



Council of the Cherokee Nation

Meeting Minutes Community Services Committee

Tuesday, May 12, 2009

9:00 AM

Legislative Conference Room

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Buzzard called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m.

INVOCATION

Councilor Snell gave the invocation.

ROLL CALL

Present 9 - Bill John Baker; Don Garvin; Buel Anglen; Jack D. Baker; Jodie Fishinghawk; Janelle Fullbright; Harley Buzzard; Curtis Snell and Chris Soap

Absent 2 - S. Joe Crittenden and David Thornton Sr.

Late Arrival 5 - Meredith Frailey; Cara Cowan Watts; Tina Glory Jordan; Bradley Cobb and Julia Coates

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Councilor Anglen made a motion to approve the April 14th regular session minutes. Councilor Bill John Baker seconded the motion. Motion carried.

REPORTS:

1. Human Services Department - Norman Merriman

Ms. Merriman offered to answer questions from her report. Councilor Bill John Baker questioned with the economic crisis, increased interest in rentals and increased in utility bill if it would be wise to tweak the program. Ms. Merriman announced she has had the Tribal Emergency Assistance program for four years and are yet to run out of funds. She stated she does have the ability to override if needed. She stated in her opinion at this time the program doesn't need to be changed. Councilor Soap questioned the 28 ICW homes closing. Ms. Merriman stated the closings are for a number of reasons such as people applying for adoption in multiple places or having a child of their own. Councilor Soap inquired about the recruitment for homes. Ms. Merriman stated there is a full time recruiter who has attended all of the employee meetings, sends flyers, and speaks to groups to provide information. Councilor Soap inquired if a program like Thunderbird has ever been considered. Ms. Merriman stated they have looked into this type of program however it is very expensive. She stated they make numerous referrals to the program. Councilor Fullbright gave

appreciation to Lisa James for her participation with the Marble City food program. She stated the community went ahead and voted unanimously to withdraw from the program. She questioned why it would take nine months to hire a cook. Mr. Jerry Snell stated they advertised the first time and found a person but when contacted they had already located another job. The second person hired didn't want to get in the middle of the situation within the community. The third person was a non Cherokee and a non Native American. He stated they had difficulty with not being able to find a Native cook in Marble City. Councilor Fishinghawk questioned the waiting list on the rental assistance program. Ms. Merriman stated they have \$3.5ml and spend an average of \$415 per person and must serve 1471 people per year. The math doesn't work. She stated the rental assistance program has had a history of a waiting list. She stated they are meeting with Marvin Jones to try to determine ways to make the money go further. She stated there are 194 people ready for a briefing to move into a home and many more that are at some point in the application process. There are three stages to the application 1) preliminary application 2) if pass preliminary the larger application 3) briefing of responsibilities. She stated right now they are serving the extreme emergencies with priorities to the elderly and disabled. She stated they are not required to provide dorm assistance but do to help them become self sufficient. Many of the people on the list have a place or shelter however it may not be where they want to live. Councilor Fishinghawk questioned the shortfall and requested Mr. Doug Evans input. Mr. Evans stated the 2007 IHP has approximately \$1ml in this year's budget with approximately \$144,000 expended. The 2008 IHP has \$3.5ml and \$2.7ml has been expended. Combined these two IHP's have expended \$2.9ml in 7 months of this fiscal year which is an average of \$414,000 per month. This gives a projected expenditure for this fiscal year at approximately \$5ml if the participant level stays the same. The budget is \$4.5ml from both IHP's which would provide a shortfall of approximately one months funding. He stated there are a couple of options. We need the 2009 IHP funds by July or the program will overspend the budget. There is the subsidy option or looking into other programs in the IHP's that are spending at a slower rate. Councilor Fishinghawk requested information on dorm assistance. Mr. Snell stated they will not be taking any new applications for dorm assistance. He stated there are currently 118 participants and anticipate carryover of these participants to the fall. Councilor Fishinghawk stated the need for assistance isn't just handicapped and elderly there are families who have lost their jobs and have kids who also need help. Councilor Glory-Jordan inquired how many families are currently on the adoption waiting list. Ms. Merriman replied usually not more than 150 with the wait time at an average of two years. Chair Buzzard requested the Council be emailed the number of rental assistance participants in each district and the number on the waiting list for each district. Ms. Merriman stated she has the information by area office. Applicants ready for briefing in area one there are 88, area two 42, area three 49 and area four 15.

