



## EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

Monday, May 20, 2024  
10:00 a.m.

### MEMBERS PRESENT:

ROSE BAILEY	LINDA MCDUFFIE
LEONARD BURSE, JR.	ETHELYN CREECH
MICHAEL GARVIN	WALTER GIBSON
BOBBY KENNEDY	SYNITA MATHIS
Clarence Washington	JOANN STRICKLAND
GLORIA PAULK	LEE LEWIS
TINA SMITH	JAMES THOMAS, SR.
DAWN GARCIA	KIM MORGAN
BERNITA LEWIS	ANTHONY SIMMONS
MICHAEL-ANGELO JAMES	

### MEMBERS NOT PRESENT:

MEMBERS: ONLINE – CATHY BENTON, MARCUS MCCRAY

HS POLICY COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON NOT PRESENT: SIERRA EASON

### 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	DESTINY BRADSHAW
SONJA EASON	

- I. **CALL TO ORDER:** Leonard Burse, Jr., Executive Board Chairman, called the action pact Executive Board meeting to order at 10:04 a.m. at “Sarah’s in the City” restaurant in Baxley, Georgia.
- II. **INVOCATION:** Michael- Angelo James, action pact board member 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 21 Executive Board members.

- IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND BOARD MINUTES:** Leonard Burse, Jr. Executive Board Chairman, entertained a motion to approve the agenda for today's meeting and the board minutes of March 18, 2024. Michael-Angelo James made a motion and 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 March 18, 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 Ms. Rogers, the Executive Director, to discuss committee assignments, new business and birthdays. Ms. Rogers stated that committee assignments had been finalized and Ms. Maignan, the Operations Director, would pass out the assigned committee sheets and some were left with Ms. Patricia in the back; so, everyone will know what committee they will serve on. Ms. Rogers states that there were new members on each committee. Ms. Rogers covered each committee and its assigned members and roles.
- VI. NEW BUSINESS:**
- A. Executive Board Birthdays:** As for the Executive birthdays for the month of May, there was a mistake made. Ms. Garcia birthday is not in the month of May and Mr. Simmons birthday was May 9, Ms. Rogers wished Mr. Simmons a happy belated birthday and Ms. Garcia noted that she would have two birthdays this year. Ms. Rogers assured them that the mix-up would be corrected.
- B. Mr. Leonard Burse, Jr. Executive Board Chairman,** entertained a motion to accept the committee assignments and the correction of the board members birthdays. A motion was made by Michael-Angelo James that they accept the committee assignments and correction of the board member's birthday, the motion was seconded by Ms. Tina Smith, Mr. Burse call for discussion, none given. All in favor said aye, and there was no opposing. The motion was carried.
- C. Finance and Audit Committee Report:** Ms. Cathy Benton, the Chairperson of the committee, apologized to the board for not being present in person and asked Ms. Hayley Stephens to present their report, because of difficulty of being heard by the board on the phone. Ms. Benton wanted the board to know that Hayley did an excellent job in gathering the information needed for the audit. Hayley stated audit reports were emailed to the board last week, and all should have had the opportunity to look over the reports. The Finance and Audit committee met on May 10<sup>th</sup> with the lead auditor. Mr. Pat Muse reviewed the financial statements and said they presented fairly in an unmodified opinion was issued. There was no finding regarding the Federal Award, but there was one regarding the financial statements. That was

regarding the new standard and that finding was corrected with an adjustment to the books. The single regarding LIHEAP and Weatherization, there were no findings, but there were questions about the statements. Hayley was asked to explain that finding, she stated that there was a new accounting standard for leases, instead of them being expensed, they had to be reported on the balance sheet, this was corrected with an adjustment to the books. Ms. Stephens stated that there should not be a problem in the future. Ms. Rogers also mentioned that it was not anything that we had to report to our Fund source. Hayley thanks her team and co-workers for all their help through-out the year; because it is hard work in order to have a good audit. Diane stated that we are one of few agencies that has a Fiscal team that can prepare their own financial statements, it saves thousands of dollars. We have a gold standard with our fiscal department, stated Ms. Rogers. Hayley also mentioned that it gives the agency more control.

