

Full Council Meeting Minutes

January 17, 2023

Attendees: David Bowman (Trinity Health), Breanna Bradley (PACE), Carolina Sisiruca (Centro La Familia), Leigh Coyle (OCHD), Robin Danto (OCHD), Jae Gerhart (Washtenaw County Food Policy Council), Marcia Gershenson (Oakland County Commissioner), Anne Ginn (Forgotten Harvest), Paul Green (Taste the Local Difference), Melanie Grund (OC Neighborhood & Housing Development), BriAnna Koenig (Macomb County Health Dept.), Theresa Krell (Trinity Health), Myyon Ligon (Macomb County Health Dept.), Jennifer Lucarelli (Oakland University), Sarah Niskanen (Pontiac Community Foundation), Jessica Ramsey (Gleaners), Lindsay TerHaar (OCHD), Claudia Terrel (OCHD), Virginia Uhley (Oakland University William Beaumont School of Medicine), Amanda Woods (OCHD), Jennifer Wrobel (OCHD), Amanda Woods (OCHD)

Welcome and Introductions

New members were welcomed. Member introductions were made.

Workgroup Updates

DEIJ workgroup

The workgroup is developing DEIJ issue cards with the Michigan Local Food Council Network. Issue cards help frame food-system issues and solutions. The workgroup members are also assessing next steps for more authentic community engagement with the council.

Double Up Food Bucks (DUFB) workgroup

The digital and paper formats are in final review. The group is producing two different formats to increase reach among groups with low literacy/technology literacy. The paper version will be 1-page, front to back, with a list of key resources. There will be a QR code on the paper copy to link the digital flyer. Both materials will be hosted on the [Oakland County Food Policy Council website](#).

[DUFB resumed earnings on January 15th](#). The earned dollar amount has been reduced because of the high demand and reduced funding. The new maximum dollar amount is \$10/day. There is also a 90-day window to redeem earnings.

Council members discussed the monthly emergency SNAP allotments will be ending in March (national organizations are calling this “The Hunger Cliff”), and to date, there has not been communication from MDHHS on how households and organizations can prepare. This benefit cutoff reinforces the value and work council members are doing regarding DUFB expansion. States that have already ended the additional benefit payments are reporting increased rates of reported food insecurity. During a webinar ([slide deck](#), [recording links](#)) about the cutoff, FRAC’s main message for SNAP recipients is to review their eligible expenses (childcare, housing, etc.) to ensure they are maximizing available SNAP benefits.

Identifying 2023 Priorities

As a reminder, the council is using a tailored version of the [Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Prioritizing Food Security Solutions Toolkit](#) to guide the prioritization process. During the last prioritization process (late 2019), council members modified the weighted scale to rank each priority.

At the November 2022 council meeting, council members used a Jamboard to develop 2023 priorities. The Interim Co-Chairs, Whitney Litzner and Theresa Krell, along with ECHO staff, Amanda Woods and Carrie Hribar, reviewed the ideas for alignment with the council's vision and mission and possible duplication of ideas. Ideas with similar focuses were grouped together.

During the January meeting, members used a Mentimeter poll to rank each refined priority based on the impact of the quantity of food available, the impact quality of food available, the impact on affordability of healthy food available, the impact on the equity, and difficulty to implement.

Here are the priorities members ranked during the meeting (*initial Mentimeter results attached*):

1. Review and update publicly available local resources to assist households with food security.
2. Develop education campaign and policy language for communities to reduce community implementational barriers.
3. Develop a tax incentive policy for community gardens and present it to the Oakland County (OC) Board of Commissioners and/or city, village, or townships.
4. Develop strategic plan to address lack of BIPOC in the council and in priority focus development.
5. Link OC small businesses and entrepreneurs operating in the food system focusing on BIPOC owned businesses to OC Economic Development & Community Affairs resources.
6. Create a policy systems and environmental level strategy that addresses food security among OC students and targets the whole household.
7. Conduct root cause analysis on the connection between food access and transportation solutions in OC.
8. Identify and develop advocacy focus areas and strategic plan.
9. Expand DUFEB acceptance to more locations in OC.

A member requested clarification on priority #3, specifically examples of a tax incentive. There were no present members able to give an example. Amanda reached out to Kristine Hahn (MSU-E) after the meeting.

Kristine provided the following tax examples via email:

- [San Diego, CA: Assembly Bill 551, passed in 2013](#). This law encourages owners of vacant properties to commit to using the land for a community garden space for a minimum of five years to receive the property tax reduction. The goal of this legislation is to make neighborhoods more attractive while providing green space and fresh produce for residents.
- Other [examples](#) provided by Community Food Strategies.

It was suggested that the language be changed for priority #7 to advocate for healthy food access in local transportation planning initiatives due to the transportation proposal passed on the ballot in November.

The Interim Co-chairs and Amanda will enter the results into the weighted scoring spreadsheet and share out the results before the March meeting.

Policy Updates

- Monthly emergency SNAP allotments will end in March, with the last amount dispersed in February 2023. There are concerns about the impact due to inflation, rising food costs, and end of the expanded Child Tax Credits. States that previously ended the additional benefit allotments are reporting increases in household food insecurity. Anne Ginn reported USDA is working with the state agencies that administer the program to develop communications. MDHHS, to date, has not released communications about benefit changes. *On January 27, [MDHHS released this memo about the upcoming benefit changes](#).*
- Department of Defense is [increasing their monthly allowance for food costs](#) for active-duty members by 11%. This is approximately \$453 for service member and \$312 for officers.
- The House introduced and passed [H.R. 8888, Food Security for Veterans Act](#), which would establish an office for food security within the VA to provide information for veterans regarding eligibility for federal nutrition programs to help support and help veterans that are experiencing food insecurity. That bill was introduced in October.
- The White House Council on Nutrition and Food Security continues to hold monthly calls. Community organizations may begin to see action occurring at the state and local level. [Sign up to receive updates](#).

Partner Updates

- Jennifer Lucarelli shared there is a meeting to engage produce prescription programs statewide and is accepting applications for the Tech Rx Management Program Project. Contact Jen at lucarell@oakland.edu.

- Melanie Grund shared about an open, free, community speakers series: [Food Literacy for All](#). It covers climate change, race, and food security.
- Amanda shared OCHD is looking to improve coalition and partnership operations and effectiveness, such as OCFPC, Healthy Oakland Partnership, and Best Start for Babies. An evidenced based tool was selected, tailored, and will be distributed among the various coalitions OCHD facilitates. It will take approximately 10 minutes to complete the survey. It is completely anonymous. [Take the survey](#).

Next Meeting

March 21, 2023, at 9:00- 10:30 AM, virtual