

Full Council Meeting Minutes

March 21, 2023

Attendees: Lori Adkins (Oakland Schools), David Bowman (Trinity Health), David Cipriano (Hospitality House), Robin Danto (OCHD), Russell Estill (Lighthouse), Angela Gill (Lighthouse), Anne Ginn (Forgotten Harvest), Selena Goss (Gleaners), Paul Green (Taste the Local Difference), Melanie Grund (OC Neighborhood and Housing Development), Carrie Hribar (OCHD), Trevor Johnson (resident and business owner), Theresa Krell (Trinity Health), Myyon Ligon (Macomb County Health Department), Jennifer Lucarelli (Oakland University), Lisa McKay-Chiasson (OCHD), Kelsey Merz (OCHD), Sarah Niskanen (Pontiac Community Foundation), Melissa Opsahl (YMCA), Megan Page (OCHD/RX for Healthy Oakland), Amanda Woods (OCHD), Joann Wrobel (OCHD)

Welcome and Introductions

Member introductions were made.

Workgroup Updates

DEIJ workgroup

Workgroup members are building a network list to conduct one-on-one interviews, with the purpose to improve community connections and better understand community needs. Members may be reaching out to council members for additional support and connections.

Double Up Food Bucks (DUFb) workgroup

Workgroup members finished the SNAP Resource Guide ([located on the OCFPC's website](#)), a digital and print guide to find non-food programs and resources SNAP-enrolled households may be eligible to receive. It contains connections for housing; healthcare; food programs; discounts on internet, phone, and cable; entertainment; tax preparation support; workplace training; and pet care. The abbreviated 2-page version includes a QR code to the OCFPC website. If you are interested in receiving print copies, [fill out this form](#).

Oakland County will be partnering with [Fair Food Network](#) to increase the number of vendors who accept [Double Up Food Bucks](#) in Oakland County. COVID-19 has exacerbated food system inequities and making access to healthy food expensive. Additionally, Oakland County has fewer participating DUFb vendors. DUFb matches SNAP benefits up to \$10/day to provide SNAP households with additional dollars to purchase healthy fruits and vegetables.

Council Chair Update

Whitney and Theresa are nearly halfway through their term as interim chairs. Currently, Whitney and Theresa are reviewing the roles and responsibilities originally drafted for alignment with their current responsibilities as co-chairs. The Leadership Committee will reconvene to launch the search process. If you would like to be a part of the Leadership Committee, please email Amanda at woods@oakgov.com. One council member suggested conducting a broad search for new OCFPC members as a mechanism to find new leadership for the Council.

Policy Updates

SNAP Updates

- SNAP emergency allotments, previously providing families at least an extra \$95/month, ended with the last allotment in February 2023. The Food Bank Council of Michigan compiled an education and resource toolkit. Amanda posted the toolkit on the [OCFPC website](#). If you would like a copy, email Amanda at woods@oakgov.com.
- Amanda asked members how the council can address the SNAP benefit changes and support those impacted by the changes.
 - [FRAC](#) and a statewide group are collecting stories of individuals impacted by these benefit cuts. It was suggested we could buttress the stories with data collection and then look at pre-COVID to post-COVID food security so show effect of existing legislation.
 - Members discussed food waste at farmers market days, and how that might be recaptured to redistribute to people who are nutritionally insecure.
 - Meijer has a program called [Flash Food](#), a digital app that shows allows users to purchase heavily discounted food items. This is a good resource to promote not only to SNAP recipients but all Oakland County residents as food prices have hurt everyone's budgets recently.
- Michigan Senate Bill 35 was introduced in March 2023, which would eliminate the state asset test.

Federal updates and the Farm Bill

Updates were provided by Lori Adkins and Anne Ginn.

- The Farm Bill is re-authorized every 5 years, and the current Farm Bill will expire September 30, 2023. It covers a wide range of programs and funding authorizations, such as SNAP, food commodity programs, and GUS NIP which provides funding for DUFB and produce prescription programs. Senator Stabenow chairs the Senate Ag committee and Congresswoman Slotkin is a member of the House Ag committee which leads Farm Bill legislation.
- SNAP is the nation's largest and most effective food program. Thirty-one percent (31%) of SNAP families are working families. On average, SNAP provides \$5.41/day/person. OCFPC members may educate legislators on the Farm Bill, including sharing stories of those impacted by the Farm Bill.

