



CUYAHOGA COUNTY CITIZENS' ADVISORY COUNCIL ON EQUITY  
Monday, April 11, 2022  
1:30 PM – 3:30 PM

**I. Call to Order**

Eddie Taylor called the meeting to order at 1:36 PM.

**II. Roll Call**

A quorum was present.

In Attendance (In Person)- Eddie Taylor, Heidi Gullett, Habeebah Grimes, LeVine Ross, and Yanela Sims.

In Attendance (Virtual)- Jenice Contreras, India Pierce Lee, Marsha Mockabee, Sheila Wright, Randell McShepard, and Glen Shumate.

Excused Absence- Annette Blackwell, Stephen Caviness, Rev. Kenneth Chalker and Victor Ruiz.

**III. Moment of Silence and Reflection**

Clerk Byrd shared her thoughts on the controversial and violent interaction between entertainers Will Smith and Chris Rock during the 2022 Oscars Award Ceremony.

**IV. Public Comment**

There were no public comments submitted via email to [equity@cuyahogacounty.us](mailto:equity@cuyahogacounty.us) since the March 2022 meeting.



## V. Message from County Executive

Cuyahoga County Executive Budish shared the County is working to solidify use for the \$240 million ARPA dollars awarded. The County solicited suggestions from the community and received many ideas on potential use of the funds. The funds awarded are not enough to monetarily support all of the ideas proposed. The County has two goals for the funds; one is to ensure the County rises out of the pandemic, and two is to ensure the County is in good standing in the future.

In partnership with Cuyahoga County Council, Executive Budish publicly announced approximately 35 initiatives for the intended use of the funds. Executive Budish shared several of the initiatives which impact equity including, but not limited to:

1. \$5 million dollars to the Food Bank to help battle food scarcity and hunger in the County.
2. \$1.8 million dollars (in addition to the previous allotment of \$ 800,000 per year for 5 years) to the Board of Health to mitigate the lead problem in County homes.
3. \$2 million dollars to support small minority-owned businesses. (previously contributed \$7 million dollars)
4. \$3 million dollars to incentivize developers to increase affordable housing. (Gap financing).
5. \$1 million dollars toward Youth Emergency Placement
6. \$5 million dollars toward Youth Diversion Center for people to drop off children in an emergency as well as for a longer-term treatment program similar to what is offered for adults
7. \$1 million dollars toward expansion of the Hitchcock Center for women with children.



8. \$2 million dollars toward the demolition of vacant and abandoned properties (contributed \$50 million dollars as a County to date).
9. \$400,000 dollars to the conversion of vacant properties into pocket parks, gardens, etc. to improve neighborhoods.
10. Eviction Protection (\$25 million of CARES spent previously on eviction protection (rent, legal assistance) another \$25 million allocated to spend and an additional \$50 million. Total of \$100 million; none is ARPA dollars.
11. \$500,000 dollars for college subsidies to assist with scholarships and to help individuals pay college balances owed to schools which if not paid would prevent students from attending school. (In addition to \$500k)
12. \$2.5 million dollars to pay for last two years of college.

To date, there have been 35 initiatives announced. Each initiative will be presented to County Council for discussion, final vote, and approval.

Additionally, there are a number of other initiatives not funded by ARPA, but are equally exciting and equity related (workforce pipeline training program and microgrids, etc.).

Chair Taylor asked who will manage the deployment of ARPA funds?

Member Sims asked if there were any guidelines/stipulations for small businesses i.e., paying the employees a livable wage. She also asked about the reconstruction of vacant/abandoned lots and if it will include affordable housing.

Executive Budish explained the County doesn't administer small business programs. Instead, the County partners with expert organizations like the Urban League and ECDI who work in this space. The County does not decide who receives loans.



Executive Budish further confirmed the County could never afford to build new affordable housing but can supply gap funding in the form of grants or loans. The County could also require award recipients specify a certain number of housing units as affordable housing. However, the County does not decide location of where to build.

Chair Taylor added his desire for the content of the discussion to not just be word service but instead create change. If the County is committing \$3 million dollars in gap funding and if the County is using an equity lens, some of the selected developers should be minority and women owned businesses. If there aren't enough minority and women organizations to choose from, he suggests the County consider creating partnerships to encourage learning.

Member Mockabee asked Executive Budish if there are compliance goals associated with awarding contracts. Executive Budish confirmed that is true.

Member Mockabee asked Executive Budish if the ARPA recommendations would be presented during the April 18<sup>th</sup> County Council meeting. Executive Budish confirmed some of the recommendations may be presented during that meeting, but there will be presentations before County Council over the next several months. Member Mockabee believes the workforce recommendations will be presented during the April 18<sup>th</sup> meeting. Executive Budish agreed.

Member Gullet shares we should layer an equity lens on where and how ARPA funding is distributed. She further suggested pipelines be created to build capacity for minority owned businesses mentioned by Chair Taylor.

Member Wright shared her perspective as a minority business owner and the difficulties she encountered to receive contracts/awards for certain projects. She shared information about her project for affordable housing in the Hough Neighborhood of Cleveland. She believes we should begin thinking of people as emerging developers.

Member Grimes spoke to the effects around youth and why there should be investments in early childhood first to prevent young people from becoming victims



and/or perpetrators of vicious crimes. Executive Budish responded he is a huge advocate for high quality sustainable Pre-k Education. ARPA money is one-time and since he came into office the number of children in high quality Pre-k has doubled. Still more to do.

