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DeKalb County Government  
Sycamore, Illinois

**Health & Human Services Committee Minutes  
March 1, 2021**

The Health and Human Services Committee of the DeKalb County Board met virtually via Zoom on Monday, March 1, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. Madam Chair Crawford called the meeting to order. Those Members virtually present were Mr. Scott Campbell, Mrs. Karen Cribben, Mr. Bill Cummings, Mr. Neill Mohammad, Ms. Linda Slabon, and Chair Rukisha Crawford. Ms. Maureen Little was absent. A quorum was established with six Members present and one absent.

Other individual present via Zoom were Brian Gregory, Deanna Cada, Lisa Gonzalez, Dianne Leifheit, Kathy Lampkins, Kiara Jones, and a few other members of the public.

**APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

**Mr. Campbell moved to approve the agenda as presented. Mr. Mohammad seconded the motion. Those Members voting yea were Mr. Campbell, Mrs. Cribben, Mr. Cummings, Mr. Mohammad, Ms. Slabon, and Chair Crawford. The motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.**

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

**Ms. Slabon moved to approve the minutes of the February 1, 2021 Committee Meeting. Mr. Cummings seconded the motion. Those Members voting yea were Mr. Campbell, Mrs. Cribben, Mr. Cummings, Mr. Mohammad, Ms. Slabon, and Chair Crawford. The motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.**

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments.

**COVID-19 SITUATIONAL UPDATE / Q&A WITH PUBLIC HEALTH ADMINISTRATOR LISA GONZALEZ**

DeKalb County Public Health Administrator Lisa Gonzalez joined the Committee to provide a situational update regarding COVID-19 and vaccine distribution. Ms. Gonzalez provided a graph that depicted the County's COVID-19 cases by week which was a representation of just shy of a year. She added that although the current numbers are showing a large decrease, she wanted everyone to keep in mind that local testing has also decreased drastically. The weekly summary as of February 26, 2021, showed there has been 109,088 negative tests reported, 117, 497 of total tests reported, 646 are in a recovery period, and 7,653 have recovered.

The Health Department is currently in high gear with vaccination roll outs and are currently vaccinating individuals who live or work in DeKalb County.

The DeKalb County Health Department receives a pre-determined allotment of vaccines by the Illinois Department of Public Health each week. The Department completes a survey weekly to order the number of doses based off of pre-determined allotments. Unfortunately, there is not enough supply to meet the current demand.

The vaccine that Health Department is administering is the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine. It requires a second dose, 28 days after the first does. There have been 7,927 does administered as of February 26<sup>th</sup> but that number (about 3,000) does not include doses that have been transferred to local partner organizations (Northwestern Medicine's Kishwaukee & Valley West Hospitals and Greater Elgin Center for Family Health). Ms. Gonzalez reviewed what their allocation amounts have looked like which also involved a large decrease in 1<sup>st</sup> doses in the last few weeks. They are seeing an increase already in 1<sup>st</sup> doses again and they are being told that they will see those numbers continue to increase throughout March, shared Ms. Gonzalez.

She continued to share that the Health Department is currently vaccinating individuals in Phase 1a and Phase 1b (first responders, K-12 education, daycares, public transit workers, and shelter workers). Until the vaccine supply increases, DeKalb County will not be expanding to Phase 1b+.

Ms. Gonzalez also reviewed with the Committee how the Health Department's Vaccine Notification System works. She also shared local and state efforts to expand vaccine access. She lastly, took questions from the Committee Members regarding COVID-19 and the vaccine allocations. The Committee thanked Ms. Gonzalez for meeting with them and providing her situational update.

#### **GRANT EVALUATION TRAINING**

Community Mental Health Director Deanna Cada introduced Ms. Ashley Harper. Ms. Harper provided the HHS Committee will a tutorial of their online grant evaluation program that they will be utilizing going forward for the Senior Services Tax Levy Allocations.

#### **DEKALB COUNTY FOOD SECURITY COUNCIL UPDATE**

Ms. Slabon explained that she has talked about the DeKalb County Food Security Council at recent County Board Committee meetings. People have asked, "What is the DeKalb County Food Security Council?"

She provided the Committee with the current Mission Statement, Guiding Principles, and a Brief History. It was additionally clarified that the Food Security Council is NOT a governmental organization nor is it part of the County Government.

