

Minutes – Shields Township Community Services Committee
Special Meeting of Community Services Committee April 11, 2023

STATE OF ILLINOIS,)

Lake County,) SS.

Town of Shields)

THE COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING OF SHIELDS TOWNSHIP
meeting in person on **Tuesday, April 11, 2023 at 4:30 pm.**

PRESENT

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| Lisette Rothing | Deputy Clerk |
| Kathy Blahunka | Committee Chair |
| Vickie Brown | Committee Person |
| Carl Evans | Committee Person |
| Heather Meyers | Committee Person |
| Janice Schnobrich | Committee Person |

ABSENT

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| Susan Fowler | Committee Person |
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I. Call to order & Roll call – Deputy Clerk Rothing called the meeting to order at 4:30 pm.

II. Approval of January 10, 2023, Minutes – Committee Person Brown was questioning the time frame in the January minutes in which Foss Park did not receive a grant from Shields Township. Although not discussed at the meeting, Committee Chair Blahunka stated that we could update the minutes to reflect that it was the year 2022 that Shields Township decided not to provide grant money to Foss Park. Committee Chair Blahunka motions to approve the amended minutes from January 10, 2022. Committee Person

Schnobrich motions to approve the updated minutes. Committee Person Brown seconds the motion. Committee Chair Blahunka asks if all are in favor of the updated minutes. All the committee members voted Aye. There were no Nays.

III. Public Comment – Three (3) Minutes per speaker – No Public Comment

IV. Old Business:

a. Recommendation on Township Relations with Phoenix Rising

Committee Chair Blahunka began to review the draft report titled “Food Pantry Recommendations for Shields Township.” The history of the Pantry was briefly covered. Committee Person Schnobrich explained the Foundation was originally started with grant money obtained by Illinois Senator Susan Garrett to help fund security deposits and first month rents for recipients of low-income housing however the funds were used up in less than a month because the demand was so high. Committee Chair Blahunka stated that the Townships with the highest poverty need did not have pantries and would redirect residents to local pantries. She also informed the group that although the foundation did not have walk-in hours, they were most likely helping people with food needs, but the working model was not well understood. She also commented that it is hard to understand as the lease agreement does not require reporting of activities as requirements with other groups that get grants through Cooperative Service Agreements. Committee Person Evans says he gets about 100 bags of food from the foundation all the time. Committee Person Meyers talked to a Phoenix Rising representative about the business and use of the space that they lease. She mentioned that we do not want to throw them out of the space, we just want to find a way to work

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II. Approval of January 10, 2023, Minutes – Committee Person Brown was questioning the time frame in the January minutes in which Foss Park did not receive a grant from Shields Township. Although not discussed at the meeting, Committee Chair Blahunka stated that we could update the minutes to reflect that it was the year 2022 that Shields Township decided not to provide grant money to Foss Park. Committee Chair Blahunka motions to approve the amended minutes from January 10, 2022. Committee Person

Schnobrich motions to approve the updated minutes. Committee Person Brown seconds the motion. Committee Chair Blahunka asks if all are in favor of the updated minutes. All the committee members voted Aye. There were no Nays.

III. Public Comment – Three (3) Minutes per speaker – No Public Comment

IV. Old Business:

a. Recommendation on Township Relations with Phoenix Rising

Committee Chair Blahunka began to review the draft report titled “Food Pantry Recommendations for Shields Township.” The history of the Pantry was briefly covered. Committee Person Schnobrich explained the Foundation was originally started with grant money obtained by Illinois Senator Susan Garrett to help fund security deposits and first month rents for recipients of low-income housing however the funds were used up in less than a month because the demand was so high. Committee Chair Blahunka stated that the Townships with the highest poverty need did not have pantries and would redirect residents to local pantries. She also informed the group that although the foundation did not have walk-in hours, they were most likely helping people with food needs, but the working model was not well understood. She also commented that it is hard to understand as the lease agreement does not require reporting of activities as requirements with other groups that get grants through Cooperative Service Agreements. Committee Person Evans says he gets about 100 bags of food from the foundation all the time. Committee Person Meyers talked to a Phoenix Rising representative about the business and use of the space that they lease. She mentioned that we do not want to throw them out of the space, we just want to find a way to work

