

District 4 Citizens Advisory Board Meeting

Minutes

Monday, September 13th, 2021 Zoom Online Meeting

6:00 p.m. Virtually

**Board members in attendance:** Maggie Ballard, Adam Bosworth, Jamie Buster, Zach Day, Sara Dixon, Nalini Fraser, Philip Fraser, Maria Elena Gonzalez, Madison Shriner

**County representatives and speakers:** Commissioner Lacey Cruse, Brent Shelton

**1. Call to Order**

Chairperson Nalini Fraser called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

A quorum was present.

**2. Meeting Minutes from August 9th (2 minutes)**

After review, Jamie Buster made a motion to approve the August 9th minutes. Nalini Fraser seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**3. ARPA Funds Discussion (37 minutes)**

Deputy Chief Financial Officer Brent Shelton presented an update on the American Rescue Plan Act. ARPA is a $1.9 trillion spending bill designed to help local governments and organizations recover from the pandemic. $100 million will go towards Sedgwick County.

Brent Shelton explains the County has conducted an internal needs assessment to find immediate internal County needs. The County also conducted an external needs assessment and focus groups to determine community needs.

The internal needs assessment drove the internal spending plan. This includes $20 million for Premium Pay, $9.7 million for the Court backlog, $9.4 million for public health response, and $500,000 for Community Navigators.

The top four community needs highlighted through the external needs assessment are small business and non-profit assistance to safely operate, public safety and community-violence intervention, mental health services, and premium pay for essential workers.

Brent Shelton explains that six focus groups were conducted with the help of consultants: arts, culture, travel, and tourism; community health; economic development, business, and workforce; education, youth, and childcare; local government; and make-up, potpourri.

Focus group results highlighted workforce challenges as the number one issue. Other challenges include child care services, finding ARPA funding, safe operating grants, mental health, COVID-19 testing and vaccination, and local government infrastructure.

Brent Shelton explains the County is not done gathering information. There is an ongoing online needs assessment located at Sedgwickcounty.org.

Brent Shelton explains the County is releasing an RFP for a Community Navigator program. $500,000 is allocated for selecting an organization to provide Community Navigators. Community Navigators will connect those with needs to available resources.

Maria Elena Gonzalez asks if $500,000 is an initial amount or the total allocation for Community Navigators.

Commissioner Lacey Cruse answers that the $500,000 is for a program to connect people with resources. The $500,000 is not for any individual service, it is for the program to be administered.

Commissioner Lacey Cruse explains the Grants Manager position. This will be an ongoing position within the County.

Lonny Wright asks if the County will consider providing Premium Pay to hospital workers.

Brent Shelton explains that hospitals have been receiving money from the Federal Government. The County will try to apply money where it is the most effective.

Lonny Wright asks if CARES money was used for Premium Pay to County employees.

Brent Shelter explains that Hero pay came from CARES. Premium pay will come from ARPA.

Chairperson Nalini Fraser asks when the funds will be allocated.

Brent Shelton answers that $42 million has already been allocated primarily internally. Some community programs are expected in the first quarter of 2022.

Maria Elena Gonzalez asks how the County is advertising the survey to the public.

Brent Shelton explains that the survey recently went online. The Communications department and COVID Task force will get the word out.

Brent Shelton explains that the survey is anonymous because of Federal guidelines.

Commissioner Lacey Cruse asks how we can ensure the validity of the survey.

Brent Shelton explains it is based on peoples’ goodwill. Most will answer the survey legitimately.

**6. Meeting Location Discussion (9 minutes)**

Chairperson Nalini Fraser started a discussion on where the next meeting should be held.

Commissioner Lacey Cruse asks the members on what frequency they would like to hold the meetings.

After discussion, Chairperson Nalini Fraser made a motion to continue with Zoom. Maria Elena Gonzalez seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Maria Elena Gonzalez made a motion to continue with monthly meetings. Jamie Buster seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**7. Other Business (16 minutes)**

Commissioner Lacey Cruse mentions that the Citizens Advisory Board can hear zoning cases.

Sara Dixon mentions to Commissioner Lacey Cruse that she could bring any zoning cases to the Citizens Advisory Board that she may need feedback on.

Commissioner Lacey Cruse explains how important it is for everyone to pay attention to CARES and ARPA Fund discussion. It is vital for individuals to hold all Commissioners and County Staff accountable for how money is spent in regards to the ARPA surveys.

Maria Elena Gonzalez explains that she works for the Section 8 Program of Wichita. There are a lot of clients having a difficult time finding adequate housing in Wichita.

Commissioner Lacey Cruse says homelessness needs to be addressed. The organization Community Solutions talks about five principles of solving homelessness in the community: have a commitment to shared measurable goals; have a data feedback loop that is qualitative and quantitative; have a dedicated team doing the work; testable, provable practices; and access to flexible resources.

Chairperson Nalini Fraser mentions that we don’t want to just treat the symptoms, but must also address the underlying issues and root causes.

Chairperson Nalini Fraser asks for suggestions on topics and speakers.

Chairperson Nalini Fraser made a motion to adjourn. Maria Elena Gonzalez seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**Next Meeting**

Monday October 11th, 2021 - Will be held over zoom at 6:00 pm.