

**Chatham-Savannah Authority for the Homeless/Coca
Board of Directors Meeting
April 21, 2020 – 3:00 – 4:30
Location: Via Video/Phone Conference**

Present Board Members

Toby Browne-**Chair**
John Miller-**Vice Chair**
Julian Miller- **Treasurer**
Joseph Ervin
Lynn Coleman
Sharon Hill
James Jones
Beverly Willett-**Secretary**
Jeffrey Rayno
Vernon Jones
Jennifer Fordham
Rick Wagner
Janet Kniss
Linda Wilder Bryan
Kurtis Purtee

Absent Members

Josua Rine
Carolyn Hughes
Shawn Brown
Pat Geoghegan

Staff

Cindy Kelley-**Executive Director**
Luella Clark
Carlos Baker

Guests

Nicole Fields
Robert Simmons

Call to Order

Board Chairman Toby Browne called the meeting to order at 3:02pm on April 21, 2020 via Zoom video/phone conference call as we continue to practice social distancing due to the COVID-19 virus.

Welcome and Introductions- Browne welcomed everyone. Roll call and introductions were established.

Quorum- A Quorum was established.

Approval of February 18, 2020 Board Minutes- Beverly Willett

Browne asked for a motion to approve the February 18, 2020 board minutes as presented. A motion was made by **Julian Miller**. The motion was seconded by **Jeffrey Rayno**, and all were in favor. Motion carried. Willett noted that she would sign the minutes on a later date when she is able to sign them in person.

Chairman's Items -Toby Browne

Election of new board members:

Browne stated that we will have an election to accept four new board members. He gave all proposed board candidates; Janet Kniss, Rick Wagner, Linda Wilder-Bryan, and Kurtis Purtee the opportunity to introduce themselves and give a short summary about their backgrounds. Browne said that board member John Miller is responsible for presenting individuals' candidacy to voting board members. Seated members received an opportunity to oppose proposed candidates. No opposition was provided to John Miller. Browne opened the floor for any last-minute objections. None received. Browne asked for a motion to accept Janet Kniss, Rick Wagner, Linda Wilder-Bryan, and Kurtis Purtee candidacies for CSAH/CoC board members. A motion was made by **Joseph Ervin** to accept all candidates as new board members. The motion was seconded by **Julian Miller**, and all were in favor. Motion carried.

COVID-19 Activities/Discussion

- Browne noted that due to the COVID-19 quarantine all of us have our own personal challenges during these uncertain times, but more uncertain at this point is for homeless individuals. He said that the Executive Committee, (Toby Browne, Cindy Kelley, John Miller, Julian Miller, and Beverly Willett) have been in constant contact with each other, the City of Savannah, and Chatham County during this pandemic. He noted that all have been doing what we can.
- Kelley gave an update on the concern about ensuring homeless persons are receiving food given some loss of sites (primarily due to the fact that volunteers who serve are often seniors). The City of Savannah stepped up to assist with helping to close meal gaps. At present, they served about 200 per day at Emmaus House, Forsyth Park, and St. Luke Baptist Church. Primary feeding sites that remain in place include Old Savannah City Mission, Inner City Night Shelter, and Salvation Army. Some non-homeless persons are coming to the sites due to hunger in the general population. Kelley said CSAH staff are doing a major effort in accepting and distributing supplies to the Emergency Shelters and the camps. A contribution from IKEA of \$10,000 worth of products is forthcoming including backpacks/linens and twin size sheets.
- Kelley said we have limited shelter space due to COVID-19. We lost about a third of our emergency shelter space because the shelters had to space clients 6ft. apart. Our primary emergency shelters are Old Savannah City Mission, Inner City Night Shelter, Union Mission, Salvation Army and SAFE shelter. She said that we have been in continuous communication with the homeless Service

Providers, all are working really hard and have pulled together to support each other and collaborate as necessary. CEMA has scheduled twice weekly conference calls and CSAH and the critical agencies all are attending.

