



CUYAHOGA COUNTY CITIZENS' ADVISORY COUNCIL ON EQUITY

Friday, November 4, 2022

1:30 PM – 3:30 PM

I. **Call to Order**

Chair Taylor called the meeting to order at 1:37 PM.

II. **Roll Call**

A quorum was present.

In Attendance- Eddie Taylor, Annette Blackwell, Rev. Kenneth Chalker, Jenice Contreras, Colleen Cotter, Randell McShepard, Glen Shumate, LeVine Ross, and Yanela Sims.

Excused Absence- Stephen Caviness, Habeebah Grimes, Marsha Mockabee, Dr. Charles Modlin, India Pierce- Lee, Dr. Heidi Gullett, and Sheila Wright.

Chair Taylor opened the meeting by sharing the CACE Subcommittee Chairs will meet informally next month. Chair Taylor further stated today is the last formal CACE monthly meeting of the year, and the last meeting with County Executive Armond Budish.

III. **Moment of Silence and Reflection**

Clerk Byrd spoke briefly about the November 8, 2022, election. She outlined the importance of voting by reminding everyone of voting injustices and victories throughout American history. Her comments were followed by a moment of silent reflection.

IV. **Public Comment**

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



V. Message from County Executive

Executive Budish thanked the CACE for their diligence, impactful work, and dedication to ensuring equity across Cuyahoga County. He also shared remarks regarding other County initiatives and projects.

VI. Update / Message from Chair

Chair Taylor reminded everyone of the funding CACE received from the County and acknowledged the intent of CACE Subcommittee Chairs to meet virtually to discuss potential use of the funds in December.

VII. New Business

a. Approval of the Minutes

Clerk Byrd shared 3 sets of the CACE meeting minutes required approval. The minutes are from the April, July, and September CACE Monthly meetings. According to legal counsel, each set of minutes must be approved separately.

April 11, 2022 -CACE meeting minutes

The meeting minutes for the April 11, 2022 meeting were distributed on April 20, 2022 for review. A motion was made by Member Rev. Chalker and seconded by Member McShepard to approve the previously distributed minutes. There was no discussion. The motion carried without opposition and the minutes were approved.

July 19, 2022 -CACE meeting minutes

The meeting minutes for the July 19, 2022 meeting were distributed on July 27, 2022 for review. A motion was made by Member Shumate and seconded by Member Blackwell to approve the previously distributed minutes. There was no discussion. The motion carried without opposition and the minutes were approved.



September 12, 2022 - CACE meeting minutes

The meeting minutes for the September 12, 2022 meeting were distributed on September 30, 2022 for review. A motion was made by Member McShepard and seconded by Member Rev. Chalker to approve the previously distributed minutes. There was no discussion. The motion carried without opposition and the minutes were approved.

b. Introduction of Health and Human Service (HHS) Senior Leadership

Clerk Byrd welcomed Cuyahoga County Health and Human Service Director David Merriman and members of his senior leadership team to the meeting.

Director Merriman shared the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) works within a state supervised, locally administered system. The Federal Government funds the State, and the State funds the County. The County is mandated on how to spend funds with minimal flexibility. HHS includes 8 divisions with offices serving babies, children, teens, adults, seniors, and families across Cuyahoga County. As the largest department in Cuyahoga County, the mission of HHS is to transform lives at every age and stage through collaboration, innovation, and service. The focus is on connecting people with the opportunity to live their best lives.

Director Merriman turned the floor over to Sabrina Roberts, Interim Assistant Director of HHS to share her role in the mission of HHS. Sabrina Roberts introduced herself and stated there is no more dedicated County workers than those working within HHS as they are front-facing and touching people while dealing with crisis and planning for the future all at once. She further discussed how she assists daily in dealing with crisis management to policy across the board. She stated she assists the Director of HHS in advocating for staff internally, while also advocating for the citizens and residents interfacing with all HHS's different systems.



Each Agency Director introduced him/herself and provided an overview of the respective division's roles and responsibilities.

Children and Family Services (Jacqueline Fletcher, Interim Director)

Interim Director Fletcher shared the Division of Children and Family Services works to assure children at risk of abuse and neglect are protected and nurtured within a family and with the support of the community. The Department strives to end the over-representation of people of color in the child welfare system.

Senior and Adult Services (Natasha Pietrocola, Interim Director)

On behalf of Interim Director Pietrocola, who was not in attendance, Director Merriman shared the Division of Senior and Adult Services empowers seniors and adults with disabilities to age successfully, by providing resources and support to preserve their independence.

Cuyahoga Job and Family Services (Kevin Gowan, Director)

Director Gowan shared Cuyahoga Job and Family Services promotes economic self-sufficiency and personal responsibility for families and individuals by providing access to jobs, benefits, and community services.

Child Support Services (Tiffany Dobbins- Brazelton, Director)

Director Dobbins- Brazelton shared the Office of Child Support Services helps families establish, maintain, and modify child support orders.