- There is also a program called TEFAP, The Emergency Food Assistance Program, funded by the Farm Bill. It is a program that moves food from farms to people facing hunger. Increasing funding for this program means more funding for local growers and producers who sell food to USDA when USDA procures for this program. It is important to increase funding for this program for the farm to food bank program. Michigan Department of Education administers this program in Michigan.
- Fair Food Network is seeking \$3 billion dollar increase over 5 years to meet their current demand. It is expected that will be negotiated down to about \$1 billion dollars, which would still be an increase for the program but not to the level need to fully fund their programming, which includes DUFB.
- [Healthy Meals Help Kids Learn Act](#) was introduced by Congress in March. It would permanently increase the reimbursement rate by an extra 45 cents per lunch and 28 cents per breakfast with annual adjustments. The extra funding schools are currently receiving this year expires June 30th.
- [Helping Schools Feed Act](#) was also introduced in Congress. This would extend the 15 cents for breakfast and 40 cents for lunch through the 2023-24 school year.
- USDA is also seeking feedback on proposed updates to the school nutrition standards. The [proposed updates](#) would limit added sugars, allow some fat-free/low-fat flavored milk to be served, require products be primarily whole grain, and lower the sodium limit. Review the proposed rule and provide public comments: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/fr-020723>.
 - Lori shared some schools are having trouble procuring fresh fruits and vegetables, and so changing the nutrition standards could increase the stress on food service directors.
 - Lori shared concern that most milk purchased by food service directors is flavored (90%). These flavored milks fit into the added sugar standard that is set but this proposal could really reduce the consumption of milk by school age children which is a nutrient dense food.

State Policy Updates

Updates provided by Lori Adkins, Anne Ginn, and Amanda Woods The Governor released her [FY2024 Budget Recommendations](#). It includes the following:

- \$160 million dollars allocated for universal school meals and \$5 million dollars allocated for local produce for schools.
- \$10 million in funding for “MI Climate Smart Farming” to assist farmers who choose to implement regenerative agriculture practices, to benefit the environment.
- Funding to create local healthy community zones (\$17.1 million ongoing, \$1 million one-time, general fund). MDHHS will provide technical assistance supporting local communities as they work to create and implement comprehensive long-term strategies addressing access to healthy foods, affordable housing, and safety networks.
- \$30 million for Student Wraparound Services and Basic Needs Supports (general fund) at public

colleges and universities and tribal colleges for services to meet the basic needs of students to improve graduation and completion rates. These funds may be used to support emergency housing solutions, childcare, on-campus food pantries, emergency grants, mental health services, and to resolve institutional barriers that are preventing re-enrollment.

- The Oakland County Board of Commissioners have approved one-time funding of \$100,000 to Oakland Schools (February 16, 2023 Full Board meeting). These funds, and funds provided by participating school districts, will pay down pay off school meal debt this school year for those enrolled in reduced priced school meals.

Priorities for 2023

The top 3 scoring priorities were:

1. Expansion of DUFEB locations in Oakland County
2. Identifying and developing advocacy focus areas and a strategic plan for the coming year.
3. Creating a policy, systems, and environmental strategy that addresses food security among Oakland County students, and targets the whole family holistically.

The council is currently working on DUFEB expansion and will continue to prioritize this focus. Oakland County is conducting a landscape assessment to better understand the food system, including emergency food providers, healthy food access, and nutrition/food security. This may provide additional insight into each of these priorities as well.

Two Menti polls were launched. One, to better understand what additional information council members need to develop a PSE strategy, and the second to rank the priorities. Results attached with meeting minutes. The chairs will review the results to inform next steps for the council.

Partner Updates

- Megan shared Prescription for a Healthy Oakland open enrollment will begin in June. Enrollees must be enrolled in or eligible for SNAP or Medicaid. For more information, email Megan pagem@oakgov.com.
- Carrie shared the Oakland County Food Policy Council evolved as result of the last community health assessment (CHA) and community health improvement plan (CHIP) conducted by OCHD. OCHD has started the next CHA cycle. OCHD launched a community survey. OCHD is seeking your support to extend their reach for the survey, with priority in the following health equity zones: Pontiac, Hazel Park, Southfield, Walled Lake, Royal Oak Township, Oak Park, Madison Heights, and Wixom. The survey is available in Arabic, Chinese, English, and Spanish. Visit oakgov.com/ECHO for the survey. Email echo@oakgov.com if you can help promote the survey and would like additional materials, including postcards or paper copies of the email.

Next Meeting

May 16, 2023, at 9:00- 10:30 AM, virtual