

African American Advisory Council Minutes

Tracy Marshall, Chairperson
Keith Smith, Vice-Chairperson
January 21, 2021

ATTENDEES:

Robin Albritton
James Bracey
Fayette Coleman-Gill
Renee Heard
Tracy Marshall
Veronica Mattison
Keith Smith
Lori Welcher-Evans

The meeting was officially called to order by Chairperson, Tracy Marshall at 10:08am. The meeting was held via WebEx.

ORDER OF MEETING:

REVIEW OF MINUTES:

Tracy along with other council members congratulated James Bracey on his promotion as a

CHAIRPERSON REPORT:

Tracy Marshall stated the following:

- ❖ Kudos given to James Bracey on his promotion as PSA in permanency.
- ❖ Tracy will be scheduling smaller meetings with the co-chairs of the different committees within the council so we can focus and figure out to get back on track.
- ❖ Tracy and Lori will meet to discuss all the minutes that are expected be posted on the website so that we can submit our information.
- ❖ Retirees are interested in assisting with the council.
- ❖ Tanya Carriere reached out to Tracy and is interested, so she will be invited to begin attending council meetings again. Tanya will be an ex-officio member.
- ❖ The regional summits that the council has been conducting in partnership with Black Welfare Administrators and Chicago Association of Black Social Workers have been going well. The council was able to reach a lot of people in Cook when the Cook Summit was held in October 2020. The Northern Region Summit was held 1-26-2021. Vice-Chair, Keith was instrumental in getting two

young ladies in the region to step-up and co-facilitate so Tracy gave a big thank you to Keith. The Central Region Summit was held in December 2020. The Southern Region summit is forthcoming in late February or at the latest in March. Tracy informed council members that Yasmina took over Angela Barring-Jeffries place, and further stated that registration has gone out and is currently listed on the Dnet. State Representatives have been coming out and are supportive, as this is a collaborative effort. The council will propose solutions for current problems and present them to the Director in a binder so all issues can be heard and recognized.

NEWSLETTER:

Tracy reported that Vice-Chair Keith Smith recently took on the task of chairing the newsletter committee, and the committee has a lot of material which needs to be pulled together and organized that she would like to get out in a Spring newsletter, and another one in the Summer. Fayette stated that she would like for the committee to address some COVID19 related issues. There is no set date yet to get the next newsletter out.

A.A. SERVICES:

Tracy reported that Chief of African American services forwarded an email that he will not be available to participate in today's meeting as a result of working on different things. Tracy commended Chris during the meeting for keeping the council abreast of current information and was saluted for doing what he came aboard to do.

TRAINING COMMITTEE:

James Bracey reported that he is scheduled to speak tomorrow with a new hire training class. Tracy informed the council that there was a training class for permanency workers 1/8 thru 1/15. Lori informed the council that a new training class begins 2/2 thru 2/8 while Keith informed the council that another training class is expected to begin 1/25 thru 1/29. It was reported that some of the new employees that started with the Department were already previously CWEL certified and were not required to attend training. A list will be forwarded to James. Fayette made a suggestion for the council to obtain a back-up council member to assist with speaking to the Department's training classes when James is not available.

STATUS REPORT-HOST FAMILIES/CARE PACKAGES:

Shirley was not available to provide an updated report; however, she did speak with our student over the Holiday per Renee, and the young lady was doing well. Most recently, Shirley has not been able to get in contact

with our student. Tracy reported that she reached out to Laura Gutierrez to request a list of college students who are currently enrolled in school so the council can choose an African American student for the council to support. The council can vote to table this item until the Fall; and choose an incoming student and begin financially supporting the student this Fall. The council's next steps will be discussed. Tracy will be meeting with Shirley regarding this matter.

MEMBERSHIP:

Robin reported receiving inquiries for Cook, however, upon reaching out to one of the persons who had expressed an interest in becoming a member, there was no response received. Robin reported that once someone makes an inquiry, then an email is sent out to the person who made the inquiry requesting that a letter of interest be forwarded, there is never any follow-up. Robin further reported that she is willing to meet after hours in order to get the by-laws completed, as she does not see the passion or connection anymore from some council members who have not been in attendance. It was reported that council members who have not been engaged will be receiving a letter, and new members will be recruited.

Tracy reported having been a member on the council for about 24 or 25 years, and she has been a witness to the changes that have been made, and she would like to bring young, strong and positive people to the council. Tracy encouraged council members to invite someone to attend a meeting. All ages are welcome. Veronica inquired if people from the POS agencies can serve on the council. It was stated that staff from POS agencies can be recruited as Adhoc committee members, and this will be discussed during the next membership committee meeting.

LEGISLATIVE:

While this agenda item was tabled, Tracy did remind council members that Jere is a committee of one person, and council members can reach out to Jere to send her bills that may surface. Robin shared information with council members regarding the Illinois General Assembly - Bill Status for HB3653. This bill that is being proposed is regarding voter registration and persons being released from the Department of Corrections. Robin agreed to check into this bill further. Tracy iterated that there are so many things occurring in the community and in the child welfare world that council members aren't aware of.

REAL TALK:

While this agenda item was tabled, Tracy reported that Carole had taken on the task of committee chair when Jatuan left. Tracy is requesting that a council member think about stepping up to be the chair of this committee. Council members are encouraged to talk to peers and explore some options to meet the needs of our children, as the council is not aware what is going on with the Youth Advisory Board. Robin reported that she attended the Youth Advisory Board for Leadership last Thursday and will be attending another meeting this evening after work.

JOINT COUNCIL MEETING:

This agenda item was tabled.

CONFERENCE:

This agenda item was tabled.

BUSINESS UPDATES:

NEW BUSINESS:

- ❖ Council members were informed that meeting dates have been placed on all council members calendar, so please let the Chair or Vice-Chair know if you are unable to attend a meeting.
- ❖ Tracy was approached and asked to table the joint council meeting.
- ❖ The council was unable to conduct their regular Holiday celebration, Tracy reported that she does not want the council to fall apart. It was proposed that council members conduct an after hours zoom meeting to talk and reconnect. Robin informed council members that her team conducted a virtual Holiday celebration for 4 persons. Robin was asked to coordinate the event which may take place during the month of February. The proposed date 2-11-2021 at 7:00pm.
- ❖ Robin reported that the Central office COA Review went well and was excellent. There will be a COA Review May 3rd-May 6th, 2021. Lori, Fayette and Tracy will be leading the region. There are a new set of 2020 Child and Family Services standards. Meetings will be held Mondays at 2:00pm. The region will begin selecting cases for the upcoming COA review, and youth, stakeholders, foster parents, birth parents, community providers and DCFS staff are expected to be surveyed.
- ❖ Kudos was given to Robin for her gaining new staff on her Quality Enhancement team.

- ❖ Lori shared with council members that everyone may want to familiarize themselves with Microsoft Youth Teams as opposed to conducting meetings via WebEx.
- ❖ Lori requested a back-up recording secretary to record the minutes when she is unable to attend monthly meetings.
- ❖ Fayette proposed if the council is able to utilize a clerical to record minutes for the council's monthly meetings.

The next meeting is scheduled to take place February 18, 2021 via WebEx.

The meeting adjourned at 11:18am.

Minutes submitted by:

Lori Welcher-Evans, Recording Secretary