

Cuyahoga County Equity Commission Meeting

May 19, 2022, 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM

Cuyahoga County Administrative Building – Committee Room B

2079 East Ninth Street, 4th Floor

Cleveland, OH 44115

Cuyahoga County Equity Commission		
Last Name	First Name	Agency
Lockett	Lenora	Equity & Inclusion
Johnson	Vaughn	Development
Marshall	Sheba	Human Resources
Merriman	David	Health and Human Services
Burt	Melinda (Lindy)	Public Safety and Justice Services
Guests		
Budish	Armond	County Executive
Parks-Jackson	Sara	Development
Herdeg	Paul	Development
Bayne	Janise	Development
Flauto	Bob	Development
Miller	Adam	Equity & Inclusion

- I. Welcome
- II. Call to Order (10:07 am) – Director, David Merriman
 - a. Review & Approval of Minutes
 - Motion to approve made by Interim Director Burt, seconded by Deputy Director Johnson, minutes approved.
- III. Public Comment
 - There was no public comment.
- IV. Opening Remarks from Equity Commission Members
 - i. Interim Director Burt provided an update on the Public Safety and Justice Services Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee. They continue to move forward with County wide initiatives. Members of the Committee have agreed to serve as champions for the upcoming Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) Survey and the County wide Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Training. Work is also ongoing in establishing

Mission, Vision and Goals, as well as obtaining subject matter experts to speak at future Committee meetings.

- ii. Director Herdeg stated that internal training with the support of Kathy Jackson is continuing and is going well.
- iii. Deputy Director Johnson spoke on the status of the Small Business Support Grants. To date all four (4) agencies/organizations have received their grant funding with one (1) of these collaborating with the County in assisting small and minority owned businesses. Work is also continuing with regards to the banking institutions with regards to the City of East Cleveland and Arbor Park. There are three (3) credit union institutions that have expressed interest in opening a physical location. Deputy Director Johnson also stated that he has been provided direct technical assistance to minority commercial real estate developers to navigate and obtain information on what is required with such topics as property acquisitions.
- iv. Director Merriman spoke on the departure of Dr. Leon Harris who has taken a position at The Centers as Chief Diversity Officer. Work has started on filling an interim position for this vacancy. Director Merriman commented that work has been underway regarding the recruitment of staff for open positions via radio advertisements as well as other forms of media and hiring fairs. Director Merriman took this moment to personally thank Director Sheba Marshall and the Department of Human Resources for their work in recruitment of staff. He went on to say that filling these vacant positions is a high priority. Director Merriman closed with an update with regards to the RFP for the Ohio National Guard. The RFP has been closed and negotiations with the bidder has started. A focus on utilization of scholarship dollars and resources as well as the disparity and performance of the scholarship program will be addressed with the successful bidder.
- v. Director Marshall stated that work regarding recruitment strategies is ongoing with an emphasis on targeting all surrounding markets as well as continuing work on DEI initiatives by going directly into communities that tend to be marginalized to make them aware of the open opportunities with the County. Monthly meetings with internal DEI committee are ongoing. Committee members are championing County DEI Trainings and initiatives both within Human Resources and throughout the County.
- vi. Director Lockett reserved remarks for the agenda items.
- vii. County Executive Armond Budish thanked the Equity Commission for the work that they were doing. Executive Budish spoke on the focus utilizing ARPA dollars to fund diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives as well as several Economic Development programs. County Executive Budish also spoke on how Cuyahoga County has a history of working in the fields of DEI.

