

Cuyahoga County Equity Commission Meeting

September 15, 2022, 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM

Cuyahoga County Administrative Building – Committee Room B

2079 East Ninth Street, 4th 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

- I. Welcome
- II. Call to Order (10:05 am) – Director, David Merriman
 - a. Review & Approval of Minutes
 - Minutes approved by Interim/Deputy Director Smialek, seconded by Interim Director Marshall, minutes approved.
- III. Public Comment
 - There was no public comment.
- IV. Opening Remarks from Equity Commission Members
 - i. Interim Director Marshall had no opening remarks.
 - ii. Deputy Director Johnson stated work is still ongoing regarding the internal equity commission for Department of Development. An update was provided regarding the stimulus grant project. Over 4,000 small businesses applied for the program, with a significant number of those being minority owned. Once applications have been reviewed, the next step will be moving to subcommittee to determine where money is awarded. Deputy Director Johnson also spoke on the Central Surge program. Over 1,000 letters were sent out from Cuyahoga County and Burten, Bell, Carr Development, with discussions on future mailings to occur.
 - iii. Director Merriman wished to acknowledge and support the work being done regarding the diversity, equity and inclusion townhall trainings, as well as all of the work that is being done in getting the process started. In process of evaluating the DHHS Steering Committee to review all tools and

resources provided by Department of Equity & Inclusion, to allow the process to grow and for opportunities for improvement. Director Merriman spoke on National Voters Registration Day events which will last one (1) week and begin Saturday, September 16, 2022, and go through Friday, September 23rd. The series of events, hosted by sixty different community partners, will be held in various communities throughout the area, instead of one particular location. Detailed listing of events is attached at the end of the meeting minutes.

- iv. Interim/Deputy Director Smialek, spoke on their internal DEI led committee and stated that they are in the process of regrouping due to staffing issues. They are actively looking to add new members. Work ongoing with regards to resources/time available to attend townhalls.
- v. Director Lockett thanked everyone for their support concerning DEI Initiatives and stated that it takes everyone's participation to raise knowledge. Additional comments were reserved for later in agenda.

V. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Training-Update

- i. The 1st townhall series was completed on Wednesday, September 14th; with the 2nd series to begin Tuesday, September 27th. The second series is entitled "Increasing Your Self-Awareness". The 3rd series will begin on Tuesday, October 25th.
- ii. DEI/Tri-C has been receiving feedback regarding the registration process and has acknowledged that it can be cumbersome. Due to the townhalls being provided via Webex, the County internet system has been red-flagging and/or bouncing back emails. This is due to the number of emails, where the County system is identifying these emails as spam, so many are not receiving follow-up emails/communications.
- iii. Director Merriman wished to applaud the work that everyone has been doing and stated that the training is a strong step forward. He provided feedback regarding the Champions section, stating that even though a limited number of individuals are listed, the work is always a team effort.
- iv. Deputy Director Johnson, echoed sentiments provided by Director Merriman, stating that it is an incredible initiative and will bring topics such as unconscious bias to light.
- v. Interim Director Marshall stated that the success of this training comes from individuals' willingness to engage and be vulnerable.
- vi. Director Lockett echoed the statement made by Director Merriman regarding the Champions list and stated that the list was not all inclusive and there were many individuals working behind the scenes. The listed individuals were those who participated in the pre-townhall meetings.

VI. GARE Race and Equity Employee Survey-Update

- i. Director Lockett stated that the County had a participation rate of almost 50%, which exceeded the GARE confidence findings percentage of 40% participation. Director Lockett wished to thank Communications for all of their work in getting the word out and providing regular updates.
- ii. The first draft is slated to be received by end of September or early October with a final draft to be received in late October or early November.
- iii. Director Merriman suggested that for next GARE survey, if it would be reasonable to look at business intelligence with regards to representation and that any information available may be beneficial for future surveys (i.e. what departments had participation, when responses occurred and if there was a spike after communications from County Executive or In the Know email blasts).
- iv. Director Lockett stated that there may be some data received from GARE or from Communications department, however, some data would not be available due to the nature of the survey being anonymous, and because some smaller departments were included in data with larger ones so ensure privacy. Director Lockett stated that plans are to continue membership in GARE and that additional surveys would occur as part of the membership every two (2) to three (3) years.
- v. Interim Deputy Director Smialek was curious on what feedback would be after the townhalls had been completed, and if the perception would have changed prior to townhalls occurring.
- vi. Director Lockett stated that the GARE survey was considered to be a baseline for all future DEI work/initiatives.
- vii. Director Merriman inquired as to when GARE held their conferences, suggesting that each area of the County work on identifying individuals to participate in future conferences
- viii. Director Lockett stated that this year's GARE conference had previously taken place both virtually and in-person in April of this year. The Department of Equity and Inclusion participated in the virtual conference portion.
- ix. Interim Director Marshall stated that by identifying individuals of interest it shows that the County is 'committed to stay' and will create some enthusiasm and continued commitment from individuals.

VII. Annual Equity Report (publication deadline 1/31/2023)-Preparation & Schedule

- i. Director Lockett stated that work has already begun regarding the annual report, which is due by January 31, 2023, which will report on 2022s efforts.
- ii. DEI will be working closely with Communications, with this year's report looking at more than just the five (5) pilot agencies.
- iii. Director Lockett shared ideas on best ways to provide summary of areas and provided the example of the White House's Equity Initiatives.
- iv. Director Merriman asked that a summary be provided to acknowledge the transition of the County Executive position, to be able to present to new County Executive.
- v. Director Lockett provided an estimated timeline with an initial draft date of the 1st or 2nd weeks of November, at which a template would be provided to departments to complete. It has also been determined that DEI will hold a webinar to assist agencies/departments in data compilation and to answer questions. Information on the GARE survey as well as the DEI Training Townhalls will also be provided.

VIII. 2022 Equity Commission Objectives

- i. Discussions regarding the format for the 2023 Equity Commission took place, with Director Lockett suggesting the same format. Director Merriman asked for feedback for those in attendance, the same format was approved. Director Merriman stated that this may change depending on the new County Executive.
- ii. A conversation occurred between Directors Lockett and Merriman regarding his continuation of Chair. Director Merriman stated he was impressed and grateful of all the work that Director Lockett has done, and that he would support her as new Chair. It was agreed that Director Merriman would finish out the year in the current position.

IX. Closing Remarks

- i. Director Lockett had no comments
- ii. Interim/Deputy Director Smialek no comments
- iii. Director Merriman spoke on transitions occurring in DHHS with significant turnover in leadership. Marcos Cortes has been hired as a new permanent Department for the Division of Contract Administration and Performance. Most other positions will continue with TWL interims.
- iv. Deputy Director Johnson stated that he continues to be encouraged by all of the work that is being completed, and that he is excited about the future and whats next.

v. Interim Director Marshall acknowledges all the work that Director Lockett has done, and that conversations are open, alive and impactful.

X. Adjourn (10:51 am)

Next Scheduled Meeting: November 17, 2022 @ 10:00am