

**City of Alexandria Economic Opportunities Commission (EOC) Meeting Minutes**  
**June 26, 2024, 7:00 PM ET**

**Attendees:**

1. **Meronne Teklu, Chair**
2. **Aminata Ly, Vice Chair**
3. **Tim Laderach, Secretary**
4. **Conrad Sylvanus**
5. **Jenn Ayers (online)**
6. **Taylor Phillips**
7. **David Parker (online)**
8. **L'Allegro Smith**
9. **Illiana Moses**
10. **Charles Brown**
11. **Alison Coleman, Staff**
12. **Lesa Gilbert, Staff**
13. **Guest(s):**
  - a. Natalie Tallis (ADH)
  - b. Allen Lomax (Partnership for a Healthier Alexandria (PHA))
  - c. Mesha Hall (DCHS)
  - d. Melaku Ayalew
  - e. DT Oliver

**Absences:**

1. \*Berole Bekele
2. \*Babak Pirouz
3. \*Karishma Merchant

\*Excused

**Meronne commenced the meeting at 7:05 PM ET.**

- Brief welcoming remarks.
- Introduced guest speakers.

**Guest Speaker: Mesha Hall (DCHS)**

- Here to discuss CSBG Funding that we receive each year
- Most community action agencies are non profits, but for Alexandria, DCHS fulfills that function.
  - EOC is the board for the community action agency for the city of alexandria
- CSBG funds can only be used for rental and utility assistance; use local funds to fulfill all other functions
  - 727 requests in Q1 and Q2 2024
  - Rent, utility, moving and storage, burial, prescription
  - Most \$\$ goes to rental assistance

- \$530,578 spent so far, 245,477 from CSBG (81% of total CSBG budget)
- Q: Why spend CSBG first?
  - Use or lose
  - May be able to apply for additional later in the year if exhausted
- Q:
  - Rental assistance is 3 months per household per fiscal year
- Q: what is the role of the “board” ? How does it compare to a non profit board/company board?
  - Advisory vs. decision making, etc.
- **Q; Role of the board**
  - **Report to the board every year CSBG funding**
  - **City staff can’t advocate, board can advocate**
  - **EOC is a tripart board, representation of voices**
  - **Community needs assessment report q3years**
- Q: How does this FY compare to what we expect for FY25?
  - Hard to answer
  - With more funding, we could be more flexible (and accept more households)
  - Potentially could fund more positions and help more people
  - ~\$300,000 calculated in terms of households that would be approved
- Q: What is the financial gap between people we serve and people we can’t serve because we have to turn away?
  - Have been tracking % cases that have been denied or approved
  - usually ~1/3 not approved
    - 90 households per month served
- Q: what is included in “utilities”?
  - Washington gas, dominion energy, alex renew, V.A. Water
  - Through apartments, could be contractors, but mostly the above

#### **Guest Speaker: Natalie Tallis (ADH)**

- **Agenda**
  - CHIP 2021-2025
  - Community Health Assessment
  - Quick Healthy Homes Update
- **CHIP**
  - In the middle of implementing current CHIP
  - Developed in Oct. 2019, came from previous community health assessment
  - Top 10 health issues in Alexandria, brought to community, asked which of the 10 the community wanted to work on:
    - Poverty
    - Mental Health
    - Housing
  - CHIP is co-developed by ADH and PHA
  - 80 total tactics, 70 in progress

