

**Schoharie County Community Action Program, Inc.  
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes – February 24, 2025**

**Attendance:**

**Private Sector**

Member	Position	Attendance
Rhonda Ferris	Officer: Chair	X
Helen Owens	Member	X
Vacancy		

**Public Sector**

Member	Position	Attendance
Shane Nickle	Officer: Vice-chair	X
Amanda Fernandez	Officer: Treasurer	A
Earlin Rosa	Officer: Secretary	A

**Consumer Sector**

Member	Position	Attendance
Pastor Ray Richards	Member	X
Vacancy		
Vacancy		

**Administrative Staff:**

Jeannette Spaulding - Executive Director, Becky Kennison-Foland - Deputy Executive Director, Justina Farris – Finance Director, Melissa Napoli – Community Engagement Coordinator

**Department Staff:** None

**Guests/non-Board member attendees:** None

**Note:** Tracking Standards, if any, noted in minutes are included post Board meeting as part of NYS DOS ACROS/TRACS compliance monitoring.

**Meeting called to order at 5:00 PM by Rhonda Ferris**

**Department Presentation:** None

**Approval of Minutes:**

*Rhonda asked for a motion to receive the January 2025 minutes. Motion made by Helen, seconded by Shane.*

*Correction: Ray asked about a comment on page 4. He noted the sentence “Jeannette covered that she has been at the agency 25 years and has roles that the new executive director would have.” Should be revised to “Jeannette covered that she has been at the agency 25 years and has had roles that the new executive director would not have.” Jeannette confirmed that he is correct.*

*No further discussion. Request to approve minutes. All Ayes. Motion approved.*

**Action Items:**

**Resolution 03-02/25 Bank of Richmondville Authorized Signatories**

Rhonda presented the resolution to remove Earlin Rosa and add Ray Richards as Secretary. *Rhonda asked for a motion, Shane offered the motion to approve the resolution, seconded by Rhonda. No further discussion. All Ayes. Motion approved.*

**Executive Session:** No session held. There are no personnel or legal matters at this time.

**Committees of the Board:**

**Executive Committee:** (Held as needed for confidential legal & personnel matters.) No meeting held.

**Finance & Audit Committee: Reviewed Items - Finance Agenda/Fiscal Reports**

- **Financial Reports** - Ray presented reports:
  - Contract status: Reviewed updates/changes/etc. Brought attention to the highlighted areas noting contracts being submitted and/or approved.
  - Ray asked about CSBG and if the money that has been approved for current contract is guaranteed money? Jeannette confirmed we have not received the payment for the 20% voucher yet. We received the full advance payment; we've met the 20% expenditure level, and we are close to 45% but we have not been paid because the funding has not come down from the federal government to the state.
  - Ray confirmed EFSP is in the same situation, and we cannot move onto phase 42 because the funds are frozen.
  - Ray stated Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, Family Support, Supervised Visitation and Weatherization contracts have not been vouchered for January yet.
  - Ray asked about the Visa bill. Justina explained a large portion was our Sage Accounting subscription and other subscription renewals.
  - Ray noted we had two exiting employees in January.

*Ray requested approval of the financial reports. Shane made the motion to accept the financial reports, seconded by Helen. Being no further discussion, vote taken. All Ayes. Motion approved.*

- **2025 Compensation Schedule – presented by Rhonda**
  - Rhonda noted the handout is the current 2024 approved compensation schedule.
  - Rhonda stated that the compensation schedule is generally reviewed in the first quarter of our fiscal year to determine if there will be any adjustments to the incoming base rates and that the Board typically addresses this in February or March.
  - Rhonda stated the Board can choose to increase the rates or to leave as is. She stated a \$0.50 per hour raise will keep the lowest position \$2.00 above the NYS upstate minimum wage hourly rate, which the Board has tried to maintain that position over the last couple of years. Also, that positions have various rates based on job duties, that would all increase or knowing that our federal funding is currently to the Continuing Resolution on December 20<sup>th</sup> the U.S. House and Senate passed a second Continuing Resolution to extend federal spending and avert a government shutdown through March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2025.
  - Rhonda explained the Board may choose to table this discussion until there is clear information available in the days ahead. Either way the Board should review the schedule in advance of the March meeting so they can discuss it. Rhonda reiterated that the Board has always strived to keep the lowest compensation rate \$2.00 above minimum wage.

