

African American Advisory Council Minutes

Tracy Marshall, Chairperson
Keith Smith, Vice-Chairperson
February 18, 2021

ATTENDEES:

Robin Albritton
Shirley Barsh
James Bracey
Fayette Coleman-Gill
Renee Heard
Jacqueline Johnson
Tracy Marshall
Veronica Mattison
Jere Murry
Christopher Towers
Lori Welcher-Evans

The meeting was officially called to order by Chairperson, Tracy Marshall at 10:05am. The meeting was held via WebEx.

ORDER OF MEETING:

REVIEW OF MINUTES:

January minutes were reviewed by council members. It was moved by Robin and second by Lori that the minutes were accepted without any noted revisions. There was one abstention.

CHAIRPERSON REPORT:

Tracy Marshall stated the following:

- ❖ Kara Hamilton, who took over for Stephanie Polacheck reached out to Tracy for a meeting with the Director. Tracy was aware that it short notice, and she met with Kara on Tuesday. The Director would like an update as it relates to what the AAAC is currently working on. Tracy pulled some bullet points together and gave an overview.
- ❖ Discussed the Summits that have taken place and talked about what the council plans to do with the information received; information will be placed in a binder with proposed solutions. There were over 400 participants virtually, and the Southern Region Summit is pending.

- ❖ James shared fictive kin information and discussed how Chris Towers position came about.
- ❖ It was good dialogue, and former council member, Tracey King was present during the meeting as well as Chief Deputy Director, Derek Hobson was present at the beginning of the meeting. Chris was given praise for being very helpful. Robin added that she thought the meeting went very well, and the council got an opportunity to voice the council's priorities.
- ❖ The Director asked if there was anything that the council didn't get an opportunity to discuss during the meeting and to let him know. Jere stated that if the council have concerns, the council can commit to listing our concerns on paper and communicate them to the Director. It can be succinct and to the point.
- ❖ We are still in the planning process for the Southern Region Summit and just awaiting a response from Dr. Brown. The proposed dates are 3/23, 3/25 or 3/29. Tracy reached out to State Representative, Latanya Greenwood. A letter was submitted to ascertain if she was available. Christopher Belts will be a back-up speaker. The Director provided the council with Meaghan Jorgensen's name, as a contact resource to seek out speakers.
- ❖ The program book will need to be pulled together. The council will seek assistance from the Family Advocacy Centers and council members in Southern region may be able to assist. Fayette suggested that the council reach out to Derek Hobson. The planning committee for the Summit meets Wednesdays at 6:30pm.
- ❖ An email was received from Jataun Rollins which stated that she received a grant, and she is interested in conducting a Violence & Prevention Symposium with youth sometime in April or May. Specific information was requested from her, as the specifics are unknown at this time.
- ❖ There was a meeting today with Kim Haynes, who was a past presenter along with Ron, and used to be a co-convenor for LAN 53, and is attempting to connect services to the Department. There is an emphasis being placed on surveying the community in the south suburbs to ascertain what services are needed. The south suburbs are suffering and can benefit from additional resources.

NEWSLETTER:

Tracy is planning to meet with Keith in regards to move things forward as it relates to getting a spring issue out, maybe 6 to 8 pages, sort of like an informational.

A.A. SERVICES:

Chris Towers reported that the council didn't get anything posted on the Dnet in honor of Black History month. Jere wrote something up and will forward it to Chris. Chris will work closely with the Action teams and will assist with getting Transformation teams up and running again. Fayette reported that she was in a meeting earlier this week with Robert Blackwell and Paula Truitt-Alohan, who is currently in Mike Burns old position. They are in the process of getting this started, and there is a scheduled meeting with the Department's partners for 3/3/2021. Regional Administrators are being asked to assist, as DCFS' presence in Cook is needed.

TRAINING COMMITTEE:

James reported that he had a couple of training classes to speak at. The flyer needs to be updated so it can be determined if there are any prospective members interested in joining the council.

STATUS REPORT-HOST FAMILIES/CARE PACKAGES:

Shirley reported that the council's student that was being sponsored has finished school, however, she is not sure about her graduation date. Shirley and Renee sent the student a care package in December 2020, and she was very happy and appreciative. The council is looking for a new host for next year. Shirley reiterated that council members who have not submitted their donations, to please re-commit themselves to the process, as the donations are very encouraging and helps in those moments when the student may be going through things. Shirley stated that she has made up the difference and it leaves a gap between council members submitting their donations. Shirley encouraged council members to forward their donations, and if council members do not want to commit and support, it's a choice, as this is completely voluntary. Tracy reported that Laura Gutierrez was expected to send a list of students that will begin college in the fall. Tracy will follow-up, as the list may not be received until after June or July. Council members will plan to donate an unspecified amount to the student for her graduation gift, which would be phenomenal.

MEMBERSHIP:

LEGISLATIVE:

Jere submitted the following report:

Illinois State Black Caucus (ILBC)

In early January of this year the ILBC drafted some important legislation which contained "four pillars" to address areas of concern that hit African-American communities the hardest. Those pillars were:

- Police and Criminal Justice Reform
- Education Reform
- Health Care and Human Services Reform
- Expansion of Economic Opportunity.

This 611-page piece of legislation is aimed towards confronting long-standing legislations and policies which continue to perpetuate the marginalization of people of color, and more specifically the African-American community.

Police and Criminal Justice Reform

There are three major proposals attached to this pillar, which are to develop a statewide standard on police use of force; ending “qualified immunity for police officers and repeal the affidavit requirement for making police complaints.

Education Reform

This pillar has been approved by the Senate and now must go to the House. This reform would provide more assistance to marginalized students in the way of grants and other funding to eliminate barriers as a result of disparities.

Health Care and Human Services Reform

This pillar is simply saying to get rid of Managed Care Organizations (MCO). We know that this initiative has been stalled for several years in Illinois. However, it now has been launched. How is it going? The ILBC is aware, from investigating other states’ roll-outs, that states must have a solid and robust infrastructure to launch and implement a statewide system and there are serious concerns Illinois is ill-prepared. The fallout from this will impact communities of color in a huge way and so they feel obligated to head this off.

Expansion of Economic Opportunity

How do we get more funding and economic opportunities for African-American providers and vendors. Our role is if we know of counseling providers, dentists, etc. we should lift those names up and have the public and private sector provide contract opportunities.

Also, they are concerns around predatory lending, criminal background checks for hiring and housing, and replacing water service lines made of lead. We know that a huge amount of water service lead piping are located in lower-income neighborhoods.

REAL TALK:

JOINT COUNCIL MEETING:

CONFERENCE:

BUSINESS UPDATES:

NEW BUSINESS:



The next meeting is scheduled to take place Thursday, March 18 via WebEx from 10:00am – 1:00pm.

The meeting adjourned at

Minutes submitted by:

Lori Welcher-Evans, Recording Secretary