

Mid Michigan Community Action Agency, Inc.
Board of Directors Meeting
12/3/2025

MEMBERS PRESENT

Gage, Norm*
Jones, Nancy
Reder, William
Vernier, Joel
Goulet, Carol
Johnson, Ruth
Michell, Tim
Weimer, Suzi
Ortega, Theresa
Sims, Barbara
Hoefling, David
Bontekoe, Doug
Wilton, Kathy
Roberts, Debbie
Begick, Vaughn
Winarski, Tom
Schuelke, Larry
Ryder, Diane

MEMBERS ABSENT

Raap, Joan
Nash, Charles
Byard, Tracy
Adams, Greg

CONSULTANT

Dancer, Jennifer

STAFF PRESENT

Polega, Mark
Carson, Amyee
VanderElzen, Stephanie
Mills, Johnny
Rohlman, Eva
Swanstra, Cherri
Loomis, Courtney
Johnson, Brian
Scott, Santana
Nelson, Kaylee

* denotes virtual attendance

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson William Reder called the meeting to order at: 4:30 p.m. at 1574 E. Washington Rd., Farwell, Michigan.

Roll call was taken and a quorum established.

Motion Jones/Hoefling to excuse absent board members from meeting.
Motion unanimously approved.

MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING:

Motion Wilton/Weimer to review and approve the October 2025 Minutes.
Motion unanimously approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT

N/A

PRESENTATION

Belonging Statement – Jake Fryer, IDEA Committee

--Jake shared the Belonging Statement created by the IDEA Committee, and described how it will be used for the agency if it is adopted by the Board

RESOLUTIONS

Motion Weimer/Gage to approve resolution #12-2025-R03, Belonging Statement
 16 ayes, 0 nays
Motion unanimously approved.

POLICY COUNCIL REPORT

Stephanie VanderElzen

Motion Jones/Wilton to accept Policy Council Report.
Motion unanimously approved.

PLANNING & EVALUATION COMMITTEE REPORT:

Nancy Jones

Monitoring Report for Review (For Approval)

Discussion Family Self-Sufficiency Q3 Performance Report
Cherri Swanstra: We do get monitored quarterly on these, and we have made some new goals and we received 100% this round.

Motion Jones/Weimer to review and approve the following monitoring report:
1. Family Self-Sufficiency Q3 Performance Report
Motion unanimously approved.

Discussion Northeast Michigan Community Action Agency (NEMSCA) Head Start Financial Assessment Desk Review
Stephanie VanderElzen: This was a review from our grantee, NEMSCA. They had seven categories that they looked at and we had no findings.

Motion Jones/Wilton to review and approve the following monitoring report:
1. Northeast Michigan Community Action Agency (NEMSCA) Head Start Financial Assessment Desk Review
Motion unanimously approved.

Discussion Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) Single Audit Management Decision
Mark Polega: Our FY23 audit was filed late, and as we discussed when it was filed, there were two findings that we had to submit corrective action for. The letter that you have in your packet says that they pulled and reviewed our findings and they accept our corrective action.

Motion Jones/Wilton to approve the following monitoring report:
1. Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) Audit Decision
Motion unanimously approved.

Early Childhood Services:

Discussion Early Head Start and Head Start Director Reports

Amyee Carson:

- Early Head Start is focusing on mental health for not only for families but also for staff.
- Our staff are working hard at being present at community events, to talk about any changes with our services.
- Our disabilities enrollment has stayed a little low – a lot of our kids with disabilities transitioned out to preschool.
- We are still looking for an Early Childhood Services Program Nurse. We've had a couple interviews, and we are still looking at different places to post the position to widen our reach. If anyone knows where to find retired nurses, that would be a great help for us.
- Our enrollment has been at 165 or above – November was the first month we were at 164 since we were under enrollment.
- WIC had an 88% show rate for appointments in October. There has been a lot of illness going around, and that is usually when we see show rates decline.
- For Whole Family Services – we are still exploring what it looks like for us, we will have some more data in January – where families are enrolled in multiple services so we can try targeting that.
- We had an audit, and they did not give us much notice in advance. It was a very long week with very little prep time, but we got it done and it is done for the year. We should be hearing back by February.

Stephanie VanderElzen:

- At the end of October, Head Start completed our grants. We completed our budget and submitted that.
- We have had some really great involvement with our families.
- We are in need of some positions still, we are doing a lot of internal shifting right now to make sure that everything is covered.
- Our enrollment at the time this was reported was at 97%. In the report, you can also see how many meals we served.
- School is done next Wednesday, and they will be back in school on January 6th.

The following were received and filed:

1. Directors' Report
2. Early Head Start Dashboard
3. Head Start Dashboard

ECS/EHS time 22 mins

New Applications (For Approval)

Discussion Consumers Energy Foundation – Food Insecurity

Cherri Swanstra: We put in an application for Consumers for \$2,000 to purchase fresh food and ground beef in Gladwin. And we will be distributing that on the 15th.

Discussion Michigan Department of Health and Human Services – FY26 HUD Continuum of Care Transitional Housing

Eva Rohlman: Some of our homeless funding is competitive – this year we were not supposed to have to compete for this but under the new administration, they released a new opportunity to compete on Thanksgiving, and it is much different than it has been in the past. I will give you the broad strokes for this application – most of our homeless funding comes from HUD; some of it comes from the VA, some of it comes through MSHDA. We have a very large rapid rehousing project and a small permanent support program that are impacted by the funding notice. The current administration is looking for transitional housing projects. What this means is that people experiencing homelessness get housed in a unit for 2 years, receive support and education on how to support themselves while they are there. Years of research has shown that transitional projects are not effective, and the data showed that after those 2 years when people had to move out, they really struggled on their own.

