



CUYAHOGA COUNTY CITIZENS' ADVISORY COUNCIL ON EQUITY  
Monday, February 14, 2022  
1:30 PM – 3:30 PM

**I. Call to Order**

Nailah K. Byrd called the meeting at 1:39 PM.

**II. Roll Call**

A quorum was present.

In Attendance-Eddie Taylor, Heidi Gullett, Marsha Mockabee, Habeebah Grimes, Glen Shumate, Randall McShepard, Victor Ruiz, Rev. Kenneth Chalker, Mayor Annette Blackwell, Stephen Caviness, Yanela Sims and Sheila Wright

Excused Absence- India Pierce Lee, Jenice Contreras and Sheila Wright

Clerk Byrd and Chair Taylor acknowledged Rabbi Josh Caruso's resignation and publicly thanked him for the work he has done with the Citizens' Advisory Council on Equity (CACE).

**III. Moment of Silence and Reflection**

Clerk Byrd recognized Black History Month and reflected on the contributions of Black people to this Country. She noted the recognition began in 1926 as a weeklong way to celebrate the accomplishments of Black people to American history.

Clerk Byrd reflected and recognized cultural contributions of Black people in literature, art, sports, science, and business. She concluded by challenging all to celebrate the contributions of Black people every day.



#### **IV. Public Comment**

Since the last meeting in December, two public comments were submitted via email to [equity@cuyahogacounty.us](mailto:equity@cuyahogacounty.us).

Clerk Byrd forwarded the email submitted in December to the CACE's members on December 16, 2021. The comment included a link on the Center for Community Solutions webpage to register for the HSAN: Importance of Knowing Racism's Impact on Public Health webinar which occurred on December 17, 2021. Clerk Byrd read the comment into the record.

The second comment was received earlier today from William Tarter. It concerned the decision of the ADAMHS board to remove the word racism from its declaration of racism as a public health crisis as well as from the working group title.

There were no requests for in person comments.

Chair Taylor asked Member Mockabee if she would like to make a comment into the record. Member Mockabee stated she supported the approach of the NAACP as detailed in Mr. Tarter's email. She furthered that racism is a public health crisis declared by the County and the City of Cleveland and discrimination is an action coming out of systemic racism that we are trying to address. She also stated one cannot replace the word racism with discrimination. The Urban League would like to see this not happen.

Member Grimes also commented that it is disheartening to see this happen.

Mayor Blackwell commented on a personal level and shared how she faces racism more in Maple Heights than she had in Mobile, Alabama where she is from.

#### **V. Message from County Executive**

Cuyahoga County Executive Budish stated Cuyahoga County is celebrating the achievements of its Black employees. The County has created a video of nine Black sororities and fraternities (Divine Nine). Many employees are members of these



organizations, and they made a lifelong commitment to bring positive change for Black people in the community. The County is very excited to share this video.

Executive Budish also stated for Black History month, the County is recording a podcast on the African American Civil Rights Trail. The podcast interviews several different local scholars and the President of the Cleveland Restoration Society regarding commemorating Black History. The County sponsored one of the markers on the trail, the Ludlow Community Association marker. There will be an event in October and all are invited to attend.

Executive Budish further detailed the County is creating blog posts and videos on Black leaders, Black entrepreneurs, and other memorable individuals with history in Cuyahoga County such as Jane Edna Hunter and Virgil E. Brown. Both have county buildings named after them.

## **VI. Update/Message from Chair**

Chair Taylor asked Executive Budish for an update on the ARPA funds. Executive Budish explained the administration has developed a plan/proposal for the ARPA money, which came from thousands of suggestions and input. The developed plan is now being discussed with County Council leadership. The administration anticipates the plan will be shared with the public soon.

Executive Budish stated the funds were made available last year. Funds need to be committed in four years and spent within six years. This is one time money, and the County wants to develop the best plan for deploying these funds. Executive Budish stressed the funds are designed to help people. The County does not want to waste six years. Instead the money must be distributed as soon as possible. This is a limited fund of 240 million dollars.

Member Caviness expressed the concern of the Infrastructure Bill and how that pertains to ARPA funds. Executive Budish hoped to get additional guidance on expenditures.



A couple months ago the federal government issued a final rule on the ARPA law answering many of the County's questions. The County is in the process of hiring an attorney (with County Council's approval) to provide additional expertise on the ARPA law, and what the money can and cannot be used for.

Executive Budish stated the Infrastructure Bill has more limitations than ARPA funds. The County does not want to use ARPA funds for something that can be used under the Infrastructure Bill. The County does not want to miss out on spending eligible dollars. Executive Budish asked County Council to approve the hiring of a grant manager to assist with ways to deploy the funds.

