

Cuyahoga County Equity Commission Meeting

January 19, 2023, 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM

Cuyahoga County Administrative Building – Room 5-006

2079 East Ninth Street, 5th 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 |
| Smialek | Jill | Public Safety and Justice Services |
| Calovini | Daune | Department of Communications |
| Gallagher | Katie | Office of the Executive |

- I. Welcome
- II. Call to Order (10:07 am) – Director, David Merriman
 - a. Review & Approval of Minutes
 - Minutes approved: Motion to approve by Deputy Director Johnson, seconded by Interim/Deputy Director Smialek.
- III. Public Comment
 - There was no public comment.
- IV. Opening Remarks from Equity Commission Members
 - i. Deputy Director Johnson spoke on the Direct Stimulus Grant Program. Out of 4300 applicants, 67 businesses were awarded a total of \$2 million dollars with \$1.827 million going directly to minority owned businesses. The second phase of this program would be an advisory committee that will reach out to those who were not awarded grants to assist in receiving grants, low interest loans as well as technical assistance. Cuyahoga County met with several municipalities, mayors and chambers of commerce to discuss how Cuyahoga County supports MBE businesses. An upcoming meeting will occur next week in Hillcrest. Ongoing work was also discussed with Cleveland City Councilman Starr with regards to the Central Surge Program. Department of Development and Department of Communications worked on several noteworthy news stories which aired on Channel 19 and Fox News which highlighted several businesses, Engels

Bar & Grill, Pipe’N Hot Grill and Archie’s Hough Bakery, which were awarded monies from the Direct Stimulus Grant Program. Director Lockett spoke on the County’s Forecast Program during the Channel 19 interview. Deputy Director Johnson stated the work is ongoing with a series of in-person meetings with the Developer’s Collaboration. The SkillUp Program was also discussed and how the Business Growth Collaborative can support SBEs and the number of referrals to bring on board. Discussions also took place regarding SkillUp 2.0 and how the program could continue to evolve.

- ii. Director Merriman spoke on the partnership with Human Resources for a recent hiring event for Jobs and Family Services. There were over 230 registrants with 70 conditional offers being made. Director Merriman also spoke on the upcoming changes in the SNAP Program by the State of Ohio. The maximum number of monies that were being received during COVID-19 will begin to be rolled back beginning next month. The County provided up to \$53 million in additional funding per month to assist with the cost of inflation, which will now be reduced to around \$30 million. The extra benefits allotted to Medicaid recipients will also be coming to an end. Interim Director Marshall mentioned that the State did do some broad communications regarding these changes. Director Merriman responded that one of the major hurdles with these communications was the amount of legal verbiage included in these communications which may create additional areas of concerns.
- iii. Director Lockett spoke on the continued efforts which will be occurring throughout 2023. The What’s Next Initiative is a follow-up to the county wide equity training which will keep all levels of the workforce engaged. While a training similar to what occurred is not planned for the upcoming year, a mid-year equity summit will take place. The Department of Equity and Inclusion has also planned on reaching out to departments to conduct outreach for a series of ‘drop-in’ meetings. The department will also be working on increasing recruitment of small and minority owned businesses, especially targeting those who would align closely with the County Forecast. Deputy Director Johnson inquired as to if DEI has reciprocity agreements with other local entities. Director Lockett responded that conversations have been taking place with the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority, Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District, and the City of Cleveland on the possibility of reciprocity agreements. Currently, the law department for the City of Cleveland is reviewing requirements by the County that were provided to them.
- iv. Interim Deputy Director Smialek stated that the Public Safety and Justice Services will be reconvening their DEI committee which was temporarily suspended due to holidays. In this committee, they will be utilizing the DEI Scorecard as a guide to ensure progress is being made. There will also be a

peer-to-peer conversation model created so that all can come together to continue the dialog. Staff qualifications will also continue to be reviewed to open a wider pool of applicants. An RFP with the Medical Examiner's Office as well as County Council has been moving forward to find qualified vendors for an opioid outreach program. There will be an emphasis on finding a qualified vendor that is certified as a small, women or minority owned business to ensure messages are reaching the intended audience.

- v. Interim Director Marshall stated that work is ongoing with regards to classifications and reviewing what positions may not require a college degree or where work experience may replace requirement. Human Resources is looking to increase awareness of the Tuition Waiver Program for employees. To date there were 24 individuals who have taken advantage of the program. Hiring events will continue with an eye on locations that are accessible after hours, or on bus lines. Human Resources is also looking to create more additional community partnerships to increase awareness and interest.

V. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Training-Update

- i. Director Lockett provided data on the DEI training which wrapped up in November 2022. There were 626 individuals who completed management training #1, 599 for management training #2, 2,703 participants for townhall #1, 2,582 participants for townhall #2 and 2,685 for townhall #3.
- ii. Director Lockett also wished to express her gratitude to the Sheriff's Department for providing security services, Public Works for site assistance, and Communications who got the word out via emails as well as In The Know.
- iii. The next stage in the process is to work with Human Resources to tailor specific trainings for new hires or those who are newly promoted. These trainings would be smaller in scale and would be facilitated by an outside expert.
- iv. Director Merriman provided feedback with regards to the extended call center wait times during the initial training due to participation. He stated that it would be beneficial for future plans to think about having more frequent smaller/reduced hour trainings to ensure service.

VI. Annual Equity Report (publication deadline 1/31/2023)-Update

- i. Director Lockett provided updates on the equity report which will be completed by January 31, 2023. The current push is to include all departments and how they are looking to advance equity. This report will be the first report which will go beyond the initial five (5) pilot agencies.

- ii. Director Merriman inquired on the Equity Commission Working Group asking if there will be a final review of the report for any last minute changes. He stated that he highly encourages everyone to read the report once it is published and that he is looking forward to hearing feedback from the working group. Director Merriman also stated that this report would be essential for the incoming County Executive and his office to see what work departments have and will be working on with regards to equity and inclusion.
- iii. Daune wished to thank Director Lockett for all of her work especially in facilitating webinars to the departments to assist with any questions on how to complete their summaries for the report.

VII. Closing Remarks

- i. Interim Director Marshall stated that she is excited about the DEI Steering Committee programs for what's next regarding equity and inclusion programming.
- ii. Interim Deputy Director Smialek stated that she is excited to see that the County is working towards a common goal, and wished to express her gratitude to Director Lockett for all her work.
- iii. Director Lockett stated that she was excited about the progress noting that there is still a long way to go. She reminded the commission that the working group meets during the alternate months of the commission. There will be a repeat presentation by College Now during the next Equity Commission Meeting regarding the annual need for recruiting mentors.
- iv. Deputy Director Johnson stated that he was encouraged by the leadership by both Directors Lockett and Merriman. He went on to state the Director Herdeg strongly believes and supports equity and inclusion work both internally and externally and that it appears as if there will be a great number of initiatives upcoming in 2023.
- v. Katie Gallagher provided feedback obtained from the community during the recent transition call. Some of the items that were areas of interest during the call included day to day operations, how to improve the procurement and Request for Proposal (RFP) process, insurance requirements, and how jobs at the county are being posted.

VIII. Adjourn (10:48 am)

Next Scheduled Meeting: March 16, 2023 @ 10:00am