- They DFCS building was shut down because one of their staff members tested positive for COVID-19. As soon as we vacated the building, we moved operations outside in the parking lot in a tent. Tent operation hours are 8am-4pm, Monday-Friday. We also added 24/7 week-end phone on call services for the coming period.
- At this time, Kelley said that she is not aware of any homeless individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19.
- John Miller said that his concerns are the homeless camps (35 camps in existence) during the pandemic and getting people under cover as they are already compromised. He said that he believes getting these folks inside is something we should be working on. We will have resources via the CARES funding from the Feds. He coordinated a press release last week issuing a call for young volunteers. He is in the process of collecting a volunteer list.
- Wagner expressed his concerns about removing folks from the camps and stated that we may have some issues as many homeless residents are committed to staying in their current locations.

Chatham County Blueprint Application Presentation Update

- Julian Miller gave an update on the Chatham County Blueprint application process. He noted the request includes a Phase 1 plan for a sanitary camp (called Chatham Grounds), a program to address panhandling and a staff person (Coordinator) to provide support for this effort as well as someone to better coordinate distribution of goods and services for the homeless population county-wide. Our request is for \$100,000. Chatham Grounds would eventually have up to 90 spaces (but would start with 30) and would target homeless individuals 18 and older (men, woman, and couples). In addition to the \$100,000 request, the City of Savannah has agreed to match another \$50,000 providing the County approves the funds. We also received multiple commitments from various downtown organizations.

Finance Committee/Executive Committee

By-laws Revision & Cove Financial Protection/Discuss

- Kelley raised the issue of protecting the equity in the Cove at Dundee now and in the future. Her recommendation to the board is to restrict the organization's future ability to leverage borrowing on the Tiny House Project property and restrict it only for affordable housing related efforts by CSAH. Given donor restrictions for funds raised in Phase 1, it is necessary for the board to put this restriction in writing in the by-laws.
- Rayno said that not only should we change the bylaws, but we should also reflect this restriction on our financials.

Executive Director's Report – Cindy Kelley

Refreshing the Chatham Savannah Homeless Continuum of Care

- Kelley stated that the meetings/entire process has been put on hold due to COVID-19. She gave a brief overview to inform new members about the process including that the process was started by Chatham County. She stated they should be responsible for moving it forward. Kelley said that her concern is that CSAH has a history of making good strategic plans and then getting stalled by

requests to hold-up from City, County, or other agencies. This has been a pattern over the past six years that does need to cease. She reminded members that it is our mission to respond to the needs of our homeless population, and make decisions for both short and long term elements of the organization and the Continuum of Care.

Proceeding with Phase 2 Capital Campaign/Cove Update

- Kelley said that we put up two signs up in the clubhouse to honor donors for Phase One. The gentleman who came to install the signs ran his drill through the electrical box and killed the power in the clubhouse. We will get it repaired tomorrow. We are settling in with our residents. We have had some behavioral issues with tenants and our staff is working on a plan to manage these issues and maintain our Housing First approach. Tenants are paying their rent and we have a slight surplus in the Cove operations checking account.
- She stated that we must break ground on 2nd phase in 2020 due to our permit to build in this year. If we are forced to go into 2021 we fall under the new code and would need to go through a new application process and follow the new code, neither of which is desirable. We have slightly under \$200,000 in the bank and an outstanding pledge of \$75,000. We also have the pledge incoming to support payoff of the land. The \$75,000 donor wants assurance that Phase 2 will get off the ground before releasing the gift. The campaign will start back in earnest on May 1.
- On Thursday we received an unexpected \$10,000 from one of the foundations for the COVID-19 effort. This foundation also has been an ongoing donor to the Tiny House Project. We do have our contract and budget for phase 2 but we are still negotiating final costs.