Family and Children First Council (Robin Martin, Director)

On behalf of Director Martin, who was not in attendance, Director Merriman shared the Family and Children First Council connects individuals to make lasting progress for those who provide, fund, or need family services.



Invest in Children/ Early Childhood (Shawna Rohrman, Interim Director)

Interim Director Rohrman shared, the mission of Invest in Children is to mobilize resources and energy to ensure the well-being of all young children in Cuyahoga County.

Office of Homeless Services (Melissa Sirak, Director)

On behalf of Director Sirak, who was not present, Director Merriman shared Cuyahoga County's Office of Homeless Services leads the local effort to prevent and end homelessness across the County.

Office of Reentry (Simeon Best, Director)

On behalf of Director Best, who was not present, Director Merriman shared the mission of the Office of Reentry is to provide a full range of comprehensive services, support, and monitoring opportunities needed for successful reintegration.

In addition to the above listed 8 core services, HHS also consists of administrative office divisions including Fiscal, Communications, Performance Evaluation and Innovation, and the Division of Contracts Administration and Performance (DCAP).

DCAP Administrator Marcos Cortes shared DCAP supports the various HHS divisions to meet procurement needs in a timely and efficient manner. The division processes over 300 contracts annually from 130 vendors. Services are solicited through informal RFP bids. The division is also responsible for creating and monitoring contracts for compliance and reviews invoices for payment processing.

Member McShepard thanked the HHS leaders for their presentation and shared Cleveland is the number one city in America for childhood poverty. He asked to what extent does HHS triage services? He also asked if and how HHS collaborates internally to meet citizen needs?



Director Merriman explained every HHS program has a direct connection to childhood poverty. While childhood poverty is a primary function of Job and Family Service division, it affects other Human Service areas as well, including Reentry and Senior and Adult Services.

Director Merriman also offered for Director Gowan to return and provide additional details to the CACE.

Member Shumate thanked the members of HHS for their service and presentation. He asked for more details regarding the number of people benefitting from HHS programs.

Director Merriman shared over 60 % of HHS clients are seniors, children, and disabled adults. Many of these clients are veterans. The other large group HHS serves is the working poor. These populations are disadvantaged and frequently underserved.

Member Shumate shared the CACE is looking to learn more about how to support internal equity efforts. He also asked how CACE could be helpful in the efforts of HHS.

Interim Assistant Director Roberts commented their agency started with an internal approach to equity efforts by engagement and participation in the Internal Equity Commission. She believes it is critical to ensure County employees are prepared internally to do good equity work before we begin to look externally.

Member Cotter commented on the presentation and indicated she recalled some HHS leaders mentioning shortage of workforce. She asked how bad are the workforce shortages for staff and contracting? How do these shortages



relate to advancement opportunities for staff and contracting? How are services impacted?

Director Merriman responded and shared these are complex issues. Although each division of HHS is run separately, there are constant connections between the systems which causes challenges when trying to navigate and track status.

Director Merriman also shared last month County Executive Budish and members of the County Council authorized an increased entry wage for Social Worker 3's from \$20.70 to \$26 per hour.

Member McShepard added he observed a number of the senior leaders introduced today are in interim positions and asked Director Merriman to explain why.

Director Merriman responded and shared HHS has been through a tremendous amount of turnover this year and the County is approaching a transition in leadership as County Executive Budish did not elect to serve as a candidate for the position of County Executive. Clerk Byrd added with the upcoming transition, some County positions also require confirmation, including some HHS leadership positions.

Member Chalker commended Director Merriman for ensuring the HHS processes did not get in the way of providing service to the community members.

Member Ross stated there are a number of HHS areas engaged in diversity and equity work aside from County requirements, for example the Division of Invest in Children. She asked Interim Director Rohrman to speak briefly about those efforts.



c. Presentation from the Department of Equity and Inclusion

Director Lockett provided a detailed update and PowerPoint presentation of the work her department has completed related to the Equity Assessment Tool, the Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) County Scorecard and the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) survey.

Chair Taylor asked Director Lockett with whom and when will the survey results be shared. Director Lockett shared the results will be available internally on the County Internet.

d. Update form the Department of Human Resources

Interim Chief Marshall shared the County has an Operational and Organizational Assessment to evaluate the number of County employees and confirm if there are enough staff to adequately complete the work. This assessment was driven because from 2019 to 2022, the County lost approximately 800 employees.

In addition, Interim Chief Marshall is also interested in Performance Management System succession planning and how to best engage with this information to improve the County's Equity initiatives.

e. Ohio House Bill Updates/ Ohio's New Congressional Districts and Redistricting Update

Clerk Byrd briefly announced there are no updates regarding any of the Ohio House Bills or Congressional Redistricting. The legislature is on recess until after the November 8th election.

VIII. GARE Update

Due to time constraints Clerk Byrd distributed the GARE update to the CACE members via email.



IX. Next meeting

The next formal CACE meeting date, which will be in 2023, has not yet been confirmed. Once a date is confirmed, Clerk Byrd will send communication to the CACE membership.

There will be a CACE working group meeting in December to plan and strategize for 2023.

X. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:34 PM.