Chair Taylor asked for an update from Executive Budish on the renovations or developments with the Guardians facilities, the Lakefront and the County Jail. Executive Budish stated there is much happening in the County. Infrastructure is one, and the County is very focused on equity and inclusion in these projects. The work is done on the Progressive Field deal with the Guardians and it is starting to move forward. Executive Budish stated that a new County jail is a must, with an approximate cost of 550 million dollars.

Executive Budish shared there are huge costs coming up and no decisions have been made on the physical infrastructures within the County.

Chair Taylor stated that CACE will be proponents for the good work of equity within these projects.

## **VII. New Business**

### **a. Approval of Minutes**

A motion was made by Member Mayor Blackwell and seconded by Member McShepard to approve the previously distributed minutes. There was no discussion, and no one opposed the motion. The motion was carried, and the minutes were approved.



b. **Update from the Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services (ADAMHS) Board of Cuyahoga County**

The Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services (ADAMHS) Board of Cuyahoga County is one of 50 boards in Ohio mandated to organize the public mental health and addiction treatment and recovery system across the state. The primary responsibility of the ADAMHS Board is to ensure public mental health, addiction treatment and recovery services are provided to Cuyahoga County residents. The board is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors and chaired by Rev. Benjamin F. Gohlstein, Sr.

On June 5, 2020, the ADAMHS Board of Cuyahoga County signed a statewide declaration declaring racism a public health crisis as a member of the Ohio Association of County Behavioral Health Authorities. On June 24, 2020, the ADAMHS Board of Directors passed Resolution Number 20-06-01 declaring racism a public health crisis.

A workgroup was created under the ADAMHS Board initiatives to address the items outlined in that resolution.

On November 1, 2021, there was a request to change the name of the work group from the Eliminating Structural Racism in Behavioral Health Care Work Group to the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Behavioral Health Care Work Group. It was Clerk Byrd's understanding the suggestion derived from the thought that by using the word "racism" in the work group title, the work group could divert attention from unity and not address the actual problem, which the work group believes is discrimination and bigotry based on race and ethnicity. On November 17, 2021, the ADAMHS Board voted to change the name of the work group.

Additionally, on February 7, 2022 *The Land* newsletter published an article titled "County mental health board backtracks on 'Racism is a public health crisis' declaration." The article offers various perspectives on the thoughts of community members regarding the removal of the word "racism" from the ADAMHS Board Resolution as well as the name change of the ADAMHS Board work group and the ADAMHS Board strategic plan.



Clare Rosser, Chief of Strategic Initiatives for the ADAMHS Board and coworker Star Sizemore, Director of Special Projects presented on behalf of the ADAMHS Board. Ms. Rosser shared comments and provided further information regarding the ADAMHS Board Resolution and the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Behavioral Health Care Work Group.

The CACE will invite CEO and Board Chair Rev. Benjamin Gohlstein to an upcoming meeting to provide further details on the name change.

**c. Update from Cuyahoga County Board of Health**

The Cuyahoga County Board of Health has partnered with the Cleveland Department of Public Health to complete a “Source of Income” Issue Brief. They have also finalized a letter from the Health Commissioners of both Health Departments.

Interim Co-Director of Prevention and Wellness Martha Halko from the Cuyahoga County Board of Health was joined by 3 presenters: Roger Sikes from the Cuyahoga County Board of Health, Lita-Marie Wills from the Cleveland Department of Public Health and Naimah O’Neil from the Ryan White Planning Council. They shared additional information regarding the “Source of Income” Issue Brief.

**d. Update on Tuition Reimbursement**

Cuyahoga County is in the process of developing a tuition reimbursement program and policy for County employees. Three schools responded to the RFP issued. Each shared a willingness to provide discounted tuition rates for Cuyahoga County employees. Those three schools are Tri C, Cleveland State University and Balwin Wallace.

At the end of 2021, Cuyahoga County Council passed the budget which included an allocation of money for the Tuition Reimbursement Program.

The goal, according to Interim Chief Marshall, is to have the program in effect by summer 2022. According to Interim Chief Marshall, the County is hoping to solidify this week what these schools are willing to offer. There is 1.2 million dollars set aside for this program.



**e. Update on County Statement on Diversity**

As reported during the November CACE meeting, former Chief Drucker previously reviewed the current statement on diversity with an internal Human Resource Committee and the final version was forthcoming. However, after the resignation of Jesse Drucker, Sheba Marshall transitioned into the role of Interim Chief of Human Resources.

Chief Marshall shared she likes the Statement on Diversity provided in the Cuyahoga County Employee Handbook. She read the statement.

**f. Update on RFP for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Training**

Cuyahoga Community College was selected to provide Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) training.

