, given by Diane Rogers, Walter Gibson made the motion it was seconded by Rose Bailey. Mr. Burse called 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.

GRANTS AND AWARDS

Executive Director, Diane Rogers presented the Grants/Awards to the board:

- Head Start Continuation Grant Application for 2024-2025 in the amount of \$12,509,924
- Georgia Ship Health, funding period 09/01/2024-08/31/2025 \$270,679.47
- LIHEAP, funding period 10/01/23-09/30/24 \$285,670 (amendment #2)
- CSBG, funding period 10/01/24-09/30/25, \$1,046,408.12
- LIHEAP, funding period 10/01/24-09/30/25 \$3,623,628
- NPE, funding period \$1,160,294,.46

Total Grant/Awards are \$18,896,604.05.

Mr. Leonard Burse, Executive Board Chair, entertain a motion to accept the Grants/Awards presented to the board by Executive Director, Diane Rogers a motion was made by Mr. Walter Gibson and seconded by Mr. Michael-Angelo James. 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. the Executive Board Chairman, stated that he appreciated the participation of the board members and thank them for there being at the meetings, ask if there were any other sayings are announcements. There were none.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Leonard Burse, Jr. Executive Board Chairman declared the meeting adjourned at 12:12 PM, Mr. Michael-Angelo James was asked to pray and give the grace for the food.



Gloria Paulk, Corporate Secretary



Diane Rogers, Executive Director