

**State of Maryland Commission on Civil Rights  
Commission Meeting  
June 21, 2023 – 10am  
Meeting Held by Google Hangouts Meet  
MINUTES**

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

**Management Present:** Alvin O. Gillard, Executive Director; Cleveland L. Horton II, Deputy Director; Glendora Hughes, General Counsel; Martine Chery, Assistant Director for Administration

**Staff Present:** Gerald T. Ford, Executive Associate; Alesha Bell, Employment Unit Supervisor

**Meeting called to order at 10:05 am**

**Did not have a quorum at the start of the meeting to approve the May minutes, however minutes were approved once a quorum was reached.**

**Chairperson's Report**

- Due to feeling ill, the Chairperson was unable to give a report.

**Executive Director's Report**

- MCCR held a successful forum on hate bias at Frostburg State University on May 11. We were very pleased with the 2 day forum where on the first day, it was only for members of law enforcement from the Western Maryland region and on the second day members of the public interacted with law enforcement, sharing their concerns, suggestions and observations on hate bias reporting and prevention. MCCR heard from people from across the state, asking if we will replicate the forum in different regions. With partnership from the Attorney General's Office, and Maryland State Police, we're trying to schedule three more sessions across the State with the next one being targeted for September.
- MCCR hosted a forum on recreational cannabis and its workplace implications in partnership with the University of Maryland, Carey School of Law on June 13<sup>th</sup>. It drew over 100 people and we were very pleased with both the turn out and the content of the form. There is still so much to learn as we move forward with the legal use of recreational cannabis as of July 1, 2023.
- In the upcoming weeks, MCCR will be meeting with our partners with the University of Maryland to discuss the Maryland Equity and Inclusion Leadership Program. The program has successfully had 5 cohorts and this meeting will assess the value of the program and identify adjustments we need to consider in order to increase the program's attractiveness and viability. .

- The Executive Director informed the Commission that on Aug. 13-17th the International Association of Official Human Rights Agencies will hold its annual training conference in Bethesda, MD. The Montgomery County Office of Human Rights is serving as the local host for the conference. Any Commissioner interested in attending should let us know.
- The EEOC Fair Employment Practices Agencies (FEPA) annual training conference will be held in Baltimore this year (July25-27). Any Commissioner interested in attending should let us know.
- MCCR has made a selection to fill the vacant Director of Education & Outreach position. Hopefully, an announcement can be made within the next week on the successful candidate..

### **Deputy Director's Report**

- The Deputy Director highlighted a few points from the Case Processing Unit's written report.
- Case Processing has moved the overwhelming majority of the backlogged cases into investigations. The number of backlogged cases has been reduced from over 600 cases down to approximately 67 with many of these being transfers from EEOC.
- Effective at the start of FY 24, Case Processing has been approved to receive 5 additional PINS. These PINS will significantly strengthen our Housing and Employment Units.
- MCCR and EEOC are working on a town hall. EEOC has provided \$3500.00 for joint initiatives and MCCR thought that it was a great opportunity for us to do a town hall to create more awareness of our agencies and our similarities and our differences. We will also take a close look at the issue of the legal use of cannabis at the State level, while at the Federal level, the use of cannabis is still illegal. The tentative plan is to hold this event in August at Morgan State University.

### **General Counsel's Report**

- The General Counsel highlighted a few issues contained in the Unit's written report.
- Negotiations are still ongoing with the Attorney General's Office regarding the crafting of a memorandum regarding civil rights enforcement and cooperation between the two agencies.

### **Administrative Report**

- The Assistant Director for Administration highlighted the Unit's written report:
  - 89% of General Funds have been spent and all funds are expected to be expended through outstanding expenses and reversions.

### **Old/New Business**

- The Chair requested that, at its next meeting, the Commission discuss when to hold the next in person meeting.

**The meeting went into executive session at 10:40 am.**