

**Minutes of the  
Lassen-Plumas-Sierra Community Action Agency**

**Plumas County, Plumas Unified School District**

**Thursday, June 27, 2024 – 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.**

**I. Roll Call**

Chairperson, Odessie Welch, called the meeting to order at 10:09 AM.

Present: Directors, Vicki Barney, Gary Bridges, Sharon Dryden, Greg Hagwood, Dan Henson, Dwight Pierson, Bill Powers, and David Teeter.

Also present: Executive Director, Roger Diefendorf, Finance Director, Cindy Ramsey, Dramaworks Kelsea Johnson, Eddie O’Conner, Danielle Wagner Plocki, Proposed Candidate Plumas County Community Seat Deborah Whiting, Proposed Candidate Sierra Community Seat Barbara O’Donnell, Proposed Candidate Sierra County Public Seat Candy Corcoran by Microsoft Teams and Board Secretary, Tricia Romandia

Absent: Directors Lynda Alberico, Carla Barclay, Robin Chapin, Barbara Longo, Jessica Norman and Connie Stovall.

Quorum met.

**II. Additions, Corrections or Deletions from the Agenda**

Executive Director, Roger Diefendorf, requested to add ROMA Requirements for Community Action Agencies under XII.D

Director Pierson motioned to add ROMA Requirements for Community Action Agencies under XII.D. Director Bridges second the motion. Approved.

**III. Approval of Agenda**

Director Bridges motioned to approve the June 27, 2024 Agenda with the additions. Director Teeter second the motion. Approved.

**IV. Approval of Minutes-April 18, 2024**

Director Powers motioned to approve the April 18, 2024 Minutes. Director Bridges second the motion. Approved.

## V. Dramaworks Presentation

Danielle Wagner Plocki, Program Director for Dramaworks, Kelsea, Johnson Executive Director and Eddie O'Connor thanked LPSCAA for the funding that pays for scholarships for students to attend the Dramaworks classes and productions.

The fall semester focuses on theater process. They teach the skills through drama games, improvisation, characterization, stage presence, using your voice, movement on stage, communication skills, and making the group work together as a whole.

The spring semester focuses on theater production. Additions are held. It is nonthreatening. No child is ever denied in being in a production. Rehearsals are held. There is singing, dancing, costumes, makeup, sets, lights, music, acting and working together to put on a full musical production. In 2023, Pirates Past Noon Kids was the production. LPSCAA funding allowed seven (7) kids to participate ages K-6<sup>th</sup> grade. In April, they performed Annie Kids and did the Annie School's Tour. They took both casts and went to Quincy Elementary, Quincy Pioneer and Quincy Charter schools and performed selected scenes and songs. It was an amazing opportunity to expose approximately 700 students to children's musical theater.

In 2023, there were 55 students who participated. In some years, they have two full casts. There were students from seven (7) different schools represented in the program.

A slide show was presented with pictures of the children creating their own skits and working with the community group Quircus who taught the children juggling, aerial silks and circus tricks. In the past, they taught mimes, comedy skits, and commercials. More pictures were presented showing the children making props, costumes and makeup.

Dramaworks has not been able to have a summer camp since the pandemic so they were very excited for the upcoming camp in July. Enrollment was already to maxed capacity. Many of the students will be receiving funding from LPSCAA to participate. After the Dixie Fire, Ken Donal from Greenville, California created a coloring book for children based on the Dixie Fire story. It is about how the little dozer helped fight the fire and help the farm animals to overcome the challenge. During the summer camp, they will be working on an original musical production called The Little Dozer That Did based off of this coloring book.

Through the years, they have had several students do their senior projects through Dramaworks. Last year, Emily Choate did her senior project with Dramaworks and connected a Dramaworks workshop with some of the Magic Beanstalk Players. Another student did her project on creating costumes for the theater, and now she is at NYU studying fashion design.

With the community productions that are put on every year, Dramaworks creates more opportunities for youth. The Christmas Story was performed in December, and twelve (12) Magic Beanstalk Players were able to perform in this production.

The Sweet Program is designed for teenagers' 7<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grade. Two successful productions were performed by the Sweet Program last season. 1) Fifteen Reasons to Not Be in a Play – this was designed for the busy teenager who is extremely busy. 2) Bad Auditions by Bad Actors – designed for students to hone in on their comedic skills.

