



CUYAHOGA COUNTY CITIZENS' ADVISORY COUNCIL ON EQUITY
Tuesday, July 19, 2022
10 AM – 12 PM

I. Call to Order

Chair Taylor called the meeting to order at 10:09 AM.

Chair Taylor stated the meeting does not have a quorum and would therefore, be conducted informally. He then asked for the guests in the room to introduce themselves.

The non- member meeting attendees included; County Councilwoman Yvonne Conwell (District 7 and Health and Human Services Chair), County Councilwoman Meredith Turner (District 9), Director of Equity and Inclusion Lenora Lockett, Law Director Greg Huth, Deputy Director for Economic Development Vaughn Johnson, Director of Development Paul Herdeg, Deputy Director of Housing and Community Development Sara Parks Jackson, Interim Chief of Human Resource Sheba Marshall, and William Tarter, Jr. from the Center for Community Solutions Inc.

II. Roll Call

In Attendance- Eddie Taylor, Colleen Cotter, Rev. Kenneth Chalker, India Pierce- Lee, LeVine Ross, Glen Shumate, Annette Blackwell and Yanela Sims.

Excused Absence- Stephen Caviness, Jeniece Contreras, Habeebah Grimes, Heidi Gullett, Randell McShepard, Marsha Mockabee, and Sheila Wright.

Clerk Byrd provided a brief introduction and warm welcome to the newest member of the CACE, Executive Director of the Legal Aid Society of Cleveland, Colleen Cotter.



In addition, Clerk Byrd shared Member Victor Ruiz resigned from the CACE. She thanked him for his work and dedication to the Equitable Quality of Life and Communications Subcommittees.

Clerk Byrd also shared there are currently two vacancies on the CACE. Executive Budish nominated Dr. Charles Modlin for one of the vacancies. Dr. Modlin will appear before the Cuyahoga County Council Human Resources, Equity and Appointments Committee for confirmation prior to his appointment to the CACE. Clerk Byrd requested CACE members submit recommendations of individuals to serve on the CACE to her.

III. Moment of Silence and Reflection

Clerk Byrd shared details of the recent fatal shooting in Akron, Ohio of Jayland Edward Walker. A brief moment of reflection and a silent prayer followed.

IV. Public Comment

There were no public comments submitted via email to equity@cuyahogacounty.us since the April 2022 meeting. In addition, no public comments were received during the meeting.

v. Update/Message from Chair

Chair Taylor announced that Executive Budish heard and responded to CACE's request for funding to help with equity efforts.

Chair Taylor shared a brief overview of the need for CACE funding. He believes the funding will assist in reenergizing and recharging the work of CACE. The funding could also be used for a number of CACE equity efforts including, but not limited to; report writing, survey work, and/or community engagement. Chair Taylor added he hopes the CACE can provide an update to the Status Report to the Community originally issued in 2020.



VI. Message from County Executive

Cuyahoga County Executive Budish shared the funding request for CACE has not yet been presented before County Council for their approval, but he is hopeful that will occur.

Executive Budish detailed updates regarding the County's employee wide Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) training. According to Executive Budish, the trainings are the result of a partnership between Cuyahoga County and Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C) and consist of three 90-minute sessions conducted in a town hall format beginning in August 2022.

Executive Budish also provided an update regarding the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) Survey distributed to County employees. The voluntary survey will close on Friday, July 22nd and the results will be kept confidential and stored by GARE. Once the survey closes, GARE will provide a survey report to the County. Executive Budish proudly announced the County met the completion goal of 40 percent. He thanked Director Lockett for leading the GARE survey efforts.

The Executive also updated the CACE on the Cuyahoga County Tuition Assistance Program approved by County Council and offered through Baldwin Wallace University, Cleveland State University and Tri-C. Beginning this fall, County employees who have completed a minimum of one year of employment can participate in this voluntary program. Participants will be reimbursed up to \$3,600.00 per calendar year for graduate or undergraduate studies. According to Executive Budish, the program is designed to help county employees achieve their goals, enhance their skills, and develop careers through experience and education. Executive Budish anticipates the program this will improve recruitment, retention, and productivity.

Executive Budish also discussed the new Interim Cuyahoga County Sheriff Steve Hammond. Interim Sheriff Hammond, an African American man, attended a meet and greet Pastors luncheon with Executive Budish and Clerk Byrd held at Greater Abyssinia Church. According to Executive Budish, this event was well received.