Mr. Burse, entertained for a motion to accept the Financial and Audit report. Ms. Morgan made the motion to accept the report, the motion was seconded by Mr. Walter Gibson, Mr. Burse called for discussion, hearing none, all in favor let it be known by saying aye, the motion carries.

**D. By-Laws Committee Report:** Mr. Huey Spearman, the agency's Lawyer presented the report from the ad-hoc committee in which Ms. Mathis chaired, it was stated they had a productive meeting over the phone. Mr. Spearman advised that there were two handouts being passed out to the board one being the By-Laws draft revision and the other action pact Policies. Everyone was to make sure that they had both copies, these were the items discussed during the ad-hoc committee meeting.

Recommendations for some changes that we thought would be in the interest of the organization. The policies were reviewed as well. Mr. Spearman asked that the first document to be reviewed be the bylaws and the changes that addressed are in red font. The following is discussed

- a. Changes in board representation and terms, including the composition of the Executive Board and filling vacancies within 90 days, were discussed.
- b. Changes in board representation and terms, including the composition of the Executive Board and filling vacancies within 90 days, were discussed.
- c. Exclusions and resident representation on the board were addressed, emphasizing the need for diverse representation and approval by the board.
- d. Procedures for recording board meetings, including audio or video means, and the preservation of minutes for six months were outlined.

- e. New provisions for remote participation at board meetings were added, allowing participation via conference telephone or electronic video stream under specific circumstances.
- f. Procedures for resolving impasses between the governing board and policy council, including appointing an arbitrator, were discussed.
- g. The establishment and role of a human resources committee to monitor HR policies and conduct employee agreement hearings were emphasized.
- h. Action pact policies, such as the organization chart and equal employment opportunity policy, were reviewed and updated to ensure compliance and clarity.
- i. Page 14, paragraph 2 was revised to address complaint resolution procedures for employees against the agency. Employees are given the opportunity to present complaints through an informal procedure, with all complaints documented in their personnel file.
- j. Employees must present written complaints within five working days, or if the issue is ongoing, within five working days of becoming aware of the situation. A suggested solution to the complaint should also be provided.
- k. A new section on retaliation was added on page 15, ensuring that employees are protected from adverse actions for participating in protected activities, such as filing complaints or opposing unlawful actions.
- l. Pages 6-7 discuss the employee agreements procedure for disciplinary matters, with employees required to complete a grievance form within five working days of adverse personnel actions. Employees can submit grievances to another department head if the grievance is against the human resources director or executive director, providing multiple options for presenting grievances.
- m. Concerns about employees going to another department head within the same organization to address grievances, highlighting past issues of favoritism and conflicts of interest when complaints are not handled appropriately.
- n. The importance of grievances being directed to the HR committee in every case is emphasized to avoid bouncing complaints around and ensure proper resolution.
- o. Training and awareness among employees on the grievance procedure are crucial to ensure they know how to handle complaints effectively and are not in trouble for reporting issues.
- p. Suggestions are made to allow employees to submit complaints outside of their immediate supervisors or department heads if they do not trust individuals within the organization, such as going directly to the HR committee or an external entity.

