

## Full Council Meeting Minutes

March 17, 2026

Attendees: Jared Barnett (Oakland Connects), Eric Candela (Forgotten Harvest), Leigh Coyle (OCHD), Susan Erspamer (Hospitality House), Rhyan Frost (Micah 6), Angelya Higginbotham (OCHD), Kelly Humes (OC Sustainability), Ashley Krasicky (OLHSA), Theresa Krell (Trinity Health) Jennifer Lucarelli (OU), Maureen MacLean (Trinity Health The Farm), Lauren Marks (United Way of Southeastern Michigan), Kelsey Merz (OCHD), Kelsey Monks-Carry (Trinity Health The Farm), Megan Page (OC HHS), Jessica Ramsay (Gleaners), Emily Row (TLD, Resident), Teagan Smith (Resident), Angela Tabb (Baldwin Center), Chad Techner (Metro Food Rescue), Amanda Woods (OC HHS)

### Welcome & Introductions

Chad welcomed council members. Introductions were made.

### Federal Policy Updates

- Lauren Marks provided a legislative update on the upcoming Medicaid and SNAP changes, and the impact these will have for individuals and at the state level. See attached PowerPoint for detailed policy information. United Way [developed a SNAP one pager](#) and developing one for Medicaid.
- Lauren shared the Farm Bill has moved out of the House Agriculture Committee and is being sent to the House for full vote. [Advocates are pushing for this bill to reverse the changes made to SNAP in HR 1.](#)
- Lori Adkins provided the following written update on [Dietary Guidelines for Americans \(DGA\)](#) and School Meal Nutrition Standards.
  - School meal nutrition standards and meal pattern regulations are required to mirror the federal DGA. The new DGA published in January demonstrate a change in nutrition priorities to include whole milk, saturated fats, and proteins while placing less emphasis on grains. The USDA Food & Nutrition Service is expected to publish a new proposed rule in late spring 2026 that will reflect the new DGA for school meal programs. Top of mind for school nutrition programs for the proposed rule is the comment period is long enough to gather ample comments (hoping for 90 days) and as many people as possible comment about the impact of the proposed rule. School food service directors are advocating for updated school nutrition standards to be maintained as scientifically sound, operationally feasible, and adequately funded in the new proposed rule.
  - Another concern are Ultra Processed Foods (UPF). Some states have been passing state standards for UPF for which there is no federal definition for at this time. The

K-12 food industry, however is ahead of the curve, proactively removing artificial dyes, additives and ingredients of concerns from school foods. School Nutrition Association (SNA) is advocating for any new rules limiting UPF in schools must ensure meal programs are permitted to serve nutrient-dense, pre-prepared foods. Schools rely on some pre-prepared foods and are simply not equipped to scratch prepare all menu items. The cost of equipment, infrastructure, and staff training would be daunting to transition to all-scratch cooking without an increase in federal dollars to cover these costs. [HR 5753](#) was recently introduced and would increase federal reimbursement rates for school meals and also recently introduced is [HR 5731](#) that would fund equipment and infrastructure upgrades to expand scratch cooking.

- Lastly, SNA is advocating for CEP to continue as it is (with no changes to the 25% threshold). Lingering concerns of how HR 1 may cut the number of children automatically certified for free & reduced-price school meals resulting in some schools forced off CEP. Fewer direct certification students (via SNAP or Medicaid) results in fewer school buildings qualifying as a CEP school. [SB 3281](#) would repeal HR 1's SNAP provisions and protect CEP.
- Chad asked when the new guidelines go into effect, and how does this impact other school meal guidelines, like added sugars? *Answer:* USDA will issue a proposed rule (expected later this spring), followed by public comment (typically 60 - 90 days), and lastly the final rule will be announced and implemented the following fiscal year. The whole process will likely take 18-24 months.
- [WIC Modernization ACT](#) has gained new traction. Waivers for virtual visits expire 9/2026. Starting October 1, if not renewed, all WIC visits and benefit verification would be required to be in person. Virtual appointments and e-benefit checks have reduced barriers to participating and increased caseload.

### State Policy Updates

- 10 Cents a Meal was not included in the FY26 State Budget. There has been an ongoing advocacy group to reinstate it for FY27. [Learn more about the group.](#)
- Gov Whitmer's [FY27 Executive Budget](#):
  - Lauren Mark's PowerPoint include state level information and details the impact HR 1 will have on the state budget, and revenue tactics to try and fill the gap.
  - Governor Whitmer's budget included language to continue Universal School Meals and codify it into state law.
  - Her budget proposal also includes funding to implement the new HR 1 requirements and compliance around SNAP and Medicaid.

### Partner Updates

- Kelsey Monks Carry (Trinity Health): The [Farm Share Assistance](#) and [paid shares](#) are

open. [Trinity Health](#), in collaboration with the [Michigan Farmers Market Association](#), is seeking to better understand the current scope of Food is Medicine-type programming in [Prosperity Regions 4, 9, and 10](#) as well as gather a baseline understanding of organizations' familiarity, understanding, and interest in the Michigan Medicaid In Lieu of Services Program. The data collected by Trinity Health staff will be shared with The Michigan Farmers Market Association and the Michigan Primary Care Association. Individual answers will be kept confidential, and these organizations will seek permission before sharing any non-aggregated information publicly.

- Webster Community Center is hiring a Kitchen Manager – see attached job posting and [link](#).
- Amanda: School Meals Day of Action at the Capitol on Wednesday, April 15. The goal for the day is to bring together parents, students, educators, and partners from across Michigan to show for maintaining the funding and making healthy school meals for all students permanent. If your organization is interested in participating, helping recruit attendees, or sharing the event with your networks, we'd love your help. [Please sign up here if you're planning to attend: Michigan School Meals Day of Action](#).

**\*Note new date\* Upcoming Full Council Meeting: May 12, 2026; 9-10:30 AM  
Location: TBD, In Person**