

**Village of Downers Grove
Human Service Commission**

Village Hall
801 Burlington Avenue
February 28, 2023
Meeting Minutes

Chair Aycock called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and asked for a roll call.

Members Present

Chair Aycock
Member Drabik
Member Skerjan
Member Nicholson

Members Absent

Member Silvester
Member Loftus

Chair Aycock declared that a quorum was present.

Chair Aycock asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the January 23, 2023 meeting. Nicholson asked about the minutes reference to the dates. Motion to approve the minutes by Nicholson, seconded by Drabik. Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

Manager Fieldman introduced Interfaith Community Partners. He noted that the Social Services Referral Work Plan includes actions to address the transportation service gaps for seniors and persons with disabilities. He said that the idea of identifying a not-for-profit agency that provides rides for these individuals was discussed at previous meetings by the HSC. Interfaith Community Partners provides transportation services. Staff invited Janet Garreau, Executive Director of Interfaith Community Partners to speak to the HSC about their services.

Ms. Garreau thanked the HSC for inviting her to present. She stated that Interfaith Community Partners is expanding its service area into Downers Grove and Darien and the expansion meeting will be taking place soon. They have been operating for 23 years and started in LaGrange and Western Springs as a visitation provider and then moved into transportation services. They partner with volunteers in the community to provide safe rides to people 60 years of age and older. Rides are provided generally for life enhancing errands. Interfaith Community Partners is privately funded supported by donations and grants. Thirteen churches provide financial support. There is no charge for rides.

Interfaith Community Partners operates from a church in LaGrange. Ms. Garreau reports to a Board of Directors. Clients become aware of the services from word of mouth and referrals from

churches, social workers, municipalities and townships. ICP partners with local township transportation programs. Volunteer drivers stay with clients during the ride providing round trips. Twenty-three municipalities are currently served. Volunteer drivers undergo a background and criminal check. Training is provided to drivers. Volunteers like the flexibility of the schedule. Clients are asked to provide a one-week notice for ride scheduling. Most drivers are retired. Drivers must be at least 23 years old.

Interfaith Community Partners provided 58 rides this week. They provided 75 rides at their peak prior to the pandemic. Most rides are round trips. Some are one-way. Interfaith Community Partners is operating under a soft opening now. They are in the process of reaching out for volunteer drivers and need to be connected with churches and senior groups.

Chair Aycock asked about how to get rides. Ms. Garreau said that clients call into the office to arrange for rides. Volunteers can log into the system to schedule a ride

Chair Aycock said that she was unaware that this service existed. Ms. Garreau said that 90% of services are rides. They also provide volunteers for libraries for homebound deliveries and they are looking to serve the Downers Grove library. She said that she will provide information to municipalities, townships and park districts.

Member Skerjan asked if they work with hospitals and medical providers to arrange for transportation services. Ms. Garreau said yes and that they also offer friendly phone calls and visitations as well as rescuing flowers for repurposing and delivery to seniors.

Chair Aycock asked about insurance requirements. Ms. Garreau said that volunteers donate their insurance. Interfaith Community Partners carries some insurance as well. She stated that they have not experienced insurance related liability issues or concerns.

Member Drabik asked about reaching out to drivers when rides are needed. Ms. Garreau said that they call drivers when they are needed.

Chair Aycock said she is excited about this service being available.

Member Nicholson noted that transportation is a large need in the community and asked if this service would be addressing these needs. Ms. Lippe replied yes.

Ms. Garreau said that many friendships are formed among drivers and clients.

Manager Fieldman thanked Ms. Garreau for her time and presentation. Ms. Lippe said the services are needed and appreciated. She noted that the clients appreciate the interaction with the drivers.

Chair Aycock called on staff to provide an overview of the Village's Social Services Referral Program Data Analysis. Ms. Lippe summarized the charts, graphs and takeaways provided in the slide presentation that is included in the meeting agenda materials.

Member Nicholson asked if the information on referrals by age and gender was a surprise. Ms. Lippe said it was not surprising. Member Skerjan asked about the reasoning for decline rates for the 30-39 issues. Ms. Lippe said that she was not aware of the causes. Member Drabik asked what State Department referred to. Ms. Lippe said it refers to state agency services.

Member Nicholson asked if there were differences in mental health needs among different demographics. Ms. Lippe said there were no noticeable differences. Most referrals were trying to connect residents to counselors.

Fieldman thanked Ms. Lippe and Matt Timmerberg for preparing the analysis.

Chair Aycock recognized that Ms. Lippe's job is very difficult and her work is appreciated. There were some unexpected results, such as the 30's cohort decline rate.

Member Nicholson said he is frustrated about the direction provided by the Council and he wished the Village could do more. He said 18 males in the 30's cohort declined services. He said that this age group could use as much help as possible. He recommends that the Village continue to ask what more we should do. Member Nicholson said that this group is vulnerable and needs additional help.

Manager Fieldman explained that the Village is operating a referral system to connect residents in need of services to the agencies that provide services. He indicated that the data analysis was completed as part of an effort to identify a target audience for the public awareness efforts.

Member Skerjan said he would appreciate a better understanding of why residents are contacting the Village and asked if it was related to their insurance situation. Ms. Lippe said that some lack insurance and many have insurance. The insurance may be challenging to sort through and may be easier to contact the Village Social Worker. Ms. Lippe said she spends a lot of time working with residents to understand their specific needs to determine which agency can best help them. She stated that she provides multiple referrals for each resident. She said that she is operating like a concierge.

Manager Fieldman said that staff will present ideas about the target audience at an upcoming meeting.

Member Drabik asked if there was a plan to increase awareness for Interfaith Community Partners. Ms. Lippe said that this service is just starting and the Village can help refer them to potential clients and volunteers.

Member Nicholson left at 7:47 pm. Manager Fieldman noted that a quorum was no longer present and that the meeting was adjourned. He noted that the only item remaining on the agenda was public comments and that no members of the public were present.

The meeting adjourned at 7:49 pm.