

**HUMAN SERVICES BOARD**  
Minutes of Meeting, March 5, 2009

**CALL TO ORDER:** 6:35 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Ron Lambe, Bill Lenehan, Elma (Pat) Maye, Marc Meulman, Jason Sims, Mike Thomspson, Amy Tuley, Joanne Willson

**MEMBERS EXCUSED:** Carrie Healy

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Logan Wessendorf (Youth Advisory Committee Liaison)

**STAFF PRESENT:** Vicki Georgeau, Deputy Director of Neighborhood Services

**OLD BUSINESS:** None

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Minutes of the February 5, 2009 meeting were approved as submitted, 8-0.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

1. Fair Housing Activity Report and Update: Bob Ells, Executive Director of the Fair Housing Center of Southwest Michigan, was present to provide an overview of fair housing activity in Portage as summarized in the report included in the agenda. In addition, Ells provided information regarding the April 3, 2009 Fair Housing Conference. Tuley inquired if complaints have increased or decreased. Ells indicated on a national level, discrimination cases have increased, but locally such complaints have decreased. However, the local trend is somewhat a reflection of funding available to the Center for outreach activities, which is lower this year than in the past. In addition, Ells noted there have been five discrimination complaints in Portage, and that discrimination pertaining to provision of reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities is the most common concern, indicating a need for more education regarding this issue. Staff indicated the Center also completed a series of realtor and rental property manager tests this fiscal year, the findings of which will be incorporated into the Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Study, which will be updated as required by HUD during the next fiscal year. Willson suggested the annual city Community Survey incorporate questions regarding fair housing issues to assist with the study update.
2. Set Public Hearing for April 2, 2009 FY 2009-10 Draft CDBG Annual Action Plan: Staff indicated the 30-day public comment period for the draft FY 2009-10 Annual Action Plan, included in the agenda, began on February 28<sup>th</sup>. A motion was made by Meulman, supported by Lambe, to set a public hearing on the draft plan for April 2, 2009.
3. Human/Public Service Funding – Funding Recommendation Process: Staff provided an overview of the communication in the agenda, which was intended to facilitate the Board discussion regarding additional revisions to the application form, evaluation tool, and funding recommendation process in general. Willson indicated that if the Board has standard questions not currently asked of applicants, such questions should be incorporated into the application form. With regard to the process, Willson also suggested that between the applicant presentations and Board deliberations, Board members could email staff additional questions regarding the applications, which staff could assemble and forward to applicants for a formal response. Lambe indicated that the evaluation tool and application form seem well prepared and the Board focus needs to be on the process of funding allocations once all applicants are scored and ranked by the Board. Willson indicated recommendations that allocate a percentage of an applicant's funding requests do not seem to work well. Meulman and Tuley indicated it was necessary to make the funding application process as objective and fair as possible. Meulman recommended that the Board have an outline of the annual funding process, which the Board can then break down into components to determine what areas need to be further evaluated and modified. Tuley requested staff to provide such information at the next meeting.
4. Metro Transit ADA Advisory Board Committee/County Transit Authority: Lenehan indicated the ADA Advisory Board did not meet since the last Board meeting. Lambe indicated the Friends of Transit have continued to carry out activities to educate citizens on what the millage proposals will entail and will accomplish, and what the impact would be if the millages failed.

**STATEMENT OF CITIZENS:** Diane Schrock, Executive Director of the Portage Community Center, indicated she could provide the Board with information regarding the annual United Way funding application and review process. Willson inquired if the City of Portage would receive any new funding through the federal stimulus. Staff indicated the city will receive an additional \$57,194 in CDBG funding. While HUD rules for the funds have not yet been finalized, it is understood funding will be tracked as a separate grant, and an amendment will be required to the CDBG Annual Action Plan for either FY 2008-09 or FY 2009-10. In addition, HUD has not specified if funds can be used for public services.

**ADJOURNMENT:** The Board meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:45 p.m.