

**State of Maryland Commission on Civil Rights
Commission Meeting
January 10, 2023 – 10am
Meeting Held by Google Hangouts Meet
MINUTES**

Commissioners Present: Stephanie Suerth, MPA, CCEP, Chairperson; Vice Chair; Eileen M. Levitt, SPHR, SHRM-SCP; Magdalena S. Navarro, MSc, Diane E. Bernier; Jeff Rosen; Isabella Firth Shycoff;

Management Present: Alvin O. Gillard, Executive Director; Cleveland L. Horton II, Deputy Director; Glendora Hughes, General Counsel; Kara N. Hunt, PhD, Director of Education & Outreach; Martine Chery, Assistant Director for Administration.

Staff Present: Gerald T. Ford, Executive Associate.

Meeting called to order at 10:02 am

Motion to approve the December minutes are approved.

Chairperson's Report

- Chairperson is still hoping to coordinate a discussion on the Case Processing Reports in order to capture what the Commissioners believe is important information for them to have and understand.

Executive Director's Report

- On January 23rd, there will be an MCCR all staff meeting to reveal the core values identified by staff and the strategy on how we will integrate them into our culture internally and reflect them in our interactions with the public. Commissioners are invited to join us for the rollout.
- Human Rights Day in Annapolis which is sponsored by the Maryland Association of Human Rights Agencies, the Coalition Opposed to Violence & Extremism and the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights will be held on February 17, 2023 from 8:30-12:30 at the Historic Calvert House Hotel. Commissioners are encouraged to attend.
- The Executive Director and General Counsel met with representatives of the Attorney General- elect transition team. MCCR came out of that meeting with the sense that there is a commitment to civil rights and equity and that there is a desire to work closely with MCCR in furthering the Attorney General- elect's vision of being more active in addressing issues of systemic unlawful discrimination in the state.
- The Executive Director, the Deputy Director and the Assistant Director have held several discussions with folks from the Department of Budget and Management, Office of

Personnel Services and Benefits to address some of our salary challenges here at the Commission. We impressed upon them the consistent challenges we have in finding and retaining talent due to MCCR's salary scales being less competitive than other agencies at the state, federal and local levels. We requested an Annual Salary Review be initiated to determine whether the salary levels for our positions were competitive with similar positions both in & out of state government. It was determined after an initial review that there were imbedded inequities in the salaries of multiple positions within the same classifications, and there were other issues that needed to be corrected before a Salary Review would be considered. We are working with the Office of Personnel Services and Benefits to identify and resolve those issues.

Deputy Director's Report

In response to the Commissioner's pending discussion on the monthly report of Case Processing the Deputy Director provided some background on the information presented in our current monthly reports, in comparison to what was included in prior reports

- History of MCCR Database issues: MCCR lost access to the reporting function with EEOC database which significantly impacted the amount of data that could be extracted. In the past the case processing report was about 20 pages including a number of different graphs, charts and the like. Because of the change in EEOC database functions, MCCR no longer has access to all that information. Now that data is collected manually.
- MCCR is currently looking into developing its own database, using as a template systems that are currently in use by other agencies. Cost is a challenge but we are hopeful that we will be able to identify funding and a vendor that will allow us to move forward either later this fiscal year or in the next fiscal year.

- Intake

During the month of December 2022, Intake authorized the following charges:

- 28 Employment
- 15 Housing
- 9 Public Accommodations
- 0 Commercial
- 52 Total Complaints for December

During the month of December 2022, Intake aborted the following inquiries:

- 12 Employment
- 5 Housing
- 1 Public Accommodations
- 0 Other
- 0 Commercial
- 18 Total Aborts for December

Housing/PA

As of January 1, 2023, there are:

- 155 open Housing cases (Dual Filed with HUD) with an average age of 311 days;
- 22 open Housing Title 20 Only cases with an average age of 248 days; and
- 47 open PA cases with an average age of 447 days

During the month of December 2022, the Housing Unit closed:

- 4 Housing cases (Dual Filed with HUD) with a total monetary settlement of \$2,190
- 3 PA cases

Employment

As of January 1, 2023, there are:

- 290 Assigned Open Employment cases
- Average age is 425 days
- 234 Employment Cases in Backlog status
- Average age is 287 days

During the month of December 2022, the Employment Units closed:

- 40 Employment cases closed with a monetary benefit of \$84,350

General Counsel's Report

- Highlighted the General Counsel's written report.
- Reviewed MCCR Legislative process.
 - MCCR staff will search and select legislative bills that fall into these relevant categories:
 - Legislation with a direct impact on Title 20
 - Legislation with an indirect impact on Title 20 or requires some involvement of the Agency,
 - Legislation that has a broader impact on civil rights specifically
 - Legislation identified by MCCR Commissioners
 - Legislation identified by MCCR Executive Staff
 - Senior staff will review the legislation selected based on the above criteria. For legislation that will be discussed by Commissioners, Senior staff shall gather the relevant legislation, summarize the legislation and provide a recommendation of MCCR's position and submit to the Commissioners by 3:00pm every Wednesday during the legislation session.
 - Commissioners shall review the relevant legislation and come prepared to discuss and vote on the legislation every Thursday at 8:30am. If there is no relevant legislation pending for a particular week, Staff will notify the Chair by 3:00 pm on Wednesday. The Chair, and or their designee will notify Commissioners by Wednesday close-of-business that the call is CANCELLED.
 - On Friday, the General Counsel is responsible for submitting the position of MCCR into the ABR system for the Governor's Office.

Administration Report

- As of December 1st, MCCR s has spent 47% of its budget.
- Still working with DBM and providing the strategy as far as how we can make salary adjustments to the remainder of the positions that we have here. We have established our

prevailing hiring rate as far as what is the standard salary that should be offered for all series/positions.

- We are currently at 100% staffing capacity. The newest hire is our Fiscal Specialist, Brittany Thomas.
- FY24 Budget hearings are scheduled for February 1st (House) and February 3rd (Senate).

Director of Education & Outreach Report

- MIELP: E&O is in the second cohort of MEILP It is now being offered three times per year. The second cohort has 38 participants and will run for eight weeks.
- Young Scholars Program: E&O did an orientation last week and things seem to be going well. The second segment of the program (in partnership with Prince George's County Public Schools,) is focused on housing and it starts in January.
- Western Maryland Advisory Council,
 - Still recruiting to fill the vacant seat of the Western Maryland Advisory Council.
 - Dave Engel with the Md State Police is coming to the WMAC meeting to talk to about the hate/ bias report.
 - Plan to hold a hate bias forum in the western Maryland region that will take place in May at Frostburg State University.
- Civil Rights Leadership Program: Recruitment is well underway. The program as garnered interest from every region. Deadline is February 1st.
- New Forum: E&O has established a relationships with Barnes and Noble, as well as Busboys and Poets to offer a series of community events with the focus of spotlighting local authors. We are working with the city of Bowie for the first one.
- Months of note
 - Black History Month - February,
 - Women's History Month - March.
 - Asian American, Pacific Islander Heritage Month - May
 - LGBTQ+ Pride Month - June

Old/New Business

- The first in- person Commission meeting for the year is tentatively scheduled for March 14, 2023, the option to join virtually will also be available.

Meeting adjourned at 11:58 am.