Member Contreras commented she is disappointed with not looking at how the projects match equity goals and how those goals can be measured. She believes as an equity committee, the CACE should ensure there is an Equitable Investment. CACE members are in community and should have clear understanding of the equity impact to Investments. She wants to understand Equitable impact, and specifically how to connect dots between investments and what it is in a strategic and specific way to make sure we are maximizing the investment. What is the target? She also discussed the small business lending fund and asked Executive Budish how the County program is different. Executive Budish shared many programs are not fully developed yet and he could not go into specific details.

Member Shumate commented he agrees with others' thoughts about CACE partnering with County. He asks who is representing community? Would like to partner and support County. He specifically asked beyond Health and Human Services, what are key things County will do to drive equity. Member Shumate also again discussed participatory budgeting model.

Chair Taylor thanked the Executive and requested CACE continue to be involved in conversations. He also requested funds be appropriated to CACE.

Member McShepard suggested CACE draft criteria for factoring an equity lens for decision making criteria for County Executive Budish and other decision makers to consider.

Chair Taylor agrees and thanks Member McShepard for taking on that responsibility.

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

Chair Taylor did not provide an update.



## **VII. New Business**

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

A motion was made by Member Gullett and seconded by Member Grimes to approve the previously distributed minutes. There was no discussion. The motion carried without opposition and the minutes were approved.

### **b. Update on the Terms of CACE Members**

During a prior meeting, Chair Taylor requested the CACE receive an update on the membership terms.

Clerk Byrd shared:

The following members terms will expire on July 14<sup>th</sup> of this year.

Mayor Annette Blackwell  
Rev. Kenneth Chalker  
Habeedah Grimes  
Victor Ruiz  
Glen Shumate

The following members terms will expire on July 14<sup>th</sup> of 2023.

Jenice Contreras  
Dr. Heidi Gullett  
India Pierce Lee  
Randy McShepard  
Eddie Taylor

The following members terms will expire on July 14<sup>th</sup> of 2024.

Stephen Caviness  
Marsha Mockabee  
Sheila Wright



Currently, there are two vacancies. Once those individuals are appointed, their terms will expire on July 14, 2024, also.

The following members terms will expire on July 14<sup>th</sup> of 2025.

LeVine Ross

Yanela Sims

There was no further discussion on members' terms.

**c. Update from the Department of Human Resources**

Interim Chief Marshall shared the study regarding the composition of interview panels is on hold because of illnesses within the Human Resource Department. She is continuing to hire people for "in need" positions.

Interim Chief Marshall also mentioned Work Force Development activities in the Central Surge neighborhood. Member Sims asked if available County positions are posted on the County website. Chief Marshall responded yes.

**d. Update on the Tuition Reimbursement Program**

Interim Chief Marshall shared the tuition reimbursement Program was discussed before the Personnel Review Commission and will be discussed before Council this week for implementation in early May 2022.

Member McShepard asked if with tuition reimbursement documents, the Employer or Employee choose which areas to study. Chief Marshall replied it's broad, but the area of study must relate to an Employee's current or future job. There is a sliding scale on Employee reimbursement to the County if the employee separates from County employment. Chief Marshall will distribute the one pager provided to the Personnel Review Commission.

Member McShepard discussed how he recalls Senior leadership at County is not diverse and asks if HR is thinking of how to invest in talented minority workforce. Chief Marshall responded not yet.



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

Director Lockett shared the Department of Equity and Inclusion is attempting to fill 2 vacant positions. Additionally, Director Lockett shared the department is working on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Training and the GARE Employer Racial/Equity survey.

Director Lockett's department is currently completing the second update to the purchasing and contracting forecast. Director Lockett will share a draft of survey with CACE.

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

Director Lockett shared the stakeholder analysis for the Diversity Equity and Inclusion Training is complete and a status report will be presented to the Executive on April 15, 2022.

**g. Update Cuyahoga County Equity Commission**

Director Lockett stated the Cuyahoga Equity Commission met last month on March 17, 2022. During that meeting there was a presentation by Madeline Wright of College Now.

**h. Presentation from the Department of Health and Human Services Director David Merriman**

Clerk Byrd introduced Cuyahoga County Department of Health and Human Services Director David Merriman who provided an update on the Central Surge Initiative. Director Merriman discussed efforts in HHS to normalize the conversation around race.

Mr. Merriman also shared there have been a few administrative changes within the Department of Health and Human Services. Director Merriman received the resignations of three senior level staff including Tracey Mason- former Director of





Senior and Adult Services, Dr. Leon Harris- former Health and Human Services Deputy Director of Diversity Equity and Inclusion, and Paul Porter- former Director, HHS Division of Contract Administration and Performance.

Director Merriman shared a presentation regarding a recently released RFP to identify a provider to help develop services for Ohio National Guard men and women.

Chair Taylor asked a question regarding the financing model and how payments are distributed. Director Merriman responded payments would be made throughout the process. Chair Taylor and Director Merriman agreed to have continued conversations.

Member Gullett asked about retention of students in programs. Director Merriman responded the RFP is to help develop a contract to address retention. Member Gullett believes an equity lens is critical at this stage as well.

Member Grimes asked about the population of National Guardsperson in Cuyahoga County. Director Merriman responded 300 County residents are eligible, but he doesn't have the demographic breakdown. Director Merriman shared he is the only one currently working on this initiative.

#### **i. Subcommittee Chair Reports**

There were no Subcommittee Chair reports discussed during this meeting. Chair Taylor advised any chairpersons wishing to update the CACE on subcommittee activities should provide an email update.

#### **j. GARE Update**

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



**VIII. Next meeting**

The next meeting will be held on May 9<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 3:31 PM.