Ms. Slabon provided the following: In November of 2020, I was invited to attend the re-convening of the DeKalb County Food Security Council at a zoom gathering. I attended meetings of the original group and its founding in 2014. Then, in 2020, the Food Security Council was invited to re-convene by Dan Kenney, Exec. Director of the DeKalb County Community Gardens. Meetings are open to interested parties. Over fifty community members currently participate including Directors of Food Pantries across the county and the Northern IL Food Bank, representatives from Northern IL University, DeKalb County schools, Regional Office of Education, human service agencies, and persons working in land conservation, and local government.

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**DEKALB COUNTY FOOD SECURITY COUNCIL MISSION STATEMENT:**

The DeKalb County Food Security Council works and collaborates to expand, strengthen, and maintain a resilient, equitable local food system for all people in our community.

**FSC GUIDING PRINCIPLES:**

- Support Community Prosperity and Resilience
- Sustain Equitable Access to Healthy Food
- Develop A Health-centered Food System
- Create Sustainable Agricultural Practices
- Promote Social Justice and Equity
- Maintain a Collaborative Systems Approach to DeKalb County Local Food
- Utilize Measurable Impact Strategies

**A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE DEKALB COUNTY FOOD SECURITY COUNCIL:**

Dan Kenney writes:

A couple of years after starting DeKalb County Community Gardens in 2012, I approached the DeKalb County Community Foundation and others about establishing a Food Security Council. We held an initial organizing event in 2014 at the Depot and assembled about 75 people from various segments of the County for a Food Security Summit. There was representation from sectors that included: farmers, restaurants, school districts, the hospital and the health department, health systems, Northern Illinois University, food pantries, NIFB, the Community Foundation, social service agencies, and others.

This is also when Live Healthy DeKalb County was formed. It included the YMCA, Kishwaukee Hospital, DeKalb & Sycamore School Districts, the DeKalb & Sycamore Park Districts, and the NIU Dean of Health and Human Services.

Over the years the number of people attending the Food Security Council declined drastically. Beyond a Poverty Simulation event once or twice a year the Food Security Council had lost its relevancy.

Now, DCCG has seen a 400% increase in the number of people who are food insecure and seeking food assistance. 75% of those seeking assistance have never used a food pantry before. Like the woman who pulled up to our food distribution in Waterman, one of our rural communities with only a Casey's and a Dollar General to meet their food needs, over 12 miles from a grocery store, she pulled up in a fairly new and shiny SUV. She said to me, "Where do I stop? I'm very nervous. I have never done this before. We have never needed help before."

In total since March 21, 2020 through January 31, 2021, DCCG's Grow Mobile and the Genoa Community Food Hub has served 26,566 households 82,143 Individuals; 13,429 Individuals 60 years old or older; and 13,201 Individuals 18 or younger from August 1, 2020 through January 31, 2021.

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All across the region Northern Illinois Food Bank has reported a huge need increase in every one of the 13 counties they serve. The federal government has poured billions of dollars into increased food distributions with its CFAP program. We have also experienced a strain on the food system in general in our Country which has led to certain types of food shortages, and rising food prices putting a further burden on those struggling to keep food on their tables.

As many of you know, I have been researching and working on issues of food security for nearly a decade now. I have traveled all over the country trying to learn from other locations about the best ways to address hunger. I have seen food used as an agent for change. Food can be a driving force for change to a community's health, economic well-being, sense of community, and to address social issues. Food can be a means of organizing for good in a community. Food can bring together many parts of the community to work together to make a better community.

As Frances Moore Lappe says, Hunger is not about food scarcity it is about a scarcity of democracy. Food is also an issue of equity and social justice. Food security is a human right, meaning that all residents have the right to adequate quantity and quality of food. And everyone has a right to access adequate amounts of good quality food in a dignified way.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

**Mr. Campbell moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:37 p.m. Mrs. Cribben seconded the motion. Those Members voting yea were Those Members voting yea were Mr. Campbell, Mrs. Cribben, Mr. Cummings, Mr. Mohammad, Ms. Slabon, and Chair Crawford. The motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.**

Respectfully submitted,

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Rukisha Crawford, Chair

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Tasha Sims, Recording Secretary

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