

CITY OF KALAMAZOO
Regular Meeting
SHARED PROSPERITY KALAMAZOO (SPK) ORGANIZING COMMITTEE
12:30 pm
September 9, 2024

Members Present: Don Cooney, Bobby Hopewell, Alonzo Wilson, *Carol McGlinn, Brenda Hughes, Alyssa Stewart

Members Absent: Kym Hollars, Ben Damerow, Patrese Griffin

City Staff: Kevin Ford, Shared Prosperity Kalamazoo Coordinator

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 12:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Kevin Ford conducted a roll call of the organizing committee and determined a quorum existed.

A motion was made by Brenda Hughes, to excuse the absent members, seconded by Don Cooney. A voice vote was taken, and the motion passed.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved by consensus as presented.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Don Cooney, to approve the minutes of July 1, 2024 as presented, seconded by Alonzo Wilson. A voice vote was taken, and the motion passed.

COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Region 8 Childcare Plan – Beth Berglin, Director, Policy & Strategy, Michigan Transformation Collective

Beth Berglin explained that 10 different regions/16 different entities across the state were awarded MEDC ARPA funds to support a Regional Plan for Childcare. Each entity received

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\$150,000 to engage their communities in terms of the overall economic impact of the instability of early childhood care. Those federal grants gave communities a way to highlight each region's needs. She spoke about the example of a team that was started in the City of Battle Creek. Beth indicated that the State did not provide any support to make sure that recommendations in the report were implemented. The Kellogg Foundation has supported implementation teams in each county. She reported that the Kalamazoo county data was obtained through surveys from families and providers. There are two licensed childcare spots for every three children in Kalamazoo county. Beth shared that this is one of the better ratios statewide. There is licensed capacity, but not enough teachers to open all the classrooms. She gave information about the complications of infant daycare, Pre-K classrooms, the PreK for All expansion, and KC Ready 4s' focus on three year olds. Beth indicated that four year olds traditionally receive care in a childcare center. They are now pulling them into state funded slots such as KRESA, and Head Start classrooms. She said that a lead teacher for Head Start/GSRP has \$14.06 per hour median wage (\$29,000 a year). The annual cost last year for an infant's childcare was ~\$12,000. That cost equals more than a third of the wage of a childcare worker. Beth reported that parents can't afford to pay for childcare and teachers can't afford to stay working in childcare. There is more than a 50% turnover rate in childcare centers across the state. She indicated that childcare ought to be thought of as a public good - the same way we pay for K-12, services for veterans, and seniors. Beth shared a graph showing, based on family size, 19% of early childcare teachers across Michigan live in poverty. They are required to have many of the same skills necessary as Kindergarten teachers. She clarified that in GSRP or Head Start, a lead teacher has to have a four year degree, and paraprofessionals are required to have a two year degree.

Beth said that Kalamazoo county is the only region right now that has a plan for implementation. There is a small amount of funding for 18 months to identify ways to implement recommendations. Beth shared that Kalamazoo does not have an Early Learning Coalition like many other counties. Laura Lam, City of Kalamazoo, was instrumental in partnering with the Pulse team. They approached the MEDC and asked them to put together a toolkit for childcare. Beth said the draft just came out two weeks ago and communities can use that toolkit.

She said that the next steps for implementing the childcare plan are as follows.

- Connecting with county and other municipalities who thus far haven't been a part of the regional plan.
- Convening with providers and families who were already engaged with surveys.
- Reaching out to licensed childcare providers in Kalamazoo County and determining what it means to establish a coalition, what they will get out of it, what their needs are besides paying teachers more.
- Identifying partners and funding.

Beth said they want to focus on stabilizing home-based care. She said a connection among 22 providers between Battle Creek and the City of Kalamazoo has given them a place to start expanding and supporting that network. A big part of regional planning statewide has looked at shared services for home based childcare providers such as health care and billing services. One idea is to provide space in Neighborhood Associations on a predictable basis to connect caregivers to educational resources on child development. They want to explore cooperative

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models with them. Beth referenced a cooperative program in Arkansas that has had remarkable staying power for those families. She listed things that came up in the family surveys: 1) Not knowing how to find care; 2) Not knowing how to navigate statewide services and benefits; 3) Difficulty in the loss of care when the children move into a program that does not cover a full day. Beth said that some families are not taking advantage of funding for before and after school care and summer camp programming. Beth clarified the allowed uses of federal dollars, and that home based care was never included in that. She said the state is exploring a homebased pre-k pilot with a couple of different providers across the state. The overall care in a home based setting costs about \$18,000 a year, but they are getting about \$11,000. Providers are just not making a living wage. Beth emphasized that the City of Kalamazoo initiatives align perfectly with increasing access to A.L.I.C.E. families. The regional childcare plan aligns with SPK at almost every single bullet point.