Councilwoman Conwell asked if the Council could participate in the GARE survey. Director Lockett responded although there was not a specific request for Council to participate in the survey, the link to the survey is available on the County intranet. Councilwoman Turner confirmed she received an email regarding the survey.

Councilwoman Conwell also asked if Council members could attend the County DEI trainings. Director Lockett confirmed Cuyahoga County Council Chief of Staff Joseph Nanni received the training information. Nonetheless, Director Lockett agreed to confirm the information was forwarded to County Council. Clerk Byrd also added during the planning process for the DEI training, Clerk Byrd reached out to Mr. Nanni to invite Council staff to participate in the training. Member Ross added she believed the Council Staff Managers are currently in the midst of training and later their employees, including herself, would receive communication about attending the town hall sessions.

Chair Taylor thanked Member Ross for helping to make the connection with County Council. He also thanked Councilwoman Conwell and Councilwoman Turner for attending the meeting today.

Member Blackwell asked if the Interim Sheriff could attend the Mayors and Managers Meeting for an introduction to local mayors, managers and police chiefs. Executive Budish responded there are regular meetings with the Sheriff and local law enforcement through the Department of Public Safety, but he does not see an issue with scheduling the Interim Sheriff to meet with Mayors and city leaders.

Chair Taylor referenced a meeting held with civil rights leaders who recently visited the County. He asked Executive Budish how the meeting may have influenced the thinking in the County. Executive Budish shared that although he did not attend that meeting, the County places a heavy emphasis on equity and inclusion in all projects. Executive Budish also shared the County contributed funds to the Sherwin Williams project.

Member Shumate shared he had questions regarding where the County invests its money. He is concerned about the appearance of a disconnection when “deals” are announced to the public without details of commitments from the awarded



organization or partnering businesses. Member Shumate asked if the agencies or organizations where the County makes board appointments, already has, or should have equity and inclusion standards? Are they expected to advance equity and inclusion? Do they carry a similar mission to the County in the area of equity? Member Shumate stated there is a need to address these questions early and provide reassurance to the public to dissipate concerns. Additionally, he also has interest in exploring how the overall process can be improved in the future.

In response, Director Lockett stated the County hopes to continue progressing internally and to also serve as a model to other jurisdictions. She added for every major opportunity where there has been a requirement for an equity component, there has also been a community benefits agreement. Director Lockett confirmed the County does not currently have an equity statement, guideline or template for organizations seeking to do business with the County. Currently, these requirements are outlined and delivered on a case by case basis. However, Director Lockett conceded this could be viewed as inefficient, and she believes this is something that should be reevaluated.

Executive Budish added there were lengthy discussions and commitments made regarding equity and inclusion with the Rocket Mortgage Field House and the Progressive Field deals. If one reviewed the completed work, one would be reassured both groups honored their commitments. Executive Budish did not have much detail but was aware of the significant difference of opinion shared regarding equity and inclusion playing a role in the process.

Chair Taylor suggested this may be a topic to reengage when Member Mockabee is present based on the involvement of the Urban League. He believes an equity commitment question should be asked of agencies or organizations or board appointees in advance of finalizing agreements, commitments, or partnerships. Executive Budish added County Council members ask extensive equity related questions when items are reviewed during Council Committee Meetings.

Member Shumate shared when the ballpark discussions began, it was supported by the County and the City. However, there was nothing to outline or verify if there will be inclusion in the project. What will inclusion, include? Executive Budish disagreed and shared there were commitments made. Member Shumate continued to explain



while commitments were made, the media did not share the details. He questioned if there was a set of standards to base funding efforts so the public would have greater understanding and may refrain from questioning every action taken.

Chair Taylor shared part of the issue Member Shumate is expounding upon is a responsibility of the CACE. He added this could be an area, if CACE received funding, to post on the website or review shortfalls in the community. Chair Taylor said the CACE has a duty to be objective. He also said the CACE can make recommendations.

Member Sims stated the CACE was not created when the Sherwin Williams deal closed. Equity and Inclusion means different things for different people. She asked how can the CACE produce standards, questions and/or processes that could impact future projects. Chair Taylor reminded the CACE, this council can recommend, but they cannot enforce action on those recommendations. Despite the inability of the CACE to enforce recommendations, there is still great impact. Those recommendations lead to incremental change. According to Chair Taylor, an example of the incremental change are the County Executive Orders, as well as the development and hiring of staff for the Department of Equity and Inclusion.

Director Lockett will send the list of requirements for County projects to Clerk Byrd for distribution to CACE.

