



MEETING MINUTES
CUYAHOGA COUNTY CITIZENS' ADVISORY COUNCIL ON EQUITY
Monday, May 10, 2021
1:30 PM – 3:30 PM

I. Call to Order

Nailah K. Byrd called the meeting to order at 1:32 PM.

II. Roll Call

Present – Eddie Taylor, Stephen Caviness, Heidi Gullett, Randell McShepard, Rev. Kenneth Chalker, LeVine Ross, Danielle Sydnor, Cordell Stokes, India Pierce Lee, Marsha Mockabee, Sheila Wright, Habeebah Rasheed Grimes, Jenice Contreras. Quorum present.

Excused absence – Rabbi Joshua Caruso, Victor Ruiz

Absent – Yanela Sims

III. Moment of Silence and Reflection

During the moment of silence Clerk Byrd reflected upon the recent police killings across America.

On April 20th a sign of progress was made when the jury convicted Derek Chauvin of murdering George Floyd. However, this promise of progress was quickly overshadowed by further bloodshed at the hands of law enforcement.

Included in those lost were Ma'Khia Bryant, Andrew Brown Jr., Adam Toledo, Daunte Wright, and Casey Goodson.

Each of the deaths illustrated the tragic outcome of interactions between law enforcement and Black and Brown Americans. Clerk Byrd encouraged the CACE to reflect on these interactions and the unnecessary loss of human life and asked the CACE to find ways to reduce the use of lethal force while protecting the lives of all involved.



IV. Public Comment

No public comments were submitted to equity@cuyahogacounty.us.

Chair Taylor explained a disclaimer had been created for the CACE's website indicating comments may be published on the website and must not include sensitive, confidential or inappropriate materials.

V. Message from County Executive

Executive Budish addressed the CACE and provided an update on the Cuyahoga County Diversion Center. The Diversion Center opened the week prior and is the first facility in Ohio. The Executive believes diversion will change the culture of criminal justice in Cuyahoga County. He explained police officers will be trained to identify eligibility for services and the Diversion Center will be used to treat addiction and mental health. The current location on 55th Street is temporary, and the County intends to create a larger facility within two years.

Member Sydnor asked who will track the racial makeup of the individuals served by the Diversion Center and if funding was available from the opioid settlement. Executive Budish responded he has requested to use opioid funding for the annual operations costs for at least the next five years. He also indicated racial data will be collected for the Diversion Center.

Member Grimes commented that prior to coming to the Diversion Center residents must be taken into custody safely and asked if efforts had been made to address interactions between police and residents during this process. Executive Budish discussed the program adopted by County Council to provide training on crisis intervention and minimizing the use of force. He explained this is separate from the County program to identify individuals eligible for the Diversion Center's services.

Chair Taylor requested an update on the American Rescue Plan funding allocated to the County.

Executive Budish stated more funds were recently added to the evictions rental assistance program. An additional 10 million dollars was added to the original 20 million dollars. Approximately 8,000 renters are impacted through the program.



VI. Update/Message from Chair

Chair Taylor requested information regarding the public's engagement with the CACE and asked if data regarding video views and website hits could be provided. Clerk Byrd will work with County IT to gather the information and report out during the June CACE Meeting.

VII. New Business

a. Approval of Minutes

Prior to the meeting the minutes for the 4/12/2021 meeting were distributed for the CACE's review and comment.

A motion to accept the minutes was made by Member McShepard. The motion was seconded by Member Mockabee. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

b. Public Comment Procedure

The Public Comment Procedure was addressed earlier during Chair Taylor's comments.

c. RFP for County-Wide Employee Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Training

Two members of the CACE agreed to participate in the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Training RFP Selection Panel. Three responses were received and the selection process is currently in progress.

Once the selection process is complete the members and Clerk Byrd will provide further details.

The participating Members provided brief comments regarding their experience on the panel. The members made suggestions to increase awareness of County bids including targeted outreach and bidder conferences. Member Mockabee complimented the project description included in the RFP and the selection process.



d. Department of Equity and Inclusion

Clerk Byrd provided an update on the ordinance establishing a Department of Equity and Inclusion which was introduced to County Council on 4/13/2021. The department would focus on equity related issues in contracting, employee training and other county business. The existing office of Procurement and Diversity would be dissolved and, in its place, would be the Department of Equity and Inclusion and the Department of Purchasing. The ordinance was referred to two committees, Public Works and Human Resources. On 5/4/2021, the Human Resources Committee voted in support of the legislation with sponsor support from Councilmembers Brown, Jones, Conwell and Sweeney. On 5/5/2021, the Public Works Committee voted in support of the legislation with Councilmembers Conwell and Sweeney adding their names in support of the legislation. The legislation will go to the full Council for second reading during the 5/11/2021 Council Meeting.

e. Cuyahoga County Equity Commission

Clerk Byrd provided an update from the April 15, 2021 Equity Commission Meeting.

The Equity Commission's members include representatives from Development, Public Safety, Health and Human Services, Human Resources, and Procurement and Diversity. During the meeting, each member provided updates on their agency's equity efforts.

The Department of Health and Human Services recently promoted shared Dr. Leon Harris who is now the agency's Assistant Director. In the Assistant Director position, Dr. Harris will focus on racial equity and inclusion work within the department.

Cari Morales, Program Manager of Equity and Economic Development, proposed a plan to distribute the GARE Employment Survey to County employees in January of 2022. She shared the Equity Commission's Working Group met with Milwaukee County regarding their equity efforts and they recommended Cuyahoga County deploy the GARE survey because it provides a baseline of employee information that can be compared to responses across the nation. The Equity Commission voted unanimously in favor of moving forward with the survey.