- Tactic progress by priority
  - Housing: 89%
  - Mental Health: 92%
  - Poverty: ??%
- Aligned strategies
- **PHA**
  - PHA offers technical assistance, relationship building
    - Has contacts at other stakeholders\*\*\*
  - TACTICS EOC VOLUNTEERED FOR: (8)
    - Housing:
      - Tactic 2: Assess and promote viable zoning changes that will help to increase the supply of affordable housing
        - **\*COMMUNICATE OUR ADVOCACY FOR ZFH TO PHA\***
      - Tactic 1: Promote energy efficiency policies
        - Concepts and opportunities for retrofit initiatives identified; Policies that would be feasible & beneficial for Alexandria residents are identified; Energy Efficiency policies, concepts & opportunities presented to City Council.
    - Childcare
      - Tactic 3... advocate for greater investment in childcare at the local and state levels, including subsidies, funding for childcare facilities, and higher pay for childcare workers.
    - Employment
      - Tactic 1: \$15 minimum wage
      - Tactic 2: Create and promote a “hire Alexandrians” initiative for all building/development projects in Alexandria
        - Tactic 2 [SIC]: Identify sources of financial support for career exploration and workforce development programs
    - Financial
      - Tactic 2: advocate for community banking policies that are friendly to low-income individuals and families
        - A campaign developed and launched; number of banking policies that are changed that are friendlier to low-income individuals and families
        - Reduce dependence on pay-day lending
    - Transportation
      - Tactic 1: Advocate for free DASH/reduced fares
      - Tactic 2: Support funding for service increases of the 2022 and 2030 Vision Plan networks
- **CHA 2024**
  - Comprehensive look at Health in Alexandria
    - Leads us to the next CHIP
    - Quantitative & Qualitative data

- Steps
  - Identify overarching topics to assess
  - Develop methods and identify other assessments (like EOC's)
  - Implement assessments
    - qualitative: surveys, focus groups, built environment, photovoice
    - quantitative: core indicators, disparities in data
  - Analyze and review findings
  - Generate report
- **Public kickoff meeting end of August 2024**
  - Complete ~ June 2025
- **Healthy Homes Update**
  - Developed an Action Plan \*LINK AND DETAILS FOLLOW UP\*
  - To create a coalition to do community engagement
  - ALX Breathe came out of this
  - Data
    - 311 data re housing conditions
    - APEX data (code admin.) for citations/rental inspections
    - Hospitalizations from various issues
- **DISCUSSION**
  - Data sharing, how to share data among organizations responsible for reports like needs assessment, CHA

### City Updates

- **OCS updates - Alison**
  - Fully staffed
  - Able to fund a temp. position for eviction prevention
    - Has seen decrease from 8.5 weeks to 3-4 weeks
  - Shelter waitlist high, ~100 people (from all categories)
- **DCHS updates - Lesa**
  - No updates.

### Procedural

- Meronne reviewed the agenda, Aminata moved to approve the agenda and L'Allegro seconded. The Commission unanimously approved the agenda.
- Meronne reviewed the May minutes, L'Allegro moved to approve the minutes and Conrad seconded. The Commission unanimously approved the May minutes.

### Old Business

- **Elections**
  - Slate:
    - Chair: Tim
    - Vice Chair: Conrad
    - Secretary: Taylor
  - Meronne moved to nominate the above slate, L'Allegro seconded. The Commission unanimously voted to approve the slate.

- Community Cookouts and Pulse Check
  - Pulse Questionnaires to administer at cookouts
  - DT is collecting pulse check questionnaires, has collected 31 so far, compiling into a database
  - Best way to get to DT?
    - Add Date, where asked

### **New Business**

- Bylaws update in June
  - Incorporate new virtual meeting policy (50%)
  - Possibly child care provision; need to reach out to city clerk
- Next season schedule discussion
  - Food Security plan usually given in September, but may be delayed this year
  - Tim to create workstream document to incorporate EOC responsibilities to help aid meeting discussions and deliverables
  - DT: commission on aging, potential partnership/guest speaker for EOC
- Summer session – EOC in recess
- Next meeting: Sept. 18, 2024 in person.

### **Announcements / Open Discussion**

- Conflict of interest policies for signature
- New Commission of the year award, consider for next year
  - \* Can add to workstream \*
- 14 of 15 seats filled, 1 vacancy under elected officials
  - Recent appointment on behalf of Compagna Center
  - L'Allegro coming off (representing Councilman Chapman)
  - Another elected official position open

**Closing:** L'Allegro moved to adjourn the meeting and Conrad seconded. The meeting adjourned at 8:59 PM ET.