

COMMUNITY ALLIANCE OF SARASOTA COUNTY

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Community Foundation of Sarasota, 2635 Fruitville Road

MEETING SUMMARY

March 11, 2009

Members Present: Sherri Reynolds, Chair
Ken Alexander
Karen Bogues
Bob Carter
Kay Glasser
Janet Kahn
Bill Little
Janice Mee
Tom Pfaff
Stewart Stearns
Jerry Thompson

Members Absent: Steve Quieor

Staff Present: Chip Taylor
Kathleen Marie Hall

Sherri Reynolds welcomed everyone.

Impact Survey Update

Sherri Reynolds reported that only seven agencies responded to the Impact Survey with 53 hits to the site. A second reminder was sent out to the Community Alliance members on March 10 requesting agencies to complete the survey. Sherri asked the members to review the survey results and explained that the purpose of this survey was to identify how the Alliance should react to the current economic crisis. Janice Mee stated that there may be a need to revise the requested information since the stimulus package is forthcoming.

A discussion ensued on ways to encourage the members to respond to this survey. Members pointed out that due to budget and staff reductions and the rapid change in the economy, many non-profits are overwhelmed by the demand of direct services and are not looking at the survey as a top priority. It was mentioned several times during the conversation that in order for the non-profits to plan for the future it is important for them to complete this survey to discover ways to change with the times. It was noted that the

Committee may have to go the agencies personally to get the information for the survey. Sherri noted that once the committee reviews the final survey report, the Impact Work Group will study the information and then collaborate with the Legislative Advocacy Committee on the next step. It was suggested that the Legislative Advocacy Committee and the Impact Work Group attend the April meeting to discuss the results of the survey.

Community Alliance Meeting Schedule

A discussion ensued on the current meeting schedule. It was suggested that the Community Alliance Steering Committee meet as a whole every other month and the other committees and the work groups meet on the opposite months. It was noted that meetings need to be productive and robust otherwise it is a waste of precious time. Other suggestions were:

- To look at which months are necessary to meet rather than meeting every other month.
- To convene on a monthly basis as the Alliance's strength is in the continuing conversations and is important not to lose the connection of the agencies.
- To not jump from one routine to another routine without thinking about what may occur.
- To migrate toward the "smaller group" concept, telephone conferences, shorter meetings, and other creative alternative solutions.
- To identify what the focus is and what actions should be taken.
- To only involve the members that are absolutely necessary at this time.
- To address the concern of not being able to cover all the meetings due to a shortage of staff.
- To consolidate groups that are basically doing the same type of work.

Members questioned the role of the Community Alliance Executive Committee and how it differs from the Community Alliance Steering Committee. It was also noted that the Committee should review the current work groups and identify if they are the right groups. The bottom line is that the focus needs to be on how the Community Alliance can be most effective and efficient at this time. After a lengthy discussion it was decided to address the meeting schedule at the next Community Alliance Steering Committee. Sherri pointed out that changing the makeup of the meeting schedule can get very confusing for the members. The decision should be very specific and clearly stated.

Emerging Issues:

Legislative Issues and the Federal Stimulus Package

The members had an extensive discussion on the legislative issues and the fluid stimulus package. Bill Little pointed out that the stimulus package will consist of several ways of receiving the funding: directly to the state agencies, and then to the local agencies or directly to the local government agencies. Some of the items of discussion were:

- Legislators support the \$1.00 Cigarette Tax Bill but Governor Crist has stated that there will be no new taxes.
- The budget has a \$6 billion deficit with \$1.5 billion showing as an erosion.

- There are more unfunded mandates being discussed which will cause a greater impact on the local mental health and substance abuse community.
- There will be \$5 to \$10 million less in tax revenue for area hospitals and will require all to “conduct business as unusual”.
- The stimulus package will only assist the system on a short-term basis and structure change will be necessary to be efficient.
- The stimulus package does not address the long-term situation.
- The Community Alliance is only a piece of the sharing process and there should be a community-wide discussion.

An additional discussion ensued on the top critical priority that places the community at risk. Bill pointed out that in the integrated systems of today, there are core parts of the infrastructure that meet more than one community need. The interconnections are critical; by cutting one piece out of the system, the other links could fall apart. There is a need to identify how to preserve some measure of the infrastructure to get through the tough times and for the future. The other challenge is that this is a world-wide issue where the inter-connections of the rest of the world is affecting the entire economy.

Questions that arose from the conversation were:

- Is the Alliance the one who needs to address defining what is essential?
- Are there other systems issues that the Alliance is not discussing and should be?
- What are the threats out there from the significant budget cuts?
- Due to the significant budget cuts, how should organizations conduct business on the short-term plan vs. the long-term plan?
- How many in the community will be impacted by businesses closing their doors?
- How does the community identify the gaps and then deal with those gaps?

Members questioned the best way to keep up with all the information regarding the fluid stimulus package and the other system conversations that are occurring parallel in the community. The members agreed that further discussions were necessary to develop a structured plan to address the economic crisis and stimulus package. Bill suggested inviting a County representative to the next Community Alliance Steering Committee meeting to present an analysis on the items that will flow through the community and the best solution in getting the funding out to the community. Stewart Stearns volunteered to write a “Blog” to the local Executive Directors on, “Looking at the big picture, the necessity of strategically planning for long-term survival, and how quick decisions and cuts could affect them in the future”.

The next Community Alliance Executive Committee meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 15 at 1:30 pm at the Sarasota County Health and Human Services building, 2200 Ringling Blvd., Room 226.