

**MINUTES**  
**REGULAR MEETING, S.T.A.R.S MANAGEMENT ADVISORY BOARD**  
**July 22, 2020**

The S.T.A.R.S. Management Advisory Board of the City of Fort Myers, Florida, met in regular session on Wednesday, July 22, 2020, at 3:30 o'clock p.m. Board Members present were Neale Montgomery, Wilbur C. Smith, Dr. Jesse Bryson, Ron Inge, Michael Morris and Amanda Mingione. Advisory Board Members; Jazzmen Williams, Amber Smith, Malik Hines, and Isaiah McFadden.

**CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 03:40 P.M. by Neale Montgomery.

(03:41) Roll call was performed.

**NO. 1 MINUTES:** (03:41) Bill Morris moved and seconded by Dr. Jesse Bryson to approve the minutes of the February 19, 2020 meeting. The motion carried.

**NO. 2 Public Input:** (03:41) There was no public input

**NO. 3 STARS Program Update:** (03:42) Amber Smith STARS Sr. Center manager introduced the Program Coordinators for the STARS Complex Malik Hines who is over all of the camp and afterschool activities and Isaiah McFadden who is in charge of all of the athletic activities. Ms. Smith stated that since April and the City's shutdown through the executive order the STARS complex partnered with the Lee County School District to distribute breakfast and lunch to the students in the county by having two distribution sites, one at the STARS complex and the other at the Landings at East Point which is a housing Authority of the City of Fort Myers development where the STARS staff handed out meals. Ms. Smith stated that in addition to that STARS staff did mobile delivery with approximately 250 meals per day to students that could not get to a pick up location, in total we handed out approximately 12,000 meals to students. Ms. Smith stated that in addition to handing out meals the STARS tutors assisted students with distance learning and any issues that they had with connecting or questions that they had with homework. Neale Montgomery stated that the news is reporting that students are not learning with distance learning and does the STARS feel as if our students stayed on track. Ms. Smith stated that for the most part she does feel as if our students stayed on track and even when summer camp started we continued with the distance learning to make sure that the kids were logging in for a minimum of 20 minutes to get their reading and their math, most of the assignments that were uploaded should only take 15-20 minutes to complete. Ms. Smith stated that it is hard to replace in person learning with a laptop it is not the same, and kids get bored very easily and it is hard to keep them on task. Mr. Morris stated that his wife is a high school student and his daughter is an upcoming Junior in high school and the experience is both presenting the material to the students and the receiving end has been a mixed bag and everyone appreciates the fact that the STARS has been able to help fill some of the holes. Ms. Smith stated that it was just recently released by the Lee County School District's founder committee that they are recommending that school not begin until August 31, 2020, which is another month before they go back to school. Ms. Smith stated that many of the parents that we have spoken to are opting to send their kids back to school but there is at least 25% of parents that are opting out of sending their kids back to school so we really do not know what the future is going to hold. Ms. Smith stated that before we started the summer camp the STARS was approved for 3 grants, first was with LeeCares to assist families with returning to work and being able to attend summer camp at no cost to them, the second was a \$10,000 meal program grant where we assist the community in an outreach program that provides breakfast and lunch for summer camp and dinner