Strategic Decision Making for CSAH – Focus/Name Change

- Kelley said that the name of our organization is not a particularly good name; Chatham-Savannah Authority for the Homeless. We have been talking for a long time about a name change to be more reflective of who we are as an organization today.
- Julian Miller stated Kelley is trying to get away from the word Authority, but it means something, and we need to talk about it and find out what kind of legal ramifications comes along with it. Kelley said that she agreed that we need to get a ruling on it. She said that she would like a small group to work and take on that task, James Jones and Julian Miller volunteered to work with the group. Browne said when they touched on this before they talked about using (dba), so we could keep our original name, but we will go through all those things and take all things in consideration.
- Browne noted that during this time we have made COVID-19 a focus of our website and moved away from our capital campaign. Some additional funds that come in could be used by other agencies and if available, we will do some distribution (not HUD funds, only unrestricted funds). He said it was to his understanding that the money Kelley received from the foundation is targeted to COVID relief and the donation from IKEA will primarily be delivered to the Emergency Shelters.
- Browne thanked John Miller and Julian Miller for putting together the campaign and press release to get young volunteers for other organizations in our Continuum of Care.

Property development next to the Cove at Dundee/Sale of Horse Carriage Business

- Kelley said that the horse stables horse carriage business has been sold. The developer will be putting up some storage space, office space, and space for artists to display their work. This is another example of the changes occurring along the Wheaton Street corridor.

Associate Director's Report -Kelley/Janice Sheffield

- Kelley said that we signed our HUD contract yesterday. We hope to be able to draw HUD dollars soon. The contract year starts March 1,2020. HUD NOFA for next year is in process for March 1, 2021. Janice has completed step 2 in the E-snaps system to get us ready to apply. HMIS/DCA Steering Committee has a new HMIS Governance and Policy Sub-Committee and Sheffield will serve on that committee.

Updates and Announcements

- Browne thanked Carlos Baker and his team and Julian Miller for being on the front line during this pandemic. They have been a support to the City, County and to the population that we serve. He wanted to congratulate them for their service.
- Ervin stated that one of his biggest concerns is, come May 14, 2020 the courts will open, and we will have an influx of eviction petitions and we are not ready for that because it will add to our homeless population. He said that we are going to have to be prepared to add on top of what we already have, to start thinking long term about when we really go full-fledged back into magistrate courts and look at people being evicted from their houses. He said that is the next epidemic that we are going to be looking at as a community. He is already receiving calls from people saying that their landlords said that they are going to file an eviction petition. He made a request that Kurtis Purtee and Linda Bryan see if the City has any CDBG grant emergency funds that we can tap into that would assist with keeping people in their housing.
- Purtee said that he and Byran will be having conversations with City Council and the City Manager and that is something that they will bring up to try to at least put something in place. Julian Miller noted that his experience with the City is that you do not just go to them and ask for money, you must have a plan. Ervin said if they task him with it, he will come up with a plan.
- Julian Miller said that Bill Broker of Georgia Legal has two attorneys assigned specifically for those purposes.
- Willett inquired if the \$10,000 received with COVID-19 can be used for evictions since it seems to be related. She suggested that we do fundraising specifically for a designated cause as people seem to respond to it better.
- Kelley said that the \$10,000 should be used for eviction prevention efforts (confirmed by the donor). She said that Wells Fargo gave another \$5,000 so we would have a total fund of \$15,000 for that purpose.
- Browne said that he supports Ervin to head up a committee to work on eviction prevention.
- Wilder said that she is working on her sanitary camp project. She mentioned that they have tents, socks, etc. and the City Manager has given them land to put the tents on. She expressed her great passion for assisting the homeless and willingness to do the work that she has been elected to do.
- Browne thanked all the new board members and all that joined the meeting.

- **Officers: Chair – Toby Browne, Vice-Chair – John Miller, Past Chair - Joe Ervin, Treasurer – Julian Miller, Secretary – Beverly Willett**

Adjournment- The meeting adjourned at 4:27pm

Next Board Meeting – May 19, 2020 -Format TBD

Board Secretary

CSAH Mission:

To lead the effort to build and sustain community practices to eliminate homelessness