V. ARPA Funds & Equity – Part 1

- i. Director Herdeg stated that he believes the way that the County has approached utilizing ARPA funds should be the model for the public sector. The County had broad public engagement forums, a website dedicated to ARPA, internal debates, thoughtful and caring tracking as well as working with the legislative body. Director Herdeg expressed his thanks to the Department of Development staff.
- ii. Deputy Director Johnson spoke on the authorization of \$2 million in ARPA funds to be made available through a non-profit grants administrator that are selected on a competitive basis by a Small Business Grants Advisory Committee. This committee is to be made up of thirteen (13) small business experts from throughout Cuyahoga County. The committee will provide funds directly to small businesses with a focus on minority and women owned businesses. The advisory committee has been established and is working through the criteria, scoring, and grant amounts. There are five (5) organizations who have shown interest in serving as the grants and fiscal administrators. The timeline for the completion of this plan is to have all funds distributed by end of 2022.
- iii. Deputy Director Johnson introduced the three (3) members of the Development Team who will be discussing some of these specific programs.
 1. Brownfields- Janise Bayne
 - a. ARPA funds would assist with assessments and remediations incoming.
 - b. 75% request to State, would like to utilize 25% ARPA funds to match
 - c. Address contaminated substances, health & quality of life effects
 2. Lead- Sara Parks-Jackson
 - a. Lead in buildings built prior to 1978, as well as in pipes/plumbing fixtures, and soil
 - b. In the past partnered with the Board of Health to eliminate lead contaminates
 - c. \$1.8 million from ARPA would allow to remediate homes, removal of contaminates with a preference giving to homes with children under the age of six (6). Prevention

efforts would also be included to perform a comprehensive outreach campaign regarding factors such as elevated blood levels, asthma, as well as types of medical care and where it can be obtained.

- d. Moving forward with first read with Council on Tuesday, May 24, 2022, then on to Committee

3. Lead- Cleveland Water Alliance- Bob Flauto

- a. \$1.4 water economy by focusing on three (3) areas:
 - i. Water intensive industrial
 - ii. Water solutions
 - iii. Test beds and innovation-Parma test bed assets that would identify lead service lines and speed of replacement
- b. Intended to compliment the Cuyahoga County Lake Front Public Access program
- c. Part of the Cleveland Water Equity Taskforce to promote water equity in Greater Cleveland
- d. 2-years from execution of contract

4. Cuyahoga County Land Renewal Utilization Corporation (CCLRC)

- a. Matching funds to leverage for demolition of abandoned properties
- b. Combined w/CCLRC which will provide up to \$8 million to support the demolition/Brownfield assessment and remediation activities of up to 52 residential and commercial properties with an additional 440,00 square feet of blighted properties
- c. Improve environmental justice inequities as well as neighborhood health and boost property values
- d. CCLRC has history of utilizing minority and/or female owned businesses
- e. 3-years from execution of contract

5. Food Strong

- a. Cuyahoga County providing \$440,000 in efforts to revitalize vacant lots.

- b. Goal is to provide tools, supplies, equipment and other materials to create and sustain vacant lots.
- c. Urban Farm Renewal partnership project with Rid-All Green for redevelopment/restoration of vacant lots for community green spaces, garden, plant trees, maintenance, etc.
- d. High priority locations include Cleveland, Maple Heights, Euclid, South Euclid and East Cleveland
- e. Anticipated number of projects is 13 to 15 in Cleveland with an additional three (3) for each suburban community
- f. 1-year from execution of contract

6. Fund for Economic Future

- a. \$9 million dollars to be devoted to three (3) projects
 - i. Continuation of support to manufacturing sector partnership with an emphasis on returning/disadvantaged citizens, including Black & Latinx communities
 - ii. Internships with College level students which will focus on STEM in Black/Latinx communities
 - iii. Extension into suburban school districts which will embed career awareness into grades 6-12 curriculum. Strong goal of over 50% of participants will come from the Black/Latinx communities
- b. 3-years from execution of contract

7. Arts Initiative

- a. Cuyahoga Arts and Culture and Assembly of the Arts working with Cuyahoga County to provide \$1.65 million to support arts and culture throughout the County.
- b. These monies would be provided as direct grants to non-profit organizations. Anticipated assistance to 95 Cuyahoga County Arts/non-profit organizations.