Member Sims asked what can be done if the project is not County led but required County funding. Executive Budish shared the County can refuse to fund the project. Chair Taylor added regardless of the level of funding, this issue is still a balancing act. He suggested the possibility of adding stipulations to say, “here is the stipulation. Can you honor these?”

Member Blackwell briefly shared there is not always a requirement of a commitment to diversity for companies or organizations. She believes there is a need to hold companies accountable and help implement change if necessary for successful outcomes. Member Blackwell said we can’t just talk about it; the organizations need to have measurable goals to track achievement.



VII. New Business

a. ARPA Funding Update

Director of Development, Paul Herdeg shared a presentation regarding the County's ARPA Funding. A copy of the presentation was distributed to each member of CACE.

Following the comprehensive overview of ARPA funding there were a few comments/questions.

- Chair Taylor invited Ms. Parks Jackson to return to a future CACE meeting in a few months with the African American Women developers participating in Affordable Housing Gap Financing to present and share details about their experience (i.e., challenges, successes, future needs, etc.).
- Chair Taylor added it would be helpful to publicly post pictures and other information on these programs both before and after use of the funds to keep the community informed (via website or other avenues of communication).
- Ms. Parks Jackson confirmed the Department of Development tracks fund use.
- The associated email address for the Small Business Grants is Smallbusinessgrants@cuyahogacounty.us. This email address can be used to request notification when a grant window of interest opens.
- Executive Budish stated bonus points are allotted for minority businesses who apply for these funds.
- Chair Taylor highlighted this particular item, because this is the only funded area without a corresponding relationship to equity focused points of interest (i.e. racial identification, specified number of minorities hired, etc.). He suggested consideration be given to seeking to invite minority entrepreneurs and minority businesses to come to the County.
- Member Cotter asked if the amount of each internship is \$2,000. She expressed concerns about the low wage of what appeared to be \$2,000 per internship. Director Herdeg confirmed the employers are also contributing funds to increase the wages for the interns.



- Executive Budish added Ms. Parks Jackson is the leader he previously referenced in prior CACE meetings who is in charge of the \$100 million rental assistance funds.

b. Update from the Department of Human Resources

Interim Chief Marshall did not have any updates to share.

c. Update from Department of Equity and Inclusion

Director Lockett did not have any updates regarding her department to share.

She shared, the Equity Commission invited a number of County Department Leaders to discuss the anticipated use of ARPA funds. The most recent presentation was from the Department of Development.

Chair Taylor requested a meeting with the CACE Subcommittee Co-Chairs and the Equity Commission. Director Lockett agreed.

d. Resolution Opposing House Bills 322 and 327

Clerk Byrd shared to date there has been no additional movement on these bills. The next step is for the bills to be voted out of the House. If and when that happens, the bills will then move to the Senate for hearings and voting. However, movement on these bills is not anticipated, as the legislators are not scheduled to return to session until after the November primary.

Councilwoman Conwell asked if the representatives who introduced the bills are facing opposition in the upcoming election? Clerk Byrd agreed to research and provide Councilwoman Conwell and update.

Councilwoman Turner requested a copy of the Resolution CACE drafted in opposition to these bills. Clerk Byrd agreed to provide Councilwoman Turner with a copy of the resolution.



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

Clerk Byrd shared the primary date for general assembly candidates is confirmed.

She furthered that Congressional Maps were challenged a few times but a primary election occurred earlier this May. However, there is an Ohio Supreme Court Case still pending and it is unknown whether these maps will remain the same or be redrawn.

Clerk Byrd also stated that in regard to the State District Maps, there is a lawsuit pending in the Ohio Supreme Court. But because no decision was made, the Federal Court intervened. The maps were ruled unconstitutional five times. At some point the Federal Court provided a deadline to approve constitutional maps. That deadline was not met. The Federal Court then mandated the Court move forward with the 3rd version of the map, as it was deemed the "most constitutional" of the submitted versions. However, work continues to develop new constitutional maps. Voters will vote based on the 3rd set of maps in the August election.

Councilwoman Conwell asked if this issue would result in the filing of lawsuits. Clerk Byrd confirmed there have been lawsuits filed.

Following this update, guest audience member William Tarter, Jr. shared the Supreme Court ruled moments prior that the maps were unconstitutional. New maps must be drawn within 30 days. The new maps will be for the 2024 election.