Beth went over a map which showed statewide incomes based on role. A living wage for an early childcare teacher in an infant room would need to be \$31 per hour. She spoke of a Talent First report which conducted a cost of care study across Michigan – not including benefits. Teachers in a school system get retirement and health insurance. Almost no childcare centers provide health care and a 401K. Bobby Hopewell found the information helpful. However, he preferred more information on how to solve the challenges. He wondered what they could do to significantly impact the situation. During discussion, Beth reiterated that the system is fundamentally broken. She said centers with benefits can't hire enough teachers, there are 18 month waiting lists for infants and toddlers, people who have access to Tri-Share are not able to find infant slots. She spoke about the Tri-Share pilot that the City of Kalamazoo/SPK has supported. The City/SPK, State, and family each pay 1/3rd of the cost of childcare. She said having the City/SPK take on the employer portion has eliminated the need for the family to pay taxes on it as income.

Kevin Ford mentioned that he would keep people looped in on ways the group can engage with this plan. Through discussion, the difference between a company's onsite childcare and the Tri-Share program was clarified. Alyssa Stewart clarified that the Tri-Share was for the group that doesn't qualify for subsidized state childcare. Kevin Ford thought the Tri-Share should be considered private sector, public sector, and parent dollars. Alyssa Stewart thought that if the Tri-Share Program was more robust, childcare centers could increase prices and families could afford it because they are only paying 1/3 of the cost. Beth shared that the Tri-Share pilot only serves 12 children at this point. Bobby Hopewell asked for Beth to come back in the future and bring him five things they can do to impact the universe of childcare and what that would cost annually.

*Don Cooney left the meeting.

Beth shared that the providers and families hadn't seen the recommendations at that point. They were on the first step of an 18 month process. Alonzo Wilson and Beth agreed that the Early Learning Coalition would be important. She said it typically includes elected officials, providers, and systems leaders. Brenda Hughes asked if Beth had sponsors in Lansing. Beth

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reported that their greatest champion was the Chair of the Labor Appropriations Committee in the House.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. 2025 Requests – Kevin Ford, SPK Coordinator

Kevin Ford reported that the 2025 Requests go to the City Commission on 9/16/24. He said they had two of their three requests going forward. There was no FFE support, it was all ARPA money. He said the FOC was not going forward, but he will request that again. Kevin will work with internal staff to see what needs to be changed. He also indicated he would look for other streams of support instead of focusing solely on FFE. Alonzo Wilson asked how much the request was for FOC. Kevin said that the request was \$80,000. The whole amount would be \$330,000, but he was going to phase it in. He thought that priorities for FFE dollars were housing, and youth programs through Parks & Rec. Kevin said that if the two requests go through, he will get an agreement set up for both of those asks and get the money out before the end of the year.

COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

STAFF REPORTS AND UPDATES

1. Economic Development Plan

Kevin Ford reported that the Economic Development Plan should be finished around October. He thanked everyone who was able to attend engagement activities and said he would give them updates.

2. SPK National Representation

Kevin Ford shared that he was invited to be a panelist in Kansas City for the LISC Building Innovation in Equitable Childcare on September 16, 2024. They were interested in the Tri-Share work and business supports for in-home childcare businesses.

Kevin Ford was also invited to be a co-facilitator at Aspen Institute's ThinkXChange 2024 for their place based 2-Gen work. He thanked the Committee for supporting all of that work.

Alyssa Stewart shared an updated Fact Sheet and Commonly Asked Questions for Rx Kids. She said there is no launch date yet.

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PUBLIC COMMENTS

Kay Babcock stated there were no meeting minutes posted since 2023.

ADJOURNMENT

Bobby Hopewell adjourned the meeting at approximately 1:39 p.m.