The Pathways Program allows students from the Plumas Charter School to come to Dramaworks on their independent study day and work one on one with an instructor on technical theater skills, lighting design, fight choreography, monologue coaching, and set building.

Kelsea Johnson explained that the program charges a tuition. The program provides for scholarships or financial aid. They fill out an application and the student will receive funding through a grant program or through other financial ways. No student is ever denied.

Eddie O'Connor shared that there was a six year old non-verbal student who attended the program, and through the program she blossomed and now has no problem verbalizing. She was a LPSCAA scholarship student. Her family is delighted with her progress.

#### **VI. Plumas County Vacancy – Community Seat**

Deborah Whiting is the proposed candidate to fill the Plumas County Community Seat. Today was Ms. Whiting's second time in attendance.

Director Pierson motioned for Deborah Whiting to fill the Plumas County Community Seat. Director Hagwood second the motion. Approved.

#### **VII. Sierra County Vacancy—Community Seat and Public Seat**

There are two vacancies in Sierra County. The Community and Public seats. In attendance for the first time as proposed candidates are Candy Corcoran and Barbara O'Donnell. Directors welcomed them. If they attend the next meeting, they will be voted in.

#### **VIII. 2025 LPSCAA Request for Proposals**

Ms. Romandia announced the 2025 Request for Proposals have been sent out and will be ready for review by the September meeting. The directors from each county will meet separately between September and November so the program allocations can be voted on at the December meeting.

#### **IX. Local Area Revitalization Project Cooperative (LARP)**

Director David Teeter is the CEO of LARP. It is has been running for four years and running for two years prior as a quasi-organization. LARP's breakdown is the community garden, farm and the farmer's market. The initial start was from CARES and

Discretionary funds. Since then, LARP has been able to use those funds to leverage CEFA Farm to School funds and also some associated producers.

The community garden is in partnership with the City of Susanville. LARP took a city-owned property that was down by the river that was a nuisance and needed to be abated. It has taken multiple years to clean up the site. The first year was clawing out the space. Since then, there are power users that are 25 to 30 percent gardeners. This season LARP hired a garden attendant that is low-income who is a single father with two children. He takes care of the garden space and helps the gardeners. He is not necessarily an expert on anything, but he has been a tremendous help. Currently, there are about 30 users. Many of the users are low-income and some of them have had addiction recovery issues. The City has been a great help to those individuals.

The Susanville Historic Farmer's Market existed long before LARP took it over. In 2016, the Lassen Lands Trails and Trust determined the farmer's market did not fit within their strategies and gave it up. The Uptown Business Association took it over. They ran into troubles, and that is when LARP took the market over.

The short growing seasons make it difficult for the producers to get to the market early in the season. Most of the farmer's markets' demands are in May and June. In Susanville, nothing is grown at that time. Most of the produce is ready in September when the farmer's market goes away. LARP has some producers, hoop houses and greenhouses to help with the growing season.

The economic slowdown going on is causing problems for all of the businesses. The sales tax in Susanville was down six percent a year ago, and it is worse now. The farmer's market has lost two food vendors. The market continues to partner with Lassen County Public Health. They give matching funds for low-income individuals. The market accepts EBT and WIC. This has increased low income customers. It has also improved the diet for the low-income population.

There are struggles to the farmer's market, but this year they have had a good start. LARP is coming up on its first night market.

There is an educational farm in Janesville, which is about 15 miles from the City of Susanville. It is too far for small lot urban farming, and economically it makes no sense. As a pilot project, it is working thanks to Jeff Chu who owns two Pizza Factory's franchises. He is allowing LARP to use one of his properties and he has been very generous. LARP has been unable to pay him.

LARP has six to eight grant writers. The LARP board members have each received a grant in this year to improve either LARP or their own independent producers. At this point, LARP received a RFSI grant to purchase a reefer van, which is a refrigerated van. They are hoping to start working with local producers from the valley to bring up fresh produce to Susanville's market. At the end of the season, LARP is working with the schools to sell their produce them.