- Ray asked if the \$0.50 per hour raise and the \$2.00 above minimum wage rate the Board strives to stay at is included in the contracts and how that would work moving forward for budgeting purposes. Justina explained it depends on what contracts are impacted due to the unknown of the federal government Continuing Resolution. Ray asked if \$0.50 per hour has been budgeted for this year. Justina explained that if they look at the 4 current vacant positions, the Executive Director is probably going to have higher compensation than what the current plan lists. The Energy Services Field Carpenter compensation may be higher based on training or skills, as well as the Breastfeeding Lactation Counselor position. Justina recommended we stay at these rates because budgets are tight. Ray asked for clarification. Jeannette explained that Justina built the budgets to with an expectation of a percentage increase to people currently at the agency and that portion was built into the budget already. This plan is for new hires and to keep in mind an outgoing person would be making more than an incoming person might be so it will not reflect on the contract. But, with the government decisions in progress we can leave the plan as is and accept that we are only \$1.50 above the state's current minimum wage for new people coming in and that is for a part-time person. The lowest position in the agency is only \$1.50. Every other position is well above minimum wage.
- Ray asked about the current rates again, Jeannette explained that 2025 minimum wage was \$15.50. Jeannette and Justina confirmed that they are looking at another \$0.50 increase for 2026, making the minimum wage \$16.00 per hour. Ray was concerned that the more expensive labor becomes the more companies will automate to save on labor, hence hurting the lower-income population we're trying to help.
- Justina pointed out that the compensation schedule was based on 2024 and that there are not 25 staff currently. Jeannette explained that even the lowest full-time positions at 4 workdays a week are \$17.85 and if you bring that over to a 40-hour work week the hourly rate is less than the state minimum wage. For SCCAP it is not a problem because we work a 34-hour work week, but when potential hires look at the amount coming in compared to a 40-hour work week. Candidates will weigh out the monetary vs. non-monetary benefits, people either need the money or they have other resources so they can do a 4-day work week with a little less, it all depends on the individual.
- Ray inquired what Jeannette had heard regarding the federal shutdown. He explained that he had heard the government may shut down. Jeannette said we are not hearing on the national level, we are not hearing conversation about what entities are doing in the advocating and lobbying areas, and to remember this is a one-sided decision-making body in Washington DC so even if there are efforts made it may not get agreed to. As of right now, if the federal budget had been decided during the previous administration it would be harder to get rid of things. Cutbacks would have been established legislatively but it was put off into this administration to make those decisions, and everything is fair game. The conversation in the Community Action network is a lot of agencies are recognizing that nothing is safe from cuts. If CSBG goes away smaller Community Actions may consider closing their doors because they can't function administratively without CSBG dollars. Contracts do not give enough money to cover administration costs. Becky was part of a meeting with ECLC that discussed if CCR&R dollars (which are federal) are impacted, CCR&R's will close their doors even though Governor Hochel is stating she will attempt to protect services, but everything takes time with that too. If the federal government does not come up with a plan by March 14<sup>th</sup>, there could be a shutdown, which certain services would be impacted, and has happened in the past. The government can pick and choose what entities will be allowed to operate during the shutdown. And it means money is not drawn down, payments aren't made to state levels. We're 85% federally funded. We do not know at this time what will get affected and what will not. Hopefully it will be resolved in the next few weeks. The government could leave everything as it is and apply it to 2025 but right now it is in negotiations. Every program at SCCAP could be affected and we don't know at this moment how it will play out.