together to support walk-in residents. She suggested we could possibly look at updating the lease so that Shields could support walk-in residents in need of food. Right now, they are two separate entities (The Foundation and The Township) and there has to be an easier solution to help the community when an immediate response is needed. Committee Person Meyers also stated that Kate and other volunteers from Phoenix Rising put together about 100 bags for families in need on Thanksgiving in which half went to the Veterans Closet and half went to Alderman Carl Evans to pass out in North Chicago. She also mentioned that those metrics and data are just not enough, and the Committee is also saying we need more to go off of to understand the support provided and the needs of the community. Committee Person Brown recommended Shields Township needs to be pinpointed on the map so that we can bridge the gap between the Township and Phoenix Rising Food Pantry. She recommended putting up flyers that provide the hours and days people can come to get food. Committee Person Meyers reminded Committee Person Brown that the Pantry does not have walk-in hours and we cannot tell the Foundation what times they should be open. We do not have the authority. Committee Person Brown suggests that we have a discussion with the ladies who run the food pantry or invite them to come talk at our next meeting. As a committee we need to hear their vision going forward. Committee Person Evans wants to make sure that we have no plans to move the pantry elsewhere seeing as though Phoenix Rising signed a lease and are owed that space. Carl Kitzerow, an employee of the Shields Township spoke up to remind the group that the Township staff is not allowed to help people with the food

pantry because the entity is a private organization. As staff members, doing work that is not related to Township business is considered using taxpayers' money inappropriately. He told the Committee that they always help walk-in patrons. They provide a list of local pantries with the correct phone numbers, locations, and time of distribution so no one leaves the Township without understanding where to get food. Committee Person Meyers says she would be happy to volunteer her time to help distribute bags of groceries. It is rare but Shields Township has had about 5 people show up in the last 9 months for immediate food service. Committee Person Evans is wondering why the committee is arguing about the 5 people as long as we are helping the people of Shields Township who are in need. He mentioned that we should track metrics on the number of people walking in as well. He says his name can be provided and he would help the walk-in clients. He wonders if Shields Township has a hidden agenda to replace the food pantry with an entity that will pay top-dollar for the space. Committee Chair Blahunka informed him that the entity mentioned would not have use for such small space, they deal with large volumes of food distributions. Committee Person Evans suggested that members of the committee wanted the credit to pass out food to the community. Committee Person Meyers mentioned that her local community efforts provide most of the side dishes to the food distributed by the Foundation which Committee Person Evans benefits from, but he was unaware, so that suggestion did not make sense. Committee Chair Blahunka redirected the meeting. She suggested a follow-up meeting with Kate from Phoenix Rising to see if she can provide metrics to help our understanding.

Committee Person Evans suggested we need data from all parties (the Township, the Foundation and Committee Person Evans himself) going forward. He wants to make sure that we are properly helping our patrons. All members of the Committee agreed we needed more metrics to understand more.

- b. Updates to Social Services page for Website** – Committee Person Meyers says she is working on calling and confirming if many of the organizations listed as on the website are still in business and providing the services necessary to the community. She has also done additional research on how to grow our Social Services page and will communicate changes to Deputy Clerk Rothing about updating the website once all our data is complete.
- V. New Business – Action Items for Future Meetings** – No new business was discussed at this time.
- VI. Adjournment** – Meeting Adjourned at 5:28 p.m.

Minutes – Shields Township Community Services Committee
Special Meeting of Community Services Committee April 11, 2023

STATE OF ILLINOIS,)

Lake County,) SS.

Town of Shields)

THE COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING OF SHIELDS TOWNSHIP
meeting in person on **Tuesday, April 11, 2023 at 4:30 pm.**

PRESENT

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| Lisette Rothing | Deputy Clerk |
| Kathy Blahunka | Committee Chair |
| Vickie Brown | Committee Person |
| Carl Evans | Committee Person |
| Heather Meyers | Committee Person |
| Janice Schnobrich | Committee Person |

ABSENT

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| Susan Fowler | Committee Person |
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