



Energy Efficiency Subcommittee  
Meeting Minutes  
September 24, 2019  
1:00pm – 2:30pm

Facilitator:	Susan Cervantes		
Meeting Attendees:	Grettel Alvarado, Keshia Hills, James Geisen, Sherrie Gillespie, Susan Cervantes, Kendrick Heinlein, Monica Light, John Mitchell, Donata Kidd, Tom Oosterbaan, Carissa Patrone, Dan Schoonmaker, Wende Randall, Brianne Czyzio Robach		
Time Convened:	1:05	Time Adjourned:	2:40

<b>Introductions</b>		
<b>Review of Minutes</b>		<b>From August 27, 2019</b>
Discussion	None	
Amendments	None	
Conclusion	Motion Passed	
<b>Coalition to Keep Michigan Warm Updates</b>		
Discussion		
<p>Wende shared that she attended the September 13 meeting via phone. There was discussion that recapped conversations with congressional leaders, most conversations focused on LIHEAP funding. The LIHEAP social media awareness week had engagement across many different partners. State Energy Assessment report is in the works. On October 31, there is a Legislative staffer networking event. The goal is to ensure that staffers are aware of services. December 10 is Action Day at the state capital to talk about services and priorities from 11:30-1:00. The focus will be discussing how changes in services impacts households' ability to connect with and stay informed about services. In addition, there was discussion around building understanding around data and the effectiveness of the work that the coalition is doing.</p>		
Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
<b>MEAP 2019 Updates</b>		
Discussion		
<p>Susan shared that MI Community Action Association did not apply for MEAP dollars. BCAEO received \$6.3 million for the state, \$4 million of this is going to Wayne metro for assistance and affordable payment plans (APPs). KCCA will get about \$104,000 and can help an estimated 36 families. The funding is supposed to begin 10/1. The process is the same as last year's process. Customers must first apply for SER. SER caps will reset October 1. The same cap (\$850) will be in place this year, and only one assist per year. Salvation Army applied for MEAP but is not sure of the amount that was received. Walk for Warmth funds are available but are usually only used in special circumstances.</p> <p>Susan and Sherrie asked the group for thoughts and suggestions around how to expend limited funds. Kendrick asked whether KCCA can create guidelines for an extreme priority process. There may be issues as the funds are required to be first come first served. Monica noted that certain winter months will have an increased need, so it may make sense to use the funds during those months as compared to early fall. Wende asked if the group thought about expanding Walk for Warmth to increase marketing. Perhaps a partnership with a 501c3 to help raise funds. Wende wondered if there was a way to track data around those who are not served in relation to the times that enrollment is available. KCCA can pull navigation reports from MI Bridges with referrals made, reasons for</p>		



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ineligibility, etc. In addition, the 211 report from the past 3 months shows that 15% of calls were specific to utility assistance, which was the highest distinct percentage. The number of unmet needs calls been steadily increasing over the past few years.

There was a formula used to decide how the funds are allocated to communities throughout the state. There has been conversation around the need to the equitable distribution of funds across the state. The legislation that requires APPs is not in effect yet, it is still under review. The current bill sunsets September 30.

There has not been an update from True North regarding funds, Wende will reach out to Marissa.

Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline

**Event Preparation: West Michigan Sustainable Business Forum and Green Homes Institute**

Discussion

At the last meeting, it seems that there were several things that were discussed and ideas that were floated, and perhaps ideas to expand the event. Wende noted that it felt like there was a lot of energy around possibilities, but there were not thoughts around scale as the group has not done something like this before. Last month’s conversation included talk about building awareness across multiple sectors. Resource and vendor tables were discussed as a way for service providers to understand what resources may be available in the private sector and how service providers could connect. The group would want to introduce the need for utility assistance and the process of receiving assistance to those who may be interested in learning more and providing support. Dan noted that it would be a good idea to consider the desired outcomes and then create the event around these desired outcomes. WMSBF could bring in business contacts. This subcommittee could bring in housing, weatherization in housing, and energy and housing contacts. Wende indicated that perhaps the conversation can focus on ideas on how to support households so that they do not end up in a crisis situation where they need assistance for their utilities. A lot of this may have to do with households on fixed incomes. There is a financial sustainability piece important to this conversation.