- q. Concerns are raised about the fear of retaliation or being targeted for reporting complaints internally, indicating the need for a confidential and secure grievance reporting process.
- r. Continued discussion arises regarding grievances related to individuals within the organization and whether it should (1) be directed to the HR committee to maintain transparency and avoid conflicts of interest within the organization. (2) Should only reach the HR committee if the HR Director has an issue, and employees should follow the chain of command before escalating grievances.
- s. Concerns are raised about the clarity and efficiency of the grievance process, with a need for clear guidelines and procedures to be posted and communicated to all employees.
- t. Proposal to add language on retaliation under the grievance process to protect employees from adverse actions.
- u. Discussions revolve around the distinction between complaints and grievances, the need for clarity in processes, and ensuring that policies are followed to protect employees and uphold legal responsibilities.
- v. The plan is to review and approve these updates in the next meeting

Mr. Spearman, asked the board to take time read over the two documents and they would be discuss and voted on in the next board meeting, which will be in July, or if they felt comfortable with the changes they could vote on the By-Laws revision today. The concern on employee grievances and how they are to be resolved brought on a lot of conversation and it was stated that there would be no solution in the May 20<sup>th</sup> meeting. It was suggested that this section be Old Business in the July session. Mr. Burse thanked Mr. Spearman for his presentation and stated that it will be held over for the next meeting. **For more information see By-Laws of action pact and 2024 Policies and Procedures Manual**

**E. Community Needs Assessment:** Presented by Mr. Shawn Howell, CEO, S.A. Howell, LLC. This was a very in-depth presentation, he stated that the report consisted of 495 pages, importance for compliance and strategic planning, data collection process and is needed every three years. Community Action agencies need the report in order to continue receiving their funds. This report is also required by law, it is also a CSBG statue; so, these two big points a Community Assessment is needed. Different sources use:

- We start with statistical data from the agency's latest CSBG annual report.
- Income and poverty statistics: 20.60% population considered poor, decrease in poverty levels, county-specific improvements and challenges

- Over fifty different resources, statistical resources from the Census Department of Labor, Department of Education, etc.
- Demographics and poverty: impact on opportunities, education levels, social determinants of health, household characteristics
- School system data: attendance, college readiness, childcare shortage, importance of Head Start programs, housing and healthcare challenges.
- Surveys were conducted, Diane delivered to staff and partners, a good variety was chosen.
- There were 15 focus groups, 453,979 people who live in our region. All counties were included it would take a long time to go through all aspects of the assessment.
- Health insurance and healthcare access: challenges faced by uninsured individuals, food insecurity, lack of vehicles, prioritization of poverty-related issues, causes of poverty, need for services and counseling.
- 2% increase over the past five years, poverty levels were looked at.
- Candler county had a decrease in poverty of 44%, which is very good.
- Brantley county 32.37%, and Pierce County 29.49%, these are good decreases.

The Community Needs Assessment showed several good points. It highlighted where the problems are, the causes and recommended remedies. Michael Garvin motioned to accept the assessment as presented and the motion was seconded by James Thomas. There was no discussion. A vote was held and the motion passed unanimously. **For more information see a copy of the assessment.**

- F. Head Start Program Report: Angela Carr Director,** Ms. Carr gave Enrollment and Recruitment updates, financial reports and monthly credit card usage.

**Monthly credit card usage:**

- WEX – March \$2,029.07
- Visa--- March\$1408.68
- Monthly personnel reports

**Information from the Office of Head Start since our last meeting:**

- Ms. Carr states that they have received a PI(Program Instruction) of a 2.35% COLA increase for FY 2023 base line funding for all Head Start Staff. We are in the process of completing the application so the funds can be awarded and distributed.

**Enrollment/Recruitment Updates:**

- Current funded enrollment as of 11/01/2023: Head Start- 515 Early Head

Start-320

- Actual enrollment as of 04/30/2024: Head Start-464, Early Head Start-227

**Program Updates:**

- ✚ The Leadership team along with board members, policy council members and center staff conducted our Annual Self-Assessment April 8-12, 2024. We will be reviewing the results and working on any areas of concern.
- ✚ Ms. Carr stated that they were a part of 3 on-site hiring events: April 3<sup>rd</sup> – Ware County (Central Office), April 4<sup>th</sup> Appling Senior Center and April 5<sup>th</sup> Toombs Senior Center. Ms. Carr thank Mr. Clarence Washington for assisting at the Central Office with the hiring event. She stated that they also attended a job fair on April 16<sup>th</sup> at Southeastern Technical College in Vidalia.
- ✚ Revamping playground zones to prevent incidents and injuries, particularly from running and jumping on slides.
- ✚ Acknowledgment that children's actions can sometimes lead to unavoidable incidents

