



SC Commission for Minority Affairs Board of Commissioners Meeting

Meeting Date: Friday, December 2, 2022 at 10:11 AM

Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 10:01 AM by Vice Chair Juwan Ayers.

Attendance

Commissioners

Vice Chair Juwan Ayers

Rev. Michelle Law-Gordon

Calvin Whitfield

CMA staff attendees: Dr. Delores Dacosta, Alana Grant (CMA), Anthony Brockington (CMA), Brenton Brown (CMA), Cynthia Haddad (CMA), Ivan Segura (CMA), Antonio Price (CMA), Margaret Tillman (CMA), Indyah Hugh (CMA), Dr. Robert Fenton (CMA) and Shireese Bell (CMA) and Tim McCray (CMA)

Approval of agenda

Rev. Michelle Law-Gordon made the motion to approve the agenda. Calvin Whitfield seconded the motion. The agenda was approved unanimously. **Approved.**

Approval of Minutes

Rev. Michelle Law-Gordon made the motion to approve the minutes. Calvin Whitfield seconded the motion. The minutes were approved with one correction. **Approved.**

Comments and Observations

Vice Chair Juwan Ayers asked Rev. Michelle Law-Gordon to consider stepping in as Chaplin. Rev. Michelle Law-Gordon accepted. Dr. DaCosta named Rev. Michelle Law-Gordon as the Chaplin for the Board of Commissioners.

Executive Director's Report

Dr. DaCosta reminded the board that this is the first in person meeting since 2020. DaCosta gave an overview of the last six months:

- CMA needs five additional commissioners to complete its board because the statute

requires ten commissioners. The Governor's office has implemented a new process to expedite the process.

- Two candidates are expected to join the board: Julio Hernandez from the president's office at Clemson University and Jill Littlejohn former President of the Urban League in the upstate.
- The vacant seats are in Congressional District 2, 4,5 and at-large because Sancho Baker does not want to be reappointed.
- CMA is in a new and better office space. The move was strategically planned. Representative Shannon Erickson and Senator Darrell Jackson are our biggest supporters for funding and have made sure that all requests have been granted. Prior to DaCosta joining CMA in 2018, every audit had an issue. From 2018 forward, the audits have been clean. CMA has exceeded its goals in the Accountability Report. Last month CMA went before the Governor's team and presented its budget. The initial request was for \$450,000 for recurring expenses for relocating.
 - There is a provision in there that says every year there's 2-3% increase in rent. It is in this year's budget so that is recurring as the rent and utilities increase. There is also an increase request for publications. The statute requires CMA to produce one statistical profile annually or biannually.
 - DaCosta requested \$150,000 recurring for database management. CMA partnered with Probation and Parole to create and manage a Second Chance database for the state to reduce recidivism over the state.
 - CMA requested \$100,000 for a multimedia room where videos and podcasts could be produced. A 30-second commercial cost CMA \$20,000 to produce. It makes financial sense to design a space suitable for producing promotional materials for the agency.
 - Additionally, \$55,000 was requested for a security system. CMA is the only state agency in this building. If accepted, the requested total is \$505,000 bringing the budget to \$3.3 million. The budget and staff have doubled. The space was needed, and it shows growth in areas that were not part of the agency.
- Last year, CMA signed sixty MOUs that were included in the Accountability Report.
 - Two new partnerships have been added: The Klein Fund which helps small businesses and the University of North Carolina Kenan Institute of Private Industries which support minority businesses.

- Five MOUs have been renewed: Able South Carolina helping them reach people with disabilities, DEODAS getting information to minority communities about drug and alcohol abuse services, South Carolina Department of Disability and Special Needs which is a growing part of the agency thanks to Jerry's work with the Commission for the Blind. He has created a directory of services to present to anyone who needed them. Vocational Rehabilitation and translation services have increased.
- Ivan Segura received a thank you from Lexington County for helping them solve a child rape case. That help ended with a conviction and a twenty-year sentence of the man that raped a seven-year-old girl. CMA's services go beyond this building.
- There is no shortage of getting professional development. Everyone is required to take advantage of professional development opportunities to improve and enhance your skills.
- CMA has been instrumental in helping HBCUs connect to IT companies for internships.
- The Hispanic division continues to provide the cultural educational sessions at high schools throughout the state educating them on the resources available to them.
- At the first Native American Advisory Committee meeting, CMA recognized tribes and groups with their own proclamations signed by Governor McMaster. Only CMA can recognize a tribe in South Carolina on the state level. In the past, tribes received a letter that states they are now state recognized. This year each tribe received a framed proclamation.
- CMA is in the process of deciding on a company to develop the monitoring system for Second Chance. Parole and Probation and the Department of Corrections looked at the same companies; therefore, a company needs to be identified to come in and get data people trained. CMA is working on a Felon Friendly Business Directory of companies that would consider hiring those with criminal records.
- The CMA is celebrating its 30th anniversary! The commissioners have been asked to help raise \$100,000 for scholarships for "average" students because scholarships are always given to honor students. Academic funding is difficult to obtain for "C" students. For scholarships, the committee will also consider students who have a parent or parents who are incarcerated. It's the only way to end the cycle!