Dan asked the group what the interest level is in getting engaged with this nonprofit weatherization programming. One of the greatest barriers is the income requirements. Many people who want the programming are just over the income guidelines, it would be great to create partnerships within business so that nonprofits could be a feeder to the businesses so they can support the work. A desired outcome could be getting businesses who offer weatherizations to provide those weatherizations to households who are low income at a subsidized rate. Advocacy around the importance and helpfulness of weatherization. Utility companies have a requirement that they meet certain reduction goals. The advocacy could be to help meet these goals. It seems that the majority of marketing around sustainable weatherization is to upper to upper-upper income households. This may create stigma.

The event could work to understand how businesses in the energy space can bring about changes for low income households and connect these changes to neighbors through services agencies. For example, in the north Kent area, what renewable options are there that communities see as outside of their reach. How do we advocate for these options? In the urban areas, how do we advocate for additional options? Dan noted that things that are be done as a block or neighborhood are things that will make the difference. The event can focus on getting companies on board and make the case that



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it will save them money in the long run. Weatherization and solar energy could be promoted as a win-win situation. There is a REACH grant that has to be done in a partnership for a big project – this could be a possibility for future collaboration. Muskegon used a REACH grant to install solar panels for a domestic violence shelter. Dan noted that the weatherization piece seems slightly separate from the renewal conversation but is an important topic that may be able to be included.

**Event details:**

Date: Monday, December 9<sup>th</sup> at LIT event space (tentative).

Title: Leveraging Energy Innovation to Reduce the Need for Utility Assistance. (tentative)

Needs:

- 1-3 people to speak from this group to share about the problem to set the stage. Ann Armstrong Cusak may be a good option, as well as local perspective.
- 1-2 people to set the stage from the energy side: WMSBF has a few ideas on this. Perhaps focus on solar panels, distributed grids, etc.
- Public event with meeting on either side. One is an introductory event to get people together who are interested and represent resources – frame as new partnership opportunities. Agencies such as Energy office, Allison Sutter, energy companies with an interest. Meeting after is to digest and identify action steps for partnership between individual initiatives or something larger that ENTF could take the lead on. This could be an ask to the Wege Foundation.
- Pre-meeting preparation: October/November ENTF EE meeting (set aside updates until end) In the meantime, work offline to set agenda.
- Next steps after the event: After talking about is wanted and needed, what grants and other resources are available? Compiling info from of table conversations into a flowchart or something similar with list of contacts, opportunities, etc. This should include a way of managing next steps. Perhaps there are communities or businesses currently engaged with this type of partnership that we can learn from.

Parking lot: There is the possibility for a separate conversation/event around affordable housing in Kent County. This objective seems to be out of scope of the energy conversation but would still be important to have. WMSBF would likely be interested in facilitating a conversation with Coalition to End Homelessness developers, Green Homes Institute, and the Permanent Housing Coordinating Council, and others around this topic in the future.

With AHAR funds, weatherization was a huge focus. With fewer funds and inability to re-do projects, the discussion has decreased. With weatherizations, need to look at the impact on carbon footprint, etc. but also need to get people to buy in that this is accessible to all neighbors and spoken is proactive. There is a need for a connection between climate action and household level weatherizations, instead of just at a conceptual level. WMSBF would be interested in getting people more interested in weatherization services by demonstrating need and/or funding. In addition, it is hard to find contractors to buy into the philosophy as many contractors are getting older. This could be an opportunity for minority contractors to engage in this space.

Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
<b>Agency Updates</b>		
Discussion		



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**Salvation Army:** has a little over \$4000 in People Care funding that they will be trying to expend by November.

**DHHS:** still have SER and county funds that can be used for energy assistance. They are anticipating an increase in October. They have a contingency plan in place for a potential shutdown. 10% of staff are deemed essential and would only be handling extreme situations.

**KCCA:** has a funds from the Grand Rapids Water Department available.