As always, Clerk Byrd promised to continue to keep CACE updated regarding the congressional maps.

f. **Systems Mapping Update**

Dr. Hovmand was not present to provide an update. However, Clerk Byrd shared he is continuing to receive interview notes so he can map solutions and leverage points based on subcommittee discussions. In addition, Dr. Hovmand recently attended the



CACE Communications Subcommittee meeting to discuss how he can further his contributions to the creation and public distribution of systems mapping materials.

g. Update on RFP for CACE Community Survey

Clerk Byrd shared the CACE Communications Subcommittee requested an RFP be issued to select a vendor to assist with the dissemination of the Community Survey and aggregation of data collected. The RFP opened for bids on July 1st and closed July 15th. Four proposals were received and each is currently under review with the Communications' Subcommittee. Once a final decision is made, an award recipient will be selected.

Member Ross asked once the survey is distributed and the results are aggregated, what would CACE do with the collected information? Will the results be presented to the community? She made reference to the Community Conversation and shared in her opinion little was done with those results. Chair Taylor responded by saying it can feel like the CACE had not done enough, but much was garnered from the results of the community conversations. However, Chair Taylor also shared there should be a next level of action to show change and get broader engagement.

Clerk Byrd will provide updates as the process moves forward.

h. Subcommittee Chair Reports

i. Criminal Justice Subcommittee

Subcommittee Chair Pierce-Lee did not have an update to provide.

ii. Health and Healthcare Subcommittee

Subcommittee Chair Gullett was absent. However, she provided her update electronically which Clerk Byrd read:



For my update, our 2022 Cuyahoga County community health assessment is nearly complete. We will have a series of public meetings in August for prioritization of the focus areas for the next 3 year community Health improvement plan (2023-2026) which I will send along to publicize. In those meetings, we will review our assessment findings and obtain public input on priorities. We are also planning for fall workshops based on our mapping work to function as work sessions to identify the next steps for action based on those priorities. We can talk more soon about what role you would like/format for CACE and broader county staff participation. We can be creative as Peter and my team will run these so we don't need outside funding. I was hoping we could also discuss with Lenora and her team.

I again sincerely apologize for missing today's important meeting. Please give my best to our CACE committee.

iii. Equitable Quality of Life Subcommittee

Subcommittee Chair McShepard was absent. However, he provided his update electronically which Clerk Byrd read:

While there is no formal report from the "Quality of Life" Subcommittee, I would like to possibly have a future speaker or literacy review on a couple of topics that fall under our purview. The first would be a possible report on the new tax abatement policy recently announced by the City of Cleveland and to understand if and how that might impact housing opportunities in Cleveland...particularly on the Southeast side. Secondly, the Fund for Our Economic Future, Deaconess Foundation and several other community partners just released the "Where are the Workers" report aimed at understanding why so many workers have disappeared from the workforce. I think it would behoove CACE to study that report and to glean what factors might be at play such as transportation which falls under my committee, health which falls under the health committee and workforce development which falls under the economic opportunity committee.

iv. Economic Opportunity Subcommittee



Subcommittee Chair Caviness was absent. No report or update was shared regarding the work of this subcommittee.

v. Communications Subcommittee

Subcommittee Chair Grimes was absent. No report or update was shared regarding the work of this subcommittee.

i. Miscellaneous Business

Member Cotter thanked everyone for welcoming her to the CACE and shared she looks forward to working with the membership to improve equity issues. In closing, she said she hopes to learn more about the work of each subcommittee to see where she could best be of service.

Rev. Chalker said he was very excited about the possible funds CACE may receive. He shared his thoughts regarding next steps after receiving funds. He suggested the CACE, through Chair Taylor, request time to meet with the Editorial Board at the Plain Dealer to discuss the Council's work and recommendations. Chair Taylor added he thought the idea was great.

j. GARE Update

Clerk Byrd provided the GARE update. She shared, GARE held their Annual Meeting on April 19, 2022 and two GARE Monthly Meeting were held on May 23, 2022 and June 27, 2022.

Clerk Byrd detailed highlights from the May 23rd meeting which included a presentation from Adam Arvidson, Director of Strategic Planning for the Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board.



She also discussed the June 27, 2022 monthly meeting which included a panel discussion. During the meeting, Race Forward Vice President Cathy Albisa, Community Services Director James Green, Community Planning and Partnerships Lead Marsha Guthrie and Race Forward Senior Fellow James Haslam shared an overview of pivotal points in history and discussed important legal topics during the meeting.

VIII. Next meeting

Both Clerk Byrd and Chair Taylor discussed the possibility of rescheduling the August monthly meeting. More information to follow via email.

IX. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:57 AM.