CMA Small Business has been looking into helping Vorhees College build a hotel and conference center. Vorhees' board of directors wants to own the hotel, so it's just a matter of finding a franchise that will collaborate with Vorhees. This will benefit Denmark economically.

Because professors are having difficulty finding housing, this hotel will have mid-range standard rooms and an extended stay. Many people commute because there are no places to stay.

Staff Reports

Brenton Brown provided an update on the merger. Agency leadership of the Human Affairs Commission and CMA met a couple of times in person and corresponded heavily via email and electronic communication on Proviso 117.174. This proviso was included in the General Appropriation Bill last year. The bill created a merger study to look at the feasibility of merging CMA and the Human Affairs Commission. After looking at the mission and visions of the agency and their inner workings and how they work with the public, it was determined that a merger would not be feasible.

CMA is the only agency that focuses on economic development for underserved and marginalized communities. South Carolina is one of the few states that has a dedicated agency for this purpose. Merging with another agency would limit CMA's ability to specifically identify problems and find solutions in minority communities, which was our main concern. Brenton emphasized the importance of not losing sight of who we are and how we affect and help communities.

Human Affairs defines minority differently than the state does for this agency when it comes to federal contracts and other funding. The agencies couldn't agree on a name for the organization. Including the word minority in their title would affect their federal funding, and leaving it out would change the identity and who we help

The General Assembly received electronic and hand-delivered copies of the report. The Human Affairs Commission also submitted a proposal that included some of the same information. The decision will be made during the upcoming session.

- Brenton was asked to provide an update on the proposed CMA name change. Because it was approved in the previous legislative session, the name change will have to be resubmitted to the upcoming General Assembly.

Dr. Robert Fenton provided Research and Planning personnel update. One person has been hired and two positions are open for applications. Dr. Fenton wants to expand the agency's capabilities to conduct research in the field. Monthly briefs are published as much possible. The pandemic provided the country and state an opportunity to work with and alleviate some of the historical and structural issues affecting minority communities. The 2021 data indicates that not very much has changed.

Dr. Fenton is currently working on 2022-23 fiscal year statistical profile that will have new and updated data. It will include a comparison of South Carolina and other states in the region: North Carolina, Georgia, and Tennessee. Statistical Profile for Fiscal Year 2021 is an attempt to bring in research on a range of data points and variables that are generally associated with persistent socioeconomic disparities between the state's racial and ethnic minorities and the majority population. We primarily focused on the issue of education attainment, home ownership and

affordable housing. In 2019, research found that minorities that possessed bachelor's degrees or above earned 1.6 more times than those with some college and 2.1 times more than those with a high school diploma or equivalent.

There are chapters on a variety of topics, including poverty, business, health, and education. There are also chapters on cultural subcategories, such as the different types of Hispanics living in South Carolina. Where do Asian-Americans and Pacific Islanders come from? What subcategories do we have because there is such a wide range of racial, religious, and linguistic diversity among Asian-Americans? It is critical for CMA to be at the forefront of informing other state agencies and other members of our community about the diversity of our Asian-American and Pacific Islander population. The Statistical Analysis for next year will delve deeper into this population.

Chasity Lamp from Agency Relationship Management for the Department of Administration advised that the goal is to work closely with Mauricio to make sure they are providing the best service.

Action Items

Dr. DaCosta and Vice Chair Juwan Ayers discussed whether future meetings will be in person or virtual. An email to determine which format will be sent to commissioners.

Juwan called for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Law-Gordon made the motion to adjourn. Commissioner Whitfield seconded the motion to adjourn.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:07 AM

Respectfully submitted by:
Administrative Coordinator