We have been scrambling a bit to change our program to fit the definition of transitional housing by next year, and we are writing an application for this funding. I am asking for your permission here in advance because 16 states and agencies sued the administration, and then this funding notice was put on hold. If the requirement to compete is upheld, we need your permission to put in an application for a transitional housing project that will be the size to replace our rapid rehousing program. I do not think this is the best-case scenario for our communities, but I will apply to this so we can continue helping people.

Motion Jones/Weimer to review and approve the following new applications:
1. Consumers Energy Foundation – Food Insecurity - \$2,000
2. Michigan Department of Health and Human Services – FY26 HUD Continuum of Care Transitional Housing - \$600,000 estimated.
Motion unanimously approved.

Continuation Applications (For Approval)

Discussion Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) – FY26 Permanent Supportive Housing
Eva Rohlman: Despite changes to the regulations, we would like to apply for the continuation of our Permanent Supportive Housing program.

Motion Jones/Wilton to review and approve the following continuation applications:
1. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) – FY26 Permanent Supportive Housing - \$181,547 estimated.
Motion unanimously approved.

Discussion Michigan State Housing Development Authority
HUD Housing Counseling
Cherri Swanstra: This is to support our Housing Counselors from HUD – MSHDA asked us to ask for the max and that is what we are doing.

Motion Jones/Wilton to review and approve the following continuation applications:
1. Michigan State Housing Development Authority
a. HUD Housing Counseling - \$45,000
b. FY26 Continuum of Care (CoC) Youth Navigation - \$130,000 estimated

c. FY26 Continuum of Care (CoC) Coordinated Entry - \$60,000 estimated Motion unanimously approved.

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT:

Joel Vernier

Brian Johnson: I want to start off by recognizing the hard work of the Finance staff, it has been a busy year, and they have worked so hard on the multiple ongoing audits. We are about 50% complete with the FY24 audit, and we are working to complete it by the end of the year. Karl from WIPFLI is optimistic that we will make it by that deadline. We have also started working on FY25. My aggressive goal is to be done with FY25 by the end of March. It has been a busy year, looking forward to completing all the audits and a bit of a break for the Finance staff who have been working so hard to get these done.

Motion Vernier/Jones to accept the Fiscal Year to Date Financial Reports
Motion unanimously approved.

Motion Vernier/Winarski to approve the following contracts & awards:
1. Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA)
a. Change in per participant rate from \$100 to \$125 for the first 50 active participants

Motion Vernier/Jones to approve the following contracts & awards:
1. Michigan Veteran Affairs Agency
a. Extension of time – Michigan Veteran Homelessness Prevention Grant
10/01/2025 to 09/30/2026
Motion unanimously approved.

OTHER BUSINESS

Bill Reder: Every December we have elections to approve the officers of the Board. Currently, I am the Board Chair, Norm is the Vice Chair, Joel is the Treasurer, Nancy is the Secretary. If you would like to make any changes, please say so.

Motion Hoefling/Weimer to extend the current slate of Board Officers for one year.
Motion unanimously approved.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mark Polega: The federal shut down did eventually end – which gave us a chance to take a breath, and having SNAP assistance reinstated was huge for our families. We were feeling the pressure from families and requests coming in for food assistance. The outpouring of community support for our food pantry – from small pantries to larger organizations making sure people had food was phenomenal. It was tough given the circumstances, but it was proof that our communities pull together to do amazing things. We have a continuing resolution for almost all of our programs. That continuation keeps us funded until the end of January – we do not know what will happen after that point. What I am concerned about – as all our other programs are running on that grant cycle – the Head Start Office is going to be backlogged. I am concerned that we might experience another shut down, and if this happens in January before the start of a new Head Start Grant cycle, it might impact on our Head Start program. We will continue to

watch that as we head into January. It would be tremendously disruptive to our families, but we are hopeful that this will not take place.

You may have noticed that the roofing project you approved has been a work in progress. It turns out, it is not a quiet process so we have had to find creative ways to shift our workspace around. They started before Thanksgiving and they were here for a solid week and got a lot done. During the short work week of Thanksgiving, they were offsite at a different job. We hope by the end of next week, they will have everything wrapped up, and then we will have another contractor over for the gutter work. They found around 40 holes in the roof that they believe were there when the roof was installed. It was a very good investment for more than one reason.

The parking lot at the thrift store was finished mid-September and has been a huge hit for our customer base. It was a daily occurrence for customers to be upset about the parking lot. But now that we have the side lot done where our customer parking is marked.

It is hard to believe, but I am coming up on my one-year anniversary of being your Executive Director. I am still extraordinarily honored that I was placed in this role, and I am confident that we can pull through whatever comes our way.

A Christmas miracle came through today – we were contacted by Consumer’s Energy and they have a pot of gifted funds that they are interested in partnering with us on. Cherri and Eva were able to meet with our Consumer’s representative.

Cherri Swanstra: Fingers crossed that there are no storms for the rest of December, and we are looking at \$500,000.

Mark Polega: This is very exciting news for us – this amount of money would take off significant pressure from our other grants. It would be limited to Consumers customers, but that is the majority of our customers anyways, and it would allow us to cover back fees, and electrical repairs. It would allow us to help a lot of people.

STAFF/DIRECTOR REPORTS

Written reports provided.

Meeting adjourned at ___ 6:05 ___ p.m.

The next regular meeting of the MMCAA board will be held January 22 at 4:30PM

Location: 1574 E. Washington Road, Farwell, Michigan

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Jones, Board Secretary