On January 10, 2022, the Cuyahoga County Board of Control met, discussed, and approved a contract with Cuyahoga Community College in the amount not-to-exceed \$277,800.00 for diversity, equity and inclusion consulting services for the period of 2/1/2022-6/30/2023.

The DEI Training Project is currently in Phase one. This phase includes a stakeholder analysis from leadership and County staff. According to Cuyahoga County Department of Equity and Inclusion Director Lockett, the goal is for each focus group to encompass a diverse representation from each department under County Executive authority.

Phase one will include a 60–90-minute virtual meeting with the focus groups. The meetings are tentatively scheduled between February 14<sup>th</sup> and March 16<sup>th</sup>. Director Lockett will provide information to Clerk Byrd for dissemination to CACE.

Director Lockett is currently compiling a list of County volunteers who wish to serve on one of the five focus groups. Members of the Citizens' Advisory Council on Equity were extended an invitation to participate as volunteers in these focus groups.



Clerk Byrd and Director Lockett thanked Member Shumate for volunteering to serve on a focus group as a CACE representative.

**g. Update from Department of Equity and Inclusion**

Director Lenora Lockett shared updates regarding the Department of Equity and Inclusion. Director Lockett was joined by Jennifer Wilson, Contract Compliance Officer for the Department of Equity and Inclusion.

Jennifer Wilson introduced herself and shared her background.

**h. Update Cuyahoga County Equity Commission**

The Cuyahoga Equity Commission met on December 16, 2021 and January 20, 2022. Director Lockett shared the Equity report was released on Jan 31, 2022.

**i. Resolution Opposing House Bills 322 and 327**

Chair Taylor stated there is no new action to be discussed.

**j. Ohio's New Congressional Districts and Redistricting Update**

Due to time constraints, Clerk Byrd provided this update to the CACE via email.

**k. Systems Mapping Update**

Dr. Hovmand was not present, and thus he did not provide an update.

**l. Subcommittee Chair Reports**

**i. Criminal Justice Subcommittee**

Subcommittee Chair Pierce-Lee was not present. Member Rev. Chalker shared his appreciation for the work contributed by Rabbi Caruso. The committee is restructuring and thinking about their next approach.





## **ii. Health and Healthcare Subcommittee**

Subcommittee Chair Gullett shared she is beginning work on the 2022 Cuyahoga County Community Assessment and subcommittee members are part of the workgroup. She also invited other interested CACE members to join. There will be a series of interviews of Health and Public Health Leaders to gather data and information which will be helpful for this subcommittee.

An assessment will be done between now and August. Then there will be a prioritization phase of health priorities for the next three years.

Also, the committee is continuing to work on the mapping and modeling. Dr. Hovmand will provide the group an update during the next meeting.

## **iii. Equitable Quality of Life Subcommittee**

Subcommittee Chair McShepard shared the committee was contacted by CWRU Swetland Center for Environmental Health and provided a document titled Menu of Actions for Community Driven Food Systems Change. He believes CACE should read the document.

Subcommittee Chair McShepard furthered the document is fantastic and contains excellent DEI language. He provided an example from the document that instead of food desserts, the language should be food apartheid because food desserts speak to lack of supermarkets. When discussing lack of access to foods, structural issues must also be part of the conversation.

The document was previously distributed to the CACE and will be emailed again. Subcommittee Chair McShepard would like to invite the document's author, Dr. Friedman to present to CACE at an upcoming meeting.



#### **iv. Economic Opportunity Subcommittee**

Subcommittee Chair Caviness shared his committee met with members of the Cuyahoga County Workforce Development Board to discuss its current structure and if it should change. He also mentioned having further conversations regarding East Cleveland.

Chair Taylor stated there will be an upcoming meeting with all subcommittee chairs.

#### **v. Communications Subcommittee**

Subcommittee Chair Grimes shared the committee facilitated a training on the Youth Toolkit in partnership with the Cuyahoga County Youth Initiative Director Cheryl Oates. The training was recorded and was shared with CACE. According to Subcommittee Chair Grimes the next step is to determine how to reengage folks due to institutional stresses that have resurfaced. The toolkit will also help inform Dr. Hovmand's Systems' Mapping Tool. Subcommittee Chair Grimes also stated the work on the community survey continues and the committee hopes to distribute the document to the community soon.

#### **m. GARE Update**

Due to time constraints, Clerk Byrd provided this update to the CACE via email.

### **VIII. Next meeting**

The next meeting will be held on March 14<sup>th</sup>, from 1:30-3:30 PM.

If you are unable to attend any meetings, please contact Clerk Byrd for purposes of ensuring a quorum.

### **IX. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:43 PM.