

**State of Maryland Commission on Civil Rights
Commission Meeting
May 9, 2023 – 10am
Meeting Held by Google Hangouts Meet
MINUTES**

Commissioners Present: Stephanie Suerth, MPA, CCEP, Chair; Janssen E. Evelyn, Esq, Vice Chair; Eileen M. Levitt, SPHR, SHRM-SCP; Diane E. Bernier; Isabella Firth Shycoff; Jeff Rosen; Gina McKnight Smith, 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; Dia Drake-Sprague, Education & Outreach Associate; Ngeri Azuewah, Education & Outreach Associate; Alesha Bell, Employment Unit Supervisor

Meeting called to order at 10:05 am

Motion to approve the May minutes was approved.

Chairperson's Report

- The Chair is still working on setting up those meetings with the Governor's office, the Lieutenant Governor's office and the Attorney General's Office.
- The Chair recognized that May was Asian American Pacific Islander Month and acknowledged the rise in hate crimes targeting the AAPI community.
- The Chair also took time in the meeting to do a Commissioner and MCCR staff wellness check. Commissioner Suerth stated this work takes a toll on people and it's important that we check on everyone's physical, spiritual and mental health.

Executive Director's Report

- The Deputy Director and the General Counsel have been working with the Attorney General's Office on crafting a memorandum of understanding regarding how we move forward in response to Title 20 being amended through Senate Bill 540. The Attorney General is restructuring his office to account for its new responsibilities as well.
- The Executive Director informed the Commission that on Aug. 13-17th the International Association of Official Human Rights Agencies will hold their annual training conference in Bethesda, MD. The Montgomery County Office of Human Rights is serving as the local host for the conference.
- The national EEOC as well as others from the civil rights community is planning on some form celebratory/continuation event in commemoration of the 60th anniversary of

the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs, Justice and Peace. The Executive Director will keep the Commission informed of developing events.

- MCCR has begun discussing the framework for the 2024 Gala. The Executive Director invited the Commissioners and Chair to identify Commissioners to serve as part of the Planning Committee which will begin in earnest in September.
- With the close of FY23, The Executive Director commended staff for their diligent work. MCCR is incredibly grateful for the efforts of staff and the support of the Commissioners. Not only has staff met the goals set forth in our federal contracts, but they also made internal adjustments to account to unforeseen vacancies and other personal and personnel challenges.

Deputy Director's Report

- The Deputy Director highlighted a few points from the Case Processing Unit's written report.
- Case Processing has submitted 105 closures to HUD. They anticipate reaching 120-130 closures for our contract year with HUD.
- Case Processing has completed 392 employment closures. Our EEOC contract is for 560 closures and we are on track to reach our contract number.
- The case backlog is down to 38 cases. One year prior, the backlog was over 600 cases. The average time a case stays in unassigned status is 19 days.

General Counsel's Report

- The General Counsel highlighted a few issues contained in the Unit's written report.
- The General Counsel will conduct a training for senior staff on understanding disabilities and reasonable accommodations on May 15th.
- On June 13th, MCCR is sponsoring a "Cannabis in the Workplace" symposium at the University of Maryland, Francis King Carey School of Law. Commissioners are encouraged to attend.

Administrative Report

- The Assistant Director for Administration highlighted the Unit's written report:
 - MCCR, has \$777,868 remaining in General Funds and \$126, 804 in Federal Funds.
- The recruitment for the vacant Director of Education & Outreach position has been posted.

- In FY24, MCCR has been approved for 5 additional PINS in our Case Processing Unit.

Education and Outreach

- The Virtual Fair Housing Forum, held on April 27th, went well. The event had a total of 125 people online. The feedback was great, and E&O has been flooded with requests from participants wanting to get the power point presentations.
- The Hate/ Bias Reporting Forum is scheduled for May 11th at Frostburg State University. Over 100 people RSVPed for this event. MCCR received calls from Harford County and Howard County asking if we can replicate this forum in their region.

Old/New Business

- The Executive Director requested that the Commissioners consider rescheduling our next Commission Meeting to another date because it conflicts with the “Cannabis in the Workplace” symposium. The Executive Associate will send out a poll to identify another date that works best for most Commissioners.
- The Chair also requested, that at its next meeting, the Commission discuss when to hold the next in person meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 10:50 am.