- Ray expressed his hesitation to make any decisions on compensation until we know more about the federal government’s plans. Jeannette reaffirmed there is no harm in leaving the compensation plan as is until we know more. For a lot of Community Action Programs, it is a big picture question of if the business can stay open or not. Jeannette recommended waiting until we know what the fiscal picture looks like and then decide what the Board is comfortable with regarding compensation. Ray recommended the discussion be tabled until the next meeting.

<b>7.5 Indicator:</b> The governing board reviews and approves CEO/Executive Director compensation within every calendar year.
<b>8.7 Indicator:</b> *Board members receive financial reports at every Board meeting (must include both organization-wide report on Revenue and Expenditures that compares Budget to Actual, categorized by program; and Balance Sheet/Statement of Financial Position).

**Governance & Nominating:**

- Rhonda reminded the Board that we need to fill Board vacancies especially in the consumer sector. Ray mentioned he was interested in seeing if Brenda Morisette (a previous Board member) would be willing to come back. Jeannette confirmed she was in her 2<sup>nd</sup> term last time she served. Ray said he would reach out to her.

**Program Planning & Evaluation:**

- **Newly designed Monthly Department Program Reports – email, website, and handout**  
Rhonda presented the new program reports. Rhonda expressed that she likes the new report and layout, Ray agreed and said it was much easier to read and comprehend. Jeannette explained she plans to combine the acronym sheets into one document and place it on the website. Jeannette explained her intention was to streamline the process for staff and make it more uniform for the Board.

<b>Standard 5.9</b> The organization’s governing board receives programmatic reports at each regular board meeting.
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**TRACS Report – email, website, and handout**

- A copy was presented to each member. Rhonda asked how often this report happens and Jeannette confirmed it is every 3 years. Ray stated this is what our senators and state representatives should see so they can see we are doing productive work. Jeannette said we didn’t get a perfect report this year because we are missing a Board member in the consumer section. It was the only negative aspect the state could find in our report.
- Jeannette praised Justina and her department for their work and effort in assembling the TRACS report. The Board agreed.
- Jeannette explained she is creating a new excel tool that reflects the required timeline for TRACS and ACROS. ACROS is the same thing as TRACS but without the indicators and on an annual basis.
- Jeannette mentioned documents from the meetings can be found on the website and we have hard copies on hand in Board books.

**Personnel Committee:** – No meeting held.

**Committees of the Corporation:**

**Community Needs Assessment** – No meeting held.

### **Executive Director Search Committee:**

- Ray updated the Board on the status of the search for the new executive director. He explained that the interview questions had been decided, and the compensation range offered had been agreed upon. Ray showed the job posting and explained it was placed in various publications such as Indeed, social media and newspapers. There were 19 applications received as of this morning, and Board members of the search committee analyzed the applications received and vetted if they met the criteria required. Of the 19 applicants only 7 followed instructions and submitted material requested.
- The Board was able to identify 6 potential applicants to interview. They will interview the candidates first via zoom, then they will determine who they would like to meet for in-person interviews. Ray felt positive about some of the applicants. He explained they would like one with a bachelor's degree or higher and someone who has a human services experience and experience in community action realm specifically in rural communities.
- Shane inquired about the time frame of meetings. Ray confirmed within the next two weeks.
- Ray and Rhonda discussed that the Board independently selected the same people and how that was a validating experience for them.