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for members of the community during certain weeks through out the next four months. The last grant that we received was from Lee County for \$4,295.00 to assist us with the CDC cleaning guidelines, in addition to that we also hired a temporary staff person to assist us with cleaning our facility each and every day, because everything had to be wiped down after anyone touched it. Ms. Montgomery stated that is there a way to go back and get more money, the last she checked all of the money had not been spent and if there is still a month left of summer camp we could get more. Ms. Smith stated that as of now our summer camp has come to an end and the primary reason for that is because a few of the employees did contract COVID-19 and unfortunately through the guidelines with the health department anyone that they come in contact with, which could be their group and other employees they would all have to quarantine, and after the third person contracted COVID, it was just to cumbersome to constantly keep everyone out and to notify parents, and the City Manager made the decision to close down two weeks early. Ms. Smith stated that we have received many phone calls from parents that would like for us to open back up. Ms. Smith stated that with the STARS building expansion that they are still finalizing the design with the consultant ADG, we meet every two weeks to go over things and to make sure that we stay with the timeline, we have picked out colors for paint, and colors for furniture and flooring so that we have a fun and inviting facility. Ms. Smith stated that the next phase is to close Prince Street so that there is a safe route for the athletics between the baseball field and the football field, and that will be done internally and over the course of the next year, finalize the closure of the street and began putting in any site work that needs to be done. Ms. Smith stated that additionally we wanted to make sure that the Police Athletic League had a safe route in the event that they have a full football season for the 2020 year. Ms. Smith stated that the grant writer here at the City is preparing a grant application that will be submitted in September, it is a federal grant and we are applying for \$20 million, and the purpose of the grant is because the building will be a shelter for any type of emergency disaster. Ms. Smith stated that in addition to that we are also going to apply for the multipurpose building at Billy Bowlegs because that building will be a facility that can be used after a disaster as a staging site for any type of goods or services in the East. Ms. Smith stated that we are looking forward to receiving the grant from the Federal Department of Interior, we are applying for 3 million for Billy Bowlegs and 20 million for the STARS, but we may not receive the whole amount but we are still eager to apply and we think that it is going to rank very high based on the preliminary criteria, once we have the entire grant package we will forward it to the board for your review, and will be bringing it for your approval at the August meeting and taking it to City Council the second meeting in August for a timely submission in September. Ms. Smith stated that next is an update on summer camp it was a new experience and it was interesting just trying to maneuver through the day, because it wasn't like a regular day. Ms. Smith stated that at the beginning of the program we had about 210 participants, our numbers did decrease to about 140 participants, and of that 140, 67 of the students were approved for a scholarship through the LeeCares fund and we ran the camp for 6 weeks. Malik Hines, the Program Coordinator stated that the weeks were broken up into different themes with different principles and concepts that were tied into their everyday curriculum. Mr. Hines stated that week 1 was about safety guidelines and STARS spirit, and a tribal aspect, week 2 was empowerment week and they learned about voting and the census, week 3 was goodwill week and we learned about sportsmanship and paying it forward, week 4 was space week and they learned about

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space and aliens, week 5 was tech week and we studied technology and how far we have come and week 6 was science week, and all of the participants were working on science projects and display boards to showcase the scientific method. Mr. Hines stated that we also partnered with IWILL mentor program for STEM learning all throughout the summer. Ms. Smith stated that the rising STARS teen program had 6 volunteers that volunteered over 700 community service hours over the 6 weeks of camp, and each volunteer will receive a \$300 stipend for successful completion of the program and some of these teen volunteers will be doing applications to become members of the teen advisory council. Ms. Smith stated that the STARS took the lead on the City's step up to work program and we hired 5 teens to work part time jobs, and some of them may be coming back when we open again to become afterschool counselors. Ms. Smith stated that unfortunately due to COVID we did lose a lot of revenue and those losses came from either people backing out of summer camp or people cancelling the rentals, so we did lose a significant amount of our 2020 revenue but still feels that we will finish strong. Ms. Smith stated that as of right now all of our events are postponed, we were looking at an anticipated start date of September 1<sup>st</sup> but that could change depending on whether the governor moves us back to phase 1 or forward to Phase 3. Ms. Smith stated that we have a few upcoming events, like the dinner on us, where they can come and pick up a free meal for their family, another is the STARS staff partnering with the Fire Department and Parks department to assist with distributing PPE to the community throughout all of the city parks. Ms. Smith stated that we are implementing a new financial software called RecTrac and all staff will be trained on this software and it will make it easier for the community to register for different activities and events through the software. Ms. Smith stated that all of the fulltime staff will begin their professional development training for the 2021 year, we are all members of the Florida Parks & Recreation Association, and some of us are members of the National Recreation & Parks Association and this will assist us with accreditation. Ms. Smith stated that we have organized a school supply drive that is scheduled for August 22<sup>nd</sup> some of our Rec partners will assist us with getting supplies for this event. Ron Inge motioned to resume Advisory Board meetings in person, with consideration of CDC social distancing standards seconded by Bill Morris. Motion carried.

**NO. 4. 2020 Budget:** (04:15) Ms. Smith stated would it be possible for the advisory board to write a letter to council in support of the STARS Complex maintaining the budget from the 2020 FY including the money from the CASP funds. Ms. Smith stated that she would have a copy of the budget by next month's meeting for the board's review.

**NO. 5. ADJOURN** (04:30) Ron Inge motioned to adjourn the meeting seconded by Bill Morris. Motion carried.