

**Porter County American Rescue Plan
Sub Committee Behavioral Health and Social Services Subcommittee
Thursday, April 28, 2022, 5 p.m.
Commissioners' Meeting Room Chambers
Porter County Administration Center 155 Indiana Ave., Valparaiso IN 46383**

Voting Members Present:

Jim Biggs
Greg Simms
Robyn Lane
Mike Brickner
Mitch Peters

Citizen Members Present:

Jesse Harper
Brendan Clancy
George Topoll
Edward Morales

Presentations:

Each presenter will be given 15 minutes for their presentation and 15 minutes for Q & A

Porter County Community Foundation – Bill Higbie presented. Mary Jane Eisenhauer joined him. Lilly Endowment called communities to see what type of transformative work they could do if they funded it. The Community Foundation asked the question, if there were one thing this Foundation and the community could do, what would it be. It came down to early childhood development. The first three years of a child's life affect everything else about our community. They launched First Things First. They focused on getting it right when it counts the most.

PCCF has not received nor requested ARPA funding or assistance. They are committed to non-discrimination policies. They are committed to best labor practices. They are financially stable and have been audited by an external firm.

Mary Jane Eisenhauer defined a home visitor as a trained professional that will go in and develop a relationship with the pregnant mom and work with them as they get ready to welcome the new baby and then help them in the days and weeks following. During the pandemic 1 in 5 pregnant women experienced some sort of mental health issue. By investing early it decreases the number of children who enter the juvenile justice system. It is early intervention for developmental delays, support for families in crisis, increase in family parenting skills, and long-term health outcomes. Investing early increases the number of children who are prepared for school, reducing the costs of remediation and retention.

In Porter County there are 1,642 babies born every year. Across the country, high-quality home visiting programs offer vital support to parents as they deal with the challenges of raising babies and young children.

They have raised \$300,000. Their request is \$1,342,000. They have the capacity to meet the deadlines. It has been shown that children who have experienced high quality based home visiting are three times more likely to graduate from high school with honors. Health outcomes are significantly improved. Dependence on welfare is significantly reduced. The National Association of Counties is very involved across the country in supporting Counties for Kids. That is a way to support counties that are investing in early childhood.

Q – Would you be willing to accept less if it were offered?

A – Yes

Q – This is based on 1,642 babies being born in Porter County per year. Just because there are that many babies born; it does not mean they are going to want a home visit. How are they going to reach the families that need this the most?

A – It takes everyone to do this. They have 30 partners right now. It is a culture shift so no one feels they are singled out.

Q – If you receive a lesser amount than your request, where do you anticipate getting the balance of the funds?

A – They might have to alter the program slightly. There are some national funding opportunities. There are groups that are interested in funding this work. The national organizations are looking at the local level.

C – How many of our kids stay in the area? This is like Head Start. By the time they are in 3rd or 4th grade they are caught up. The school systems in Valparaiso are awesome. There are programs that are in place to compensate for some of this.

Q – How would you differentiate between educational or intellectual childhood training and trauma based or emotional support?

A – Neuro pathways are firing all the time. That is happening through actions by caring adults. For the kids who start behind the eight ball, those are the kids they hear about from the teachers.

C - The target population is the same people the Trustees are dealing with. Do you intend to implement something to get into the marginalized population?

A – Yes. Quarterly and monthly they meet to make sure everyone who needs help is getting it. They want to make this a part of our culture and not single out any group.

Q – How do you intend to sustain this program moving forward.

A – The Community Foundation is committed to this long term. They feel it is valuable enough they will be able to find support.

Q – Does the two years allow you additional time to find funding sources and grants?

A – Yes.

Q – There are \$300,000 matching funds?

A – Yes.

Q – Have you received or are you planning to receive any additional covid funds for this purpose?

A – No

Q – The figure of 1 in 5 pregnant women suffer mental health issues. Is that in Porter County?

A – That is a national figure. Most of the figures provided are national.

Q – The money needs to be contracted by mid 2024. It must be spent by the end of 2026. Can you guarantee the money will be spent by those deadlines?

A – Yes

Q – How often are the visits. If they are not open to having a visit initially, are you following up with them?

A – Yes. They are proposing a short term engagement that everybody would receive 2-3 visits and then that person could send them to an agency that could help them if needed.

Q – Is that one visit a week and how long do they last?

A – 45 minutes once prenatal and 45 minute once or twice after the baby is born and then they would be handed off to another agency so services are not being duplicated.

Q – How many of the kids in our juvenile system are from Porter County?

A – They do not know the answer. They have an obligation to our society. What is done here affects a broader geographic area. To say we are not going to do something because the person is going to leave Porter County is not a good approach. Even if they leave Porter County, we have done society a favor. They hate to focus just on the juvenile justice system. This is an initiative that helps a lot of different components of the community. This is paying attention when it matters the most.