### **Fundraising:** No meeting was held.

- The Board discussed the potential 60<sup>th</sup> gala. Melissa explained the only venue available during the dates considered is SUNY Cobleskill's Bouck Hall on September 27<sup>th</sup>. All other large venues in Schoharie County were booked. Melissa reminded the Board that we could look at alternate locations but having a budget and number of guests in mind will drive what we are able to do. Ray asked about fees, Melissa explained fees are based on the number of guests.
- Ray mentioned upper Champlin Hall at SUNY being an option. Ray asked for opinions on funding for the event. He would like to do something special, but he wants to raise money. Ray asked who our target audience was and mentioned the risk of not being able to obtain donations.
- Rhonda asked if we had any sponsors at this time, or local businesses that could buy a table for the event? Ray said to consider the needs of volunteers too, we can't allocate staff to work the event. Ray asked again who we were inviting and suggested a more casual approach to the event to save money. Becky raised concerns that not knowing what the federal government will do impacts the decision. Ray said we can't wait to do a fundraiser, but we only have a limited number of people to volunteer and maybe it should be a smaller event. Ray still wants special but affordable. Melissa suggested doing it in the warmer months to allow for more venue options.
- Jeannette mentioned SCCAP had a 50<sup>th</sup> at SUNY Champlin Hall that was successful. Students provided the catering. She mentioned how enjoyable the event was. It was a fundraising event though sales of tickets to event. The audience was business partners and SCCAP employees. Jeannette mentioned the importance of having affordable tickets for the public staff. She mentioned the 50<sup>th</sup> had a silent auction, Board members received auction items and donations. Staff supported behind the scenes but were able to attend the event. There was an open bar, and the food was a contest for students that was judged by the attendees. There were about 120-130 people who attended. Ray liked that idea; it became hard to do at SUNY and only did it one more time. He mentioned he would speak with his contacts at the college to see if they would assist us. Jeannette mentioned again it was very enjoyable the two years they did it.
- Jeannette reminded the Board that the event at the college had a low impact on SCCAP in terms of output on employees. She suggested a farm to table approach to the dinner, can we feature a local farm? Shane said if we do, he might be able to involve the county head of Ag development specialist and leadership in the Ag field.
- Ray said if the money does come through and we find an executive director we will need new funds, and the next ED should be very good at fundraising and grant writing. Ray reminded us we can do a SCCAP through the years presentation.

**Executive Director/Deputy Executive Director Report:**

○ **Staff Reports**

- Jeannette reviewed the immigration and ICE memo from Homeland Security and how we are navigating here at the agency. She explained we are considered an entity in the community as we may have people here with undefined immigration status. The memo outlines how we could approach the situation should it arise.
- Jeannette explained that filling positions has been a challenge. Weatherization is impacted by lack of staff. The Greeter position had 30 applications, and we are starting interviews. The Greeter will work 6 hours a day for 3 days a week to support Melissa.
- Jeannette is focused on getting all systems perfected and in place for staff going forward for her remaining time at the agency. She mentioned she would be happy to create whatever might be needed as well.

**Old/New Business:**

- Rhonda asked if there was any new or old business to discuss. None.

**Other:**

- Ray asked if the agency would be open after 5:00pm to conduct interviews, Jeannette explained we can accommodate any needs. Ray is hoping to have two meetings to conduct interviews on Thursday the 27th and 4th. Ray asked if the Board could interview 2 people in one night. Jeannette and Ray felt it was best if applicants did not cross paths. Jeannette suggested one interview per evening so there are no time parameters to be concerned with.

**Next Board Meeting – Monday, March 31st, 2025, at 5:00PM**

**Location: SCCAP's Board Room**

Before adjournment the Board discussed May 1<sup>st</sup> for the April Board Meeting. Ray asked if we needed another May meeting and Jeannette reminded them there is a new executive director coming and it is Community Action month, but they are only required to have 6 meetings a year. Jeannette asked if the timeframes of the executive director transition need to be adjusted beyond April 1st due to the applicants already having jobs and needing to provide notice to their current employer. Jeannette mentioned she is very flexible with the transition. Ray included it would be nice to have an overlap of executive directors for transfer of knowledge.

**Motion to Adjourn by Ray at 6:15 pm**

Respectfully submitted,  
Melissa Napoli, Community Engagement Coordinator