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

**OTHER ITEMS FOR BOARD APPROVAL: NONE**

**OTHER PROGRAM UPDATES: See Program Summary**

Leonard Burse, Jr. entertained for a motion to approve Head Start report as given. by Angela Carr. Michael Garvin made a motion, Dawn Garcia 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.

**G. Human Resource Report----- Sonja Eason, Director:** The HR report discussed the new overtime rule from the Department of Labor, effective July 1st. The rule increases the salary threshold for exempt employees from \$35,000 to \$42,000. There are seven Head Start employees who will be impacted by this change, with three falling below the new threshold. The report mentioned the possibility of either raising their salaries or transitioning them to hourly employees. Additionally, there was a mention of further increases in the threshold in January 2027. The team is considering the best approach for compliance, taking into account job titles, exempt status, salaries, and position requirements. It was noted that transitioning exempt employees to hourly could result in higher costs if they work many hours. The team is currently analyzing the budget to make informed decisions before the new rule takes effect.

**OTHER PROGRAM UPDATES: See Program Summary**

Leonard Burse, entertained for a motion to approve the Human Resource Report as given by Sonja Eason, Ethelyn Creech made a motion to receive the Human Resources report as given by Ms. Eason, Dawn Garcia 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.

**H. Fiscal Report--- Hayley Stephens, Director:** Ms. Stephens reported that the auditors from McNair McLemore Middlebrooks & Co. have completed the audit of the October 31, 2023, financials. Hayley that the auditors were on site the week of March 25<sup>th</sup> and spent the week meeting with the fiscal team and other staff members. The auditors have issued an unmodified opinion. Overall Ms. Stephens stated that the audit went very well, she gave credit to her fiscal team and stated how proud she was of the work that they done. She also expressed her appreciation to the staff members in each department for their diligence throughout the year in making sure we are following policy and procedures.

- a. Statement of financial position as of the end of March: Total assets \$11,948,000, total liabilities \$6,609,000, total agency gain \$300,000
- b. Statement of activities: Total revenue \$12 million, total expenses \$11.8 million
- c. General and administrative expenses \$735,000, self-insurance profit \$137,000
- d. Discussion on moving funds from reserve account to operating department due to higher volume of claims

**Grants/Awards approval: None**

**Other items for Board Approval:**

Fiscal Year 2023 audit report

**Other Program Updates: See Program Summary**

Leonard Burse, entertained for a motion to approve the Fiscal Year 2023 audit report, James Thomas made a motion, it was seconded by Michael Garvin Mr. Burse called for discussion, hearing none, he called for a vote. All in favor said aye, none opposing. The motion was carried to approve the Fiscal Year 2023 audit report. Then Mr. Burse entertained a motion to receive The fiscal report a motion was made by Michael Garvin and seconded by Tina 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.

- **Information Technology Report----- Joey Wilkes, Director:** Mr. Wilkes stated that things were moving smoothly and if there were questions concerning his report, please see him.

**Other Program Updates: See Program Summary**



- I. Executive Director's Report: Diane Rogers,** Ms. Rogers began by publicly thanking Hayley and her team for ensuring another successful audit. She stated her appreciation for the hard work, dedication, and commitment of the entire fiscal team. Ms. Rogers let the board know that she has not received a response from her April or May email regarding the HUD contract for Aesthetic Housing Property in Coffee County. Diane is now working with Behavioral Health office staff to determine if and how the current residents can be relocated. Ms. Rogers stated that the Fiscal Policy will be updated and ready for Board approval at the September meeting. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) has been incorporated into all leadership team meetings to help ensure agency leaders are knowledgeable on the subject and understand the practices required to make DEI a natural part of our though process.