Portage Twp/Center Twp Trustees

Trustee Jesse Harper and Trustee Brendan Clancy presented. As a result of covid the Trustees decided to try to work regionally and together. They formed a committee to see just what services were being performed and by what organization. The committee decided each organization should present their own request except for Gabriel's Horn. This request presented tonight is for Gabriel's Horn.

Emergency shelter is – I need it now. However, they can only shelter someone for a very short time. There are short term shelters which can house for periods of up to six months.

A reason they did this proposal is because a lot of the non-profits would not be able to get a proposal together. They do not have staff. Some have put in requests. Homelessness is a whole county problem that no one knows how to fix.

Long term housing is a rental for singles consisting of a small studio apartment. Monthly rent is at or near \$500

Q – Are you able to receive less if less is offered?

A - If they were to receive less, they would look at the non-profits they work with and see who needs it the most and use it in that way. The request tonight is \$300,000 for Gabriel's Horn.

Q – Is this plan sustainable?

A – Gabriel's Horn is a women and children only shelter.

Q – Has the pandemic caused more homelessness in women and children and is there a need for emergency shelter for women and children in Porter County and Gabriel’s Horn?

A – At Gabriel’s Horn 90% of the time they are full. Right now, they have 12 on the waiting list.

Q – Do you involve other agencies in the services and case management.

A – Yes. Right now, they can handle 19 women with children. With this project they can take 35 women with children. This will be ADA compliant.

Q – Do you have a plan together?

A – Yes. It is all ready to go.

Q – Do you have to be a Porter County resident to stay at Gabriel’s Horn.

A – The people come from the Trustee’s Office and must be a Porter County resident.

Q – Can you encumber these funds by mid 2024? And have them spent by 2026?

A – Yes. We have raised \$35,000 ourselves.

Q – Have you received any covid funds?

A – No

Q – How many families can you take after this expansion?

A – 35

Q – So you had an architect give you the estimate?

A – We did all of this pre-pandemic. That is why we have doubled our estimate.

Q – This is a project as a Township project? Is it in conjunction with any of the other requests?

Q – If approved would the money go to the Trustees or Gabriel’s Horn?

A – Gabriel’s Horn.

Q – This request would double the size of what you have now?

Y – Yes and it is all state approved.

Q – What makes you think you could sustain that?

A – They have two fulltime people right now. They are going out and asking for new donations to help sustain current operations.

Q – So this would support all townships in Porter County?

A – Yes

Q – How long has Gabriel’s Horn been in operation?

A – Since 2003

Q – The request is now \$300,000 for Gabriel’s Horn?

A – Through the presentation it has been learned that they would take less, and this is a specific request for Gabriel’s Horn of \$300,000.

Jim Biggs stated that Brendan Clancy and Jesse Harper are non-voting members of this subcommittee.

Family Promise

Emily Carpenter presented. Family Promise is a 501 c 3. It is a community based response to the crisis of family homelessness. Nationally they are in 43 states with 200 affiliate locations. They have over 200,000 volunteers and 91 unique persons were served in 2020. In most cases when families are homeless they are relegated to women’s shelters and men’s shelters. This separates the families. Family Promise keeps them together. All their services help set a family

up for permanent success beyond just shelter. They work with other non-profits in the area to provide services. Family Promise supports the church, and the church supports the families. Homelessness has increased in 2021. In Porter County as of last August there were 31 homeless families with children, 79 children total, 129 adults and children. There are 13 host churches to house these families and five churches to support and host the families.

Their request is \$10,000 to match a grant to assist with security deposits and supplement rent payments. \$25,000 to convert the resource center into a static shelter. \$40,000 to hire a case manager.

Q – If offered less would you take less?

A – Yes. The most important part is to get matching funds for grants they already have. A case worker is also vital to the success.

Q – Have you received any pandemic or covid funds.

A - No

Q – If you get a case manager how sustainable is that into the future? Whose budget does it come out of if it is being shared?

A – The Township will pick up the salary after the funds are depleted.

Q – Is there a plan in place for converting the resource center into a static shelter?

A – They have plans drawn up and will meet the deadlines.

Q – Is there a plan to sustain the building?

A – If they have a static house, the grants are different that come from Family Promise. They will apply for yearly grants to maintain the house.

Q – If only a portion of the \$40,000 for a case manager is awarded, how do they plan on making up the difference?

A – The Trustees Office will make up the difference.

Public Comment –

Dawn – Porter County Foundation: Will they be billed through insurance? How much gets charged? Who will be going to the houses? Will this become a requirement for low income families?

A – They cannot require a low income family to let someone into their homes. It was suggested that the Foundation will pay and then submit an invoice. These will be licensed nurses and social workers.

There being no more business the meeting adjourned.