- c. This would be a continuation of the 2020 \$3 million CARES Act funding.
- d. 70% of this funding would go to POC applicants
- e. Additional wording has been included for ARPA funding contracts to request all subcontractors include information on how they would advance work in diversity, equity and inclusion
- f. 1-year from execution of contract

8. Assembly for the Arts

- a. \$1.65 million to support American for the Arts (AFTA) as direct grants to local artists.
 - b. Anticipate funding 500 creatives and 40 businesses in Cuyahoga County
 - c. 1-year from execution of contract
- iv. Director Merriman wished to acknowledge amount of work the Development team has completed with regards to leveraging ARPA funds. He also wished to acknowledge Sara Parks-Jacksons work in DHHS response to COVID as well as homeless efforts
 - v. County Executive Budish also wished to acknowledge Sara Parks-Jackson, especially in regard to overseeing \$100 million in rental assistance funds. Executive Budish also spoke on the Water Project and how it could attract businesses to Cuyahoga County because of the large quantities of fresh water that many manufacturers need and are readily available in the area.
 - vi. Director Merriman asked to have the series of ARPA funding videos available on YouTube linked to meeting minutes:

American Rescue Plan Funding -Week 1: [American Rescue Plan Funding -- Week 1 - YouTube](#)

American Rescue Plan Funding – Week 2: [American Rescue Plan Funding -- Week 2 - YouTube](#)

American Rescue Plan Funding – Week 3: [American Rescue Plan Funding -- Week 3 - YouTube](#)

American Rescue Plan Funding – Week 4: [American Rescue Plan Funding -- Week 4 - YouTube](#)

VI. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Training- Update

- a. Director Lockett provided updates with regards to the upcoming training. She also wished to state her appreciation for those departments who have become department champions to get the word out.
 - i. 1st stage has been completed with executive leadership and focus groups
 - ii. Report from these meetings were provided to County Executive Budish on 4/15/22
 - iii. There will be three (3) townhalls scheduled to begin in August and to be completed by early November. These townhalls will cover three (3) topics and will be presented in seven (7) instances at various times to accommodate staff
 - iv. There are approximately 1400 County staff without laptops/computers, so physical locations are being coordinated with IT, Facilities, and Public Works to ensure all have a similar experience
 - v. An email was sent out to all County supervisors/leadership last week with regards to manager training. These will be conducted in two (2) cohorts, with homework assignments between relevant to discussions. All management cohorts should be completed by end of July.
 - vi. Work has begun with Communications to create a plan to communicate to all County employees regarding the training. An intranet page has been discussed which would grow as training progresses

VII. GARE Race and Equity Employee Survey – Update

- a. Director Lockett spoke on the rollout of the upcoming GARE survey
 - i. Survey is a free resource as part of the County membership and will assess understanding, knowledge, skills and awareness of County programs and initiatives
 - ii. Benefit of this first survey is that it would establish a baseline for future surveys that would be conducted every few years in which data would be developed and utilized for strategic planning
 - iii. Survey is scheduled to take place on June 21st and will be conducted by GARE
 - iv. Draft summary of survey results should be ready by late September with a final report available by October

- v. Champions are needed to emphasize the importance of the 40% participation goal suggested by GARE to ensure proper development of future strategies and initiatives
- vi. Work is ongoing with Sheriff's Office to provide time/opportunity for those with no computers/laptops chance for participation
- vii. Interim Director Burt requested clarification on how long survey would take. Director Lockett stated that the estimated time for completion is 10-15 minutes for the 50-question survey which would consist of approximately 45 multiple choice, 2 free flow and 3 GARE related questions.

VIII. Closing Remarks

- i. Director Herdeg stated that the value of County equity initiatives by providing the example of how the Arts & Cultural initiatives have added questions to participants on what they did regarding DEI initiatives based on Cuyahoga County ARPA funding questions
- ii. Director Merriman stated that there is value in maintaining a record/journal of work being conducted by Cuyahoga County regarding DEI initiatives and how the County institutionalizes our responses.
- iii. Director Marshall provided an update regarding the Tuition Reimbursement program and that it is set to go for a third reading on Tuesday, May 24, 2022.

IX. Adjourn (11: 08am)

Next Scheduled Meeting: July 21, 2022 @ 10:00am