A GARE employee provided a presentation on the survey during the May 6, 2021 Equity Commission Working Group. Clerk Byrd's staff attended the meeting and provided an update. Key takeaways included:

- The survey tool is a standardized survey given to get a pulse of where people are and to serve as a baseline to engage and advance efforts towards racial equity.
- GARE sends the survey, tabulates the results, and provides a summary.
- The survey is meant to be administered every over year to display progress over time.



f. Subcommittee Chair Reports

i. Criminal Justice Subcommittee

Subcommittee Chair Pierce Lee provided an update on her subcommittee’s work. The members are continuing to meet and doing a deeper dive into disparities between White youth and Black and Brown youth. The subcommittee recently met with Sam Amata, Supervisor of the Juvenile Division of the Cuyahoga County Public Defender’s Office, and his colleague Leah Winsberg, Attorney for the Children’s Law Center. She explained the subcommittee will be working hard to see what they can do about the disparities and want to change the system. Member Chalker agree with the comments made and reiterated the need to address racial disparities in the juvenile system. Member Mockabee referenced work in prior years focusing on policing issues and interactions between youth and the police.

ii. Health and Healthcare Subcommittee

Subcommittee Chair Gullett provided an update on her subcommittee’s work. Member Gullett is researching the disproportionate rate of referrals and intake of Black and Brown residents to Child and Family Services. She also discussed the state’s Health Improvement Plan and explained there will be another report in July. Member Gullett also provided an update on the Kellogg grant opportunity which is now undergoing expert review.

iii. Equitable Quality of Life Subcommittee

Subcommittee Chair McShepard provided an update on his subcommittee’s work. Member McShepard provided an update on his work associated to Pay to Stay and Source of Income legislation. He is working with Clerk Byrd and County Law Director Huth to draft language for proposed legislation. Member McShepard will be meeting with Legal Aid to discuss the topic of eviction sealing. His subcommittee will also meet with Mike Foley, Director of Sustainability, and Mark McDermott, VP of Enterprise Community Partners, over the next few weeks.

iv. Economic Opportunity Subcommittee

Subcommittee Chair Caviness provided an update on his subcommittee’s work. The subcommittee is considering a focus on education. Member Caviness recently met with Matt Carroll, Chief Economic Growth and Opportunity Officer, to discuss the County’s role in education and thoughts around an education strategy and funding. The subcommittee is also



looking at the American Rescue Plan Act funding and opportunities to move projects forward through partnerships.

Member Mockabee explained the City of Cleveland equity council is also working on a plan to deploy the funds in a manner to move from racial inequity to racial equity. She will share more information over the next few weeks.

i. Communications Subcommittee

Subcommittee Chair Grimes provided an update on her subcommittee's work. She explained she accepted the Subcommittee Chair role. The subcommittee will convene and needs members. She provided an update on the youth toolkit developed by the CACE.

g. Update on Semi Annual Report

Chair Taylor explained the CACE has an upcoming deliverable associated to the next report.

The interim report will not be as detailed as the report prepared in December. The report will incorporate the summary from the Community Conversations, updates on subcommittee work since the last report, achievements realized since the last report, and future opportunities for community engagement.

h. Update from Dr. Peter Hovmand re Systems Mapping

Dr. Hovmand provided a brief update on his systems mapping work. He also highlighted a report provided to the CACE's members regarding design driven change to the legal system.

i. GARES Update

Clerk Byrd provided an update on GARE activity attended by her and her staff.

The April Monthly Membership meeting included a presentation by Benoy Jacob PhD and author of the leading-edge research report: *Governing for Racial Equity: Implementing an Equity Lens in Local Government*. Dr. Jacob has produced research on how local governments across the country are meeting the challenges of adapting a racial equity lens to day-to-day operations and effectively



building infrastructures for change. Clerk Byrd indicated the report would be distributed to all CACE members following the meeting.

Dr. Jacob's comments focused on how local government has a strong role in building equity. Following Dr. Jacobs presentation, the audience was provided an opportunity to ask questions. Dr. Jacob's answers touched upon the following:

- How the study detailed the importance of providing data to present an issue but how the data can only take you so far. There is a need for a qualitative narrative to support the data;
- How budgeting decisions impact equity;
- The need to alter mindsets to make change and the need to have places to show impact;
- The need for community engagement in developing equity plans and the need for embedding an equity lens across the government structure.

Clerk Byrd's staff also attended the GARE Monthly Membership call which provides members an opportunity to discuss issues and ask questions. The meeting was held the week of the Chauvin verdict and discussions focused on how to check in with coworkers and reflect on current event. There was also a discussion regarding training opportunities offered by GARE. The GARE representatives shared training will pause in early summer to revisit the curriculum.

The GARE Annual Conference is scheduled for May 19 – 21st. The three-day event will include presenters and breakout sessions regarding equity related topics. Clerk Byrd and her staff are attending and will provide an update on the presentations during the next meeting.

Chair Taylor sought comment from Clerk Byrd regarding the CACE's work and its alignment with the strategies outlined by Dr. Jacobs. Clerk Byrd responded the CACE's work does align, however; there is room for improvement in collecting data.

There was a discussion amongst the members regarding communications and outreach events. The CACE will seek opportunities to talk about the work they are doing. They highlighted the success of the City Club events and expressed an interest in reaching the broader community.

The members had a brief discussion regarding County Council's involvement and awareness of the CACE. Member LeVine stated County Council is always interested in hearing from the CACE on the work they are doing.

Member Gullett provided details regarding an upcoming Health Equity Summit she and Chair Taylor are participating in. She will share additional details regarding the event with the CACE's members and support staff.



VIII. Next meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for June 14, 2021 from 1:30 PM – 3:30 PM.

Member Contreras will share details regarding a May 21, 2021 event involving OPD Director Lenora Lockett.

IX. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:11 PM.