

**COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS OF EASTERN IOWA  
SECRETARIAL NOTES**

DATE Thursday, March 20, 2025

TIME 11:00 a.m.

PLACE Zoom/Phone/7600 Commerce Park, Dubuque, Iowa

MEMBERS PRESENT:

- ☒ Martha Donnelly Sister, Presentation BVMs
- ☐ VACANT
- ☒ Beth Bonz, City Manager, City of Asbury
- ☒ Connie Behnken, Mayor, City of Manchester
- ☒ Mindy Wiley, ECIA/EIRHA
- ☒ Cori Burbach, Assistant City Manager, City of Dubuque
- ☒ Stephanie Ottavi, Community Volunteer
- ☐ Andy Mozena, Premier Bank
- ☒ Nicole Recker, Mental Health Advocate, Delaware County  
Community Services
- ☒ Rick Mihm, Executive Director, Dubuque Rescue Mission
- ☒ Sam Wooden, RSH Legal

STAFF PRESENT:

- ☒ Jennifer Walker, Director of Special Programs
- ☐ Steve Stoffel, Director of Finance and Administration
- ☒ Shelby Eipperle, Homeless Program Coordinator
- ☒ Christine Efferding, Homeless Program Coordinator

**1. - CALL TO ORDER/INTRODUCTIONS**

Chair Bonz called the CSEI meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. Introductions followed by board members and staff.

The members of the CSEI are holding this session by electronic means pursuant to the provisions of the Iowa Open Meetings Law, Section 21.8, Code of Iowa, and due to the limited agenda for this meeting, relatively short period of time that this meeting is expected to be held, the expense of transporting the board members in person is impractical. The meeting is being held by phone or internet means originating from the ECIA offices in Dubuque. It is open to the public and those in attendance can hear the proceedings. Public notice of the meeting has been issued in accordance with Iowa Code Section 21.4.

**2. – REVIEW/APPROVE CSEI MINUTES AND SECRETARIAL NOTES FOR November 21, 2024**

Motion by Wooden, second by Ottavi to approve the Minutes and Secretarial Notes of the November 21, 2024 CSEI Meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

**3. – Review/Approve CSEI Budget and Grants through February 28, 2025**

Walker referred to the FY25 Revenues & Expenses. Walker noted CSEI is in the process of submitting to the city and county for reimbursement for City of Dubuque POS and Dubuque County ARPA. It was also

noted by Walker that ERA received additional funding, and CSEI will be trying again for the DRA CORE grant. CSEI will also be submitting a TBRA grant renewal from HUD, to continue current TBRA programming. Walker also informed the board that the decision to spend some donor funds for rent and utilities has been paused while other funding is solidified.

Walker also discussed the CSEI Grant Summary as of 2/28/25. CSEI applied for two amendments to the ERA2 budget, and both were granted, resulting in an additional \$410,000 to be used for Homeless Prevention as well as additional administration funds. These funds will need to be spent by the end of September. Walker indicated these funds are filling a critical place in our assistance programs, as about 50% of renting households are cost burdened, or spending over 30% of their income on rent. Wooden inquired about the number of people currently on programs through CSEI, and Efferding and Eipperle estimated 130 individuals in about 70 households based on a quick data pull. Walker also discussed the HOME ARP grant application, which CSEI has not yet received a contract for but is expected by April 1. Walker summarized that currently CSEI has \$3.3 million dollars in live grants, with \$1.8 million being directly diverted back into the community through rent and utility payments. Burbach indicated City of Dubuque Section 8 lottery would not open at all in 2025. Walker indicated over 6000 on EIRHA Section 8 Waitlist, therefore CSEI's TBRA would be about the only thing in our region for longer-term stability.

Discussion among board members ensued regarding the importance of continued fundraising efforts in light of uncertain federal funding opportunities. Bonz indicated the word is that large local funding is expended and stretched thin. Walker noted the importance of positive press, such as a recent Telegraph Herald article featuring a CSEI client. Burbach offered to share language suggestions for federal grants, and will disperse that to Walker. Burbach also indicated her certainty that CSEI would be funded by the City of Dubuque at the same level, if not a small increase.

Motion by Burbach, second by Behnken to approve the CSEI Budget and Grants reports through February 28, 2025. The motion passed unanimously.

#### **4. – Review and Approve Potential New Board Member**

Bonz presented information regarding the nomination of Sharon Gaul to fill the vacant board seat. Gaul is a local realtor with over 20 years' experience in local government, development, and housing sectors. This experience includes nine years with the City of Dubuque Health, Engineering, and Housing Divisions managing \$12 million in HUD grant funded programs. Burbach added that her experience with Gaul at the city level was positive, and Gaul would make an excellent addition to the board.

Motion by Burbach, seconded by Ottavi to approve Sharon Gaul as a member of the CSEI Board. The motion passed unanimously.

#### **5. Fundraising and Donor Recognition**

Bonz and Walker both spoke to the success of the Donor Recognition Luncheon in January. While no funds were directly raised specifically from the event, the luncheon did educate our current donors about what exactly CSEI does, and how their donations are critical to the success of the organization as well as the clients.

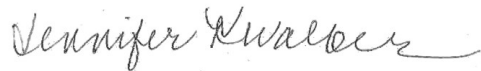
#### **6. – Other Business**

Walker indicated the next meeting will include a budget presentation for the next fiscal year, as well as include updated information regarding the hiring of an intern, supportive services funding, and City of Dubuque funding.

## **7. – ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by Wooden, second by Burbach to adjourn the CSEI meeting at 11:39 a.m. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jennifer Walker", followed by a horizontal flourish.

Jennifer Walker  
Director of Special Programs, ECIA