LARP has tied in with Modoc County and the Lost Sierra Food Project to create a regional network. The only problem is distance.

Outside of Susanville there is Berry Reservoir, and next to it is fallow alfalfa field that could be turned into five small plot farms. The City cannot use it because they are not alfalfa growers. LARP is working with them begin that project. The City lacks the funds and the capacity to do the heavy lifting on the planning side. It will take away from efforts elsewhere, which the Mayor has pointed out. LARP is trying to find the funding and capacity to get the project off the ground through a Catalyst grant.

LARP is planning on putting small farm units on the same land of the Home Key Project for foster kids who are aging out of the system and could be facing homelessness and start teaching the 18-20 year olds agriculture.

## **X. Food Trailer**

Director Teeter indicated that operating a food trailer has many rules and regulations that must be followed and they cut into one's profit. Capital and keeping expenses low is the beginning of starting a business. The initial cost needs to be next to nothing in order to make money with the truck, but at the same time one needs to be responsible to the tax payers to make sure to receive a return. To start a business in northeast California one almost has to be subsidized in some fashion.

Teeter's primary goals of the Food Trailer Pilot Program are:

- Empowerment through Entrepreneurship: Lease the food trailer to a low-income or foster youth entrepreneur for just \$1 a year.
- Educational Support: Network educational resources to provide necessary support for running a successful business.
- Community Impact: Ensure the new business owner partners with local agencies to provide two free meal days for low-income families annually.

The program specifically targets:

- Low-income Entrepreneurs: Individuals with limited financial resources looking to start their own business.
- Foster Youth: Young adults who have aged out of the foster care system and need support to build their futures.
- Disadvantaged Communities: Areas that will benefit from both the entrepreneurial activity and the community-focused initiatives of the program.

### Program Details

The food trailer utilized in the program was acquired by the Lassen Plumas Sierra Community Action Agency (LPSCAA). This food trailer is fully equipped with the necessary appliances and tools to operate a mobile food business, ensuring that participants start without the burden of significant capital investment in equipment.

- Leasing Availability for \$1 for Three-Year Duration: Entrepreneurs selected for the Food Trailer Program can lease a food trailer for a token fee of \$1 per year. This lease agreement extends for a duration of three years, during which the entrepreneur can establish and grow their business. This minimal lease cost

alleviates the financial pressure on new business owners, allowing them to invest more resources into their business operations and growth.

- **Local Provide Support to the Community:** As part of serving the low-income and disadvantaged communities the Food Trailer Program the new business owner must partner with local agencies to provide two free meal days for low-income families annually.
- **Opportunity of Purchase After Leasing Period:** Upon completion of the three-year leasing period, participants can purchase the food trailer at a discounted rate. This option provides entrepreneurs with the chance to fully own their business assets, further stabilizing their business prospects and allowing for long-term planning and development.
- **Purchase Price Consideration Off Depreciation:** The purchase price for the food trailer will be calculated with consideration of depreciation over the leasing period. This means the cost to buy the trailer will reflect its use and wear over the three years, ensuring participants can acquire it at a fair market value. This consideration helps make ownership more accessible and feasible for entrepreneurs, fostering sustainable business growth.

## Target Beneficiaries

The Food Truck Program from LPSCAA seeks to tap into the untapped potential of low-income entrepreneurs, foster youth, and disadvantaged communities. It's a unique initiative aiming to empower individuals with limited financial resources who aspire to care out their own path in the business world. The program offers a bridge over the financial hurdle, paving the way for their entrepreneurial journey.

Additionally, the program reaches out to young adults transitioning out of the foster care system. Understanding the challenges they might face in building their futures, the Food Truck Program offers them an opportunity to develop skills, learn the ropes of running a business, and achieve self-sustainability.

Lastly, the Food Truck Program from LPSCAA acts locally. It recognizes the potential in disadvantaged communities and how their transformation can have a ripple effect on the larger society. By fostering entrepreneurial activity and initiating community-focused programs, the Food Truck Program contributes to revitalizing these areas.

Teeter has a foster youth in mind that he is willing to mentor for the pilot program who was adopted by her grandparents. Her name is Alicia Rodriguez. Currently, she has a job with the Federal government at the Depot, which provides her with medical insurance, and after five (5) years she will be vested. She is close to being vested. At this time, she is not ready to run the food truck, but with continued training she is a good candidate. She currently sells tacos at the Susanville Farmer's Market, and she sells out every time.