2. Community Services - Charlie Soap

Mr. Soap offered to answer questions from his report. Councilor Bill John Baker questioned the self help housing program where \$1,000 in materials are provided. He stated in this day and time \$1,000 doesn't go far. Mr. Soap stated if the applicants exceed the funds they are referred to the rehab program. Councilor Bill John Baker requested the number of applications taken and the amount of funds available. He stated he has heard the applications have dropped off due to the \$1,000 isn't enough. He requested a report next month. Chair Buzzard requested the report also provide the number of applicants referred to rehab. Councilor Fishinghawk inquired if there would be additional SIP homes in Adair County. Mr. Soap stated they are divided equally in the districts with two per county. Councilor Bill John Baker voiced concern for the division stating he can see two per district but not two per county. Mr. Marvin Jones responded the law states you must take into

account the geographical distribution of assistance which is broken down by the funds received and generated by county. Councilor Bill John Baker suggested dividing up the homes by this information rather than two per county.

3. Housing Services - David Southerland

Mr. Gary Cooper pointed out the public disclosure listed on the last page of the written report. He stated they have an agreement with the City of Tahlequah to repave Hensley Drive with some stimulus funds. They were not able to reach the same agreement with Warner and Porum. He gave an update on the housing addition road paving. They have located 4 additional to be added to the list and requested information be provided if there are others.

OLD BUSINESS

None pending.

NEW BUSINESS

1. A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILY SERVICES TO SUBMIT AN APPLICATION FOR FUNDING TO THE OKLAHOMA OFFICE OF JUVENILE AFFAIRS, FOR EMERGENCY YOUTH SHELTER SERVICES, AND PREVENTION AND DIVERSION SERVICES

Sponsors: Councilor Harley Buzzard

Ms. Merriman stated this is an ongoing program with no match requirement.

Councilor Jack D. Baker made a motion to approve. Councilor Soap seconded the motion. Motion carried.

2. A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING CHEROKEE NATION HUMAN SERVICES AND CHEROKEE NATION HEALTH SERVICES TO SUBMIT AN APPLICATION FOR A SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ADMINISTRATION (SAMHSA) FUNDED GRANT TO EXPAND SUBSTANCE ABUSE TREATMENT CAPACITY FOR JUVENILE DRUG COURTS

Sponsors: Councilor Harley Buzzard

Ms. Merriman stated this is a grant application in partnership with Jack Brown for the Healing to Wellness program. There is a match requirement of \$142,000.

Councilor Jack D. Baker made a motion for approval. Councilor Soap seconded the motion. Motion carried.

3. A RESOLUTION APPROVING AND AUTHORIZING THE SUBMISSION OF THE AMENDED FISCAL YEAR 2009 INDIAN HOUSING PLAN TO THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Sponsors: Councilor Harley Buzzard

Mr. Marvin Jones stated it is critical to pass to get a grant agreement to draw money down and earn interest. The other critical reason to pass is to try to resolve the rental assistance program issue discussed earlier. Councilor Garvin made a motion for approval. Councilor Cowan Watts seconded the motion. Councilor Glory-Jordan offered a friendly amendment to go ahead and pass but to send the budget portion to the housing work group to address some of the issue discussed today as well as

others. Mr. Jones stated passing the IHP doesn't appropriate any of the funds. He stated there is one budget item from this IHP that will be coming to Executive and Finance committee this month in regard to the rental assistance program. The remaining budgets wouldn't be considered until fiscal year 2010. Councilor Garvin agreed to the friendly amendment. Mr. Jones stated this plan will solve the rental assistance program issue until May 31st of next year for the people obligated at this time. He referred to page 11 of the plan regarding the waiting list for rental assistance. Councilor Jack D. Baker stated it is interesting that the federal government doesn't limit these funds to within the jurisdiction it is the tribe limiting. Mr. Jones stated they are increasing the transitional emergency housing in this plan by \$105,000 in an attempt to offer an additional assistance in these economic times.

Mr. Jones requested the okay to communicate to HUD that we are passing this IHP to begin the grant agreement process. Councilor Frailey made a motion to approve. Councilor Cobb seconded the motion. Motion carried.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chair Buzzard requested a motion to be able to move Anna Knight's report for housing to this committee. Councilor Glory-Jordan made a motion for approval of this request. Councilor Fishinghawk seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Chair Buzzard inquired as to possible dates for the next work group meeting. Councilor Glory-Jordan made a motion to have the next work group meeting on June 16th at noon. Councilor Fishinghawk seconded the motion. Chair Buzzard requested issues be emailed to Shelli and she can forward to the work group and Mr. Jones. Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Cowan Watts moved to adjourn. Councilor Anglen seconded the motion. Motion carried at 10:18 a.m.

STAFF PRESENT:

<i>Jerry Snell</i>	<i>Norman Merriman</i>	<i>Gary Cooper</i>
<i>Charlie Soap</i>	<i>Shay Smith</i>	<i>Doug Evans</i>
<i>Marvin Jones</i>		

VISITORS PRESENT:

Charles Dry *Todd Hembree*

APPROVAL / DISTRIBUTION

Minutes submitted by: Shelli Brittain, Legal & Legislative Coordinator

Motion to approve minutes made by: _____

Minutes attested and concurred by: _____

Date: _____