**Strategic Planning:** There is a meeting for May 29<sup>th</sup>, Consuela Thompson Executive Director of the Georgia Community Action Association, will be our facilitator. Ms. Rogers stated that she had worked closely with Consuela on multiple strategic planning projects for more than 10 years and have great confidence in her abilities. There will be one-day board training, most likely the training will be in Tattnall County either at HK Kennedy Farms or at the Jack Hill State Park. Ms. Rogers introduced two new members to the leadership team, Mr. Harry Zeigler, Director of the Georgia Ship Program and Ms. Destiny Bradshaw, Ready2Connect Director, we are happy to have each of them join us. The Georgia CASA site visit was a success

- CSBG/LIHEAP/LIHWAP state monitoring is scheduled for July 29-August 2
- Weatherization Desk Monitoring- Date/TBD
- Duck Race was a great success
- exceeded their fundraising goal by securing \$13,000 in sponsorships, with additional ticket sales totaling over \$7,000, resulting in a net profit of around \$20,500.
- received grants and awards, including a \$10,000 grant for Southeast Georgia Casa and a \$171,474 contract for the nursing home transition program.
- Bulloch County United Way received \$22,000 to serve the Bulloch County Senior Center.
- Discussions were held regarding a property related to aesthetic housing, potential options for relocation, and the possibility of selling the property.
- Mr. Washington shared positive feedback from a board training session in Peachtree City, emphasizing the value of targeted sessions for board members. The training covered board responsibilities and essential knowledge for effective governance.
- The hope is for such training to be offered annually to enhance board members' understanding and performance.

### **For Other Updates: See Program Summary**

Leonard Burse, Executive Board Chairman entertained a motion to accept the Executive Director's report, given by Diane Rogers, Tina Smith made the motion was seconded by Walter Gibson. 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.

### **GRANTS AND AWARDS**

Leonard Burse, entertained a motion to approve the Community Care Services Program/NHT \$171,474, Southeast Georgia CASA/ \$10,000 and Bulloch County United Way \$22,000 Mr. Burse called for a motion to accept the grants Awards in the amount of \$203,474.00 a motion was made by Michael-Angelo James and seconded by James Thomes Mr. Burse called for a vote, all in favor. said aye, none opposing, the motion was carried

#### **I. Program Reports:**

**Talent Search**----Ms. Blackshear stated that all was going well except the New FAFSA applications were problematic, but they would work through it. **SEE PROGRAM SUMMARY FOR MORE INFORMATION.**

**CASA**----- Southeast Georgia CASA trained two new volunteers who were sworn in the courts, and we are in the process of training four additional volunteers at this time. Ms. Jessica Blackrick, stated that they received an allocation of funds from Georgia CASA for the upcoming term, and we are pleased announce that they received a significant increase. The funds will allow her to restructure current staff positions to best serve future growth and CASA will hire two more staff members. **See Program Summary for more information**

**Weatherization**--- **For more information See Program Summary**

**CSBG**----- Amy Hewett, Director. The Toombs Senior Center kitchen renovations are moving along, the next steps include sinks, flooring, painting and the ceilings, there was a Mother's Day Brunch, which turned out well, all who attended had a good time. Denise Dixon has been promoted to Community Services Assistant Director to CSBG/LIHEAP. She has been with the agency since 1988.

**See Program Summary for more information**

**CCSP**-----**See Program Summary**

**INDIRECT----- Operations Director--- For more information See  
Program Summary**

**GSSHIP----- For more information See Program Summary**

Leonard Burse, Jr. the Executive Board Chairman, stated that he appreciated the participation of the board members and thank them for there being a full board present with two members calling. He again expressed the importance being in 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 12:22 PM, Ms. Sonja Eason was asked to pray and give the grace for the food.

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**Gloria Paulk, Corporate Secretary**

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**Diane Rogers, Executive Director**