This is the beginning of writing the Request for Proposal. The City of Susanville just hired Clint Koble to teach economic development classes, which could assist the pilot program.

Ms. Ramsey stated the CAA guidelines require that the program would have to make every effort to get fair market value for the trailer.

Executive Director, Roger Diefendorf, stated another option would be an initial small lease and then a larger lease amount toward the end.

Director Dryden suggested that when Ms. Rodriguez is ready she could make lunch for the LPSCAA Directors.

## **XI. Grant Writing**

Finance Director, Cindy Ramsey, reported for the past years funds have been set aside for grant writing and have had to have been reallocated at the end of the year. For 2024, Plumas County has set aside \$10,500 for grant writing. Ramsey met a grant writer from Reno that has 30 years' experience with a 90 percent success rate. She writes grants for community action agencies. She is familiar with the type of programs that LPSCAA promotes. CSBG grants have restrictions and guidelines for programs that receive other funding sources. If LPSCAA programs receive any other type of funding and the money is not spent in that calendar year, the money has to be sent back to the state. To avoid the time constraints, LPSCAA can expense the \$10,500 to the non-profit and then the non-profit could collaborate with LPSCAA.

The Board was pleased that the grant writer had the experience and such a high approval rate.

Ms. Ramsey planned on meeting with the grant writer next week and she would like to take her to LPSCAA's different programs.

Gary Bridges motioned for the Plumas grant writing funds in the amount of \$10,500 to be expensed to the Plumas County Community Development Corporation for grant writing. Director Barney second the motion. Approved.

## **XII. Programmatic Reports**

### **A. LPSCAA Expenditure Report**

Finance Director, Cindy Ramsey, presented the 2024 Expenditure Report. At this point, Finance has received invoices and the contract is 50 percent spent out.

### **B. Finance Report**

Finance Director, Cindy Ramsey, presented the Finance Report as of April 2024. The 2023 CAA contract and the CAA Discretionary contract were both extended to May 2024, and both contracts have been 100 percent spent out. The 2024 CAA contract has been 50 percent spent out as of the current Expenditure Report that was presented.

Over the past five (5) years the Discretionary contract has been approximately \$29,000. The 2024 Discretionary contract is \$19,000, which is a huge cut. Ramsey presented the Discretionary Plan. \$2,000 of the \$19,000 was set aside for outreach and community events.

Director Teeter likes the idea, but cautioned the Board that they should be careful in using these funds for outreach as it takes away from the subgrantees, and it has been used to assist with food distribution. Director Bridges agreed with Director Teeter. Director Dryden agreed that the money should be given to a program.

Director Dryden reported that there is a health fair coming up that could be a good event to get LPSCAA's name out there.

Director Welch agreed that the Community Action Agency's name is not known in the community.

### C. ROMA

Executive Director, Roger Diefendorf, reported that the Results Oriented Management Analysis (ROMA) has been something CSD has required for many years. CSD is requiring that each community action agency have a certified ROMA trainer on staff. Diefendorf spoke with Mr. Wilmer Brown at the conference in Sacramento, and he suggested that small rural agencies collaborate with another agency. Diefendorf has a meeting with Butte County Community Action Agency to see if they would be willing to collaborate with Plumas.

### **XIII. Board of Directors Announcements and Reports**

The Board discussed the Rainbow gathering. Director Hagwood stated the Forest Service is shutting down the access to the forest to keep people out.

Director Pierson reported that Plumas District Hospital's Senior Citizens Building is under construction, and they have a website that has a lot of information on the matter.

### **XIV. Public Comment-None**

#### **Next Meeting:**

September 26, 2024 Sierra County, Sierra Brooks Lodge.

### **XIII. Adjournment**

By consensus the Board agreed to adjourn the meeting at 12:04 a.m. Director Bridges motioned to adjourn the meeting. Director Barney second the motion. Approved.



Odessie Welch, LPSCAA Chairperson



Attest:

  
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Tricia Romandia, LPSCAA Board Secretary