



## SC Commission for Minority Affairs Board of Commissioners Meeting

**Meeting Date: Thursday, June 23, 2022 at 2:01 PM**

---

### **Call to order**

The meeting was called to order at 2:01 PM by Vice Chair Juwan Ayers.

### **Attendance**

#### **Commissioners**

Vice Chair Juwan Ayers

Chief Bill Harris

Rev. Michelle Law-Gordon

Ms. Tammie Hall-Wilson

Calvin Whitfield

**CMA staff attendees:** Dr. Delores Dacosta, Alana Grant (CMA), Alex Tovar (CMA), Anthony Brockington (CMA), Brenton Brown (CMA), Cynthia Haddad (CMA), Ivan Segura (CMA), LaTonya Franklin (CMA), Margaret Tillman (CMA), Raphael Ofendo-Reyes (CMA), Dr. Robert Fenton (CMA) and Shireese Bell (CMA) and Tim McCray (CMA)

### **Approval of agenda**

Chief Bill Harris made the motion to approve the agenda. Rev. Michelle Law-Gordon seconded the motion. The agenda was approved unanimously. **Approved.**

### **Approval of Minutes**

Chief Bill Harris made the motion to approve the minutes. Calvin Whitfield seconded the motion. The agenda was approved unanimously. **Approved.**

### **Comments and observations**

Vice Chair Juwan Myers welcomed Calvin Whitfield to the CMA Board of the Commissioners and briefly noted his work with federal construction contracts.

Chief Bill Harris welcomed Calvin Whitfield to the board. He noted the diversity of the board members and how well the board members work together.

Rev. Michelle Law-Gordon welcomed Calvin Whitfield to the board. She updated the board that she will be back in South Carolina serving at Shaw Air Force Base for the next six months.

## **Executive Director's Report**

Dr. DaCosta informed the board that CMA is moving into a new building in September which will have more space for in person meetings.

She introduced CMA's interns, Jacelyn Arradaza and Daniel James and new CMA staff members: Patricia Gailliard and Tonya Roper.

She gave an update on applications for commissioners. There are several pending applications because applicants were unable to submit completed application packets to go before the Judiciary Committee's deadline. There are five or six people waiting. The board needs a Hispanic and Asian board member. Dr. DaCosta stressed that the board members must be as diverse as the agency. Applicants are strongly encouraged to wait for the next cycle that begins in January. Several packets did not have the required five letters of recommendation. The packet requires a background check as well as financial information. Dr. DaCosta highlighted several key upcoming events and initiatives:

- CMA received every budget item requested including six new full-time employees (FTEs) to cover new areas we have been assigned to work on this year. CMA will be working with the Department of Corrections and Probation and Parole to develop a tracking system of formerly incarcerated individuals. That division will be housed at CMA and will include two data analysts positions to help with that data. CMA is budgeted to receive \$250,000 to purchase the software to set up this new program.
- CMA has been asked by the Legislative Oversight Committee (LOC) to assist Parole Probation and Pardon (PPP) in developing a directory of employers who will employ formerly incarcerated individuals. LOC saw CMA's resource guide for second chance and asked that we work with PPP to create a statewide guide identifying employers who will hire individuals with a criminal history.
- Senator Jackson wants to consider merging CMA with Human Affairs. There is going to be a study to determine if that is possible. Staff will be interviewed by members of the administration to see whether it is a good fit or impossible. Either way CMA will remain neutral and adjust to the outcome. The survey has been agreed on and should be concluded in December. Senator Jackson feels the longevity of CMA and Human Affairs will depend upon what both agencies offer South Carolina. He thinks it is better if the agencies merged. Both agencies must be mindful that the laws that govern human affair are very different from the laws that govern CMA. The study will give facts and help to guide the legislature accordingly.
- Next year, CMA will be celebrating thirty years and reinstating its scholarship program. Staff is putting together scholarship fund raising packets and a donors' list of people known to support CMA's efforts. Commissioners are asked to identify one sponsor. Scholarships will go to high school seniors and

college students that are struggling academically. Money will also go to students participating in Norma Brown's group of young CEO's and a Hispanic organization that trains young people to be young entrepreneurs. The goal is to raise \$150,000. CMA will have a full year to raise money. Procurement has confirmed that CMA's legislation says the agency can raise unlimited amounts of money. DaCosta ended her remarks by asking the commissioners and staff to provide Tonya Roper the email addresses of any potential sponsors.

## **Staff Reports**

Brenton Brown provided a legislative update regarding the state budget:

- The budget will be \$13.8 billion and that includes a \$1 billion tax rebate.
- Teachers' salaries increased by \$4,000 to raise the minimum starting salary to \$40,000.
- State employees will receive a 3% raise and \$1,500 bonus for and an increase in starting salaries and pay for law enforcement and correctional officers.
- Additional one billion dollars in state funding for roads and infrastructure
- More than \$275 million dollars in annual funding for public education and funding to allow colleges and universities, including technical colleges to freeze in state tuition for undergraduate programs and offset costs for technical colleges
- General Assembly has simplified the income tax code. They have collapsed six brackets down to three, reduces the top marginal individual income tax rate from 7% to 6.5%. They will continue to reduce it by ½ until it reaches 6% and then there will be three tiers. It will go from 6% to 3% depending on income level a person will have no tax rate over time.
- A bill was signed into law to allow income tax credits for using solar energy property to employers who hire veterans or formerly incarcerated nonviolent individuals. The total value of the credit would reach \$6,500 if the employee stays on employer's payroll for three years.
- Election Reform bill was signed into law that allows for two weeks of early voting, mailing absentee ballots and increases the penalty of voter fraud from a misdemeanor to a felony. It also provides that the Senate has authority to confirm the Executive Director of the State Election Commission, but not the five members of the commission. The legislation sets qualifications for the members of the commission and gives the General Assembly the authority to make an appeal to the state Supreme Court to remove any commission member who does not meet those qualifications.

Dr. DaCosta shared that the budget was \$1.5 million when she came to CMA in 2018. As of the 2022 Conference Report, CMA's budget will be \$2.5 million.

Dr. Fenton provided a brief research update. The research is trying to get out is the State Fiscal Abstracted Profile for the Minority Community

- Primarily the findings support the fact that minority communities have socioeconomic discrepancies when it comes to different metrics including home ownership rates, housing, cost burden, educational attainment levels, income and occupational selection.
- The report basically provides the most comprehensive analyses of these different areas and the different metrics according to minority communities.
- All the main program areas metrics for most of these on a state and county level data cannot be found on every single minority. When data is available, it is published. The findings are centered around two important areas: broad coalition of partners in the state legislature and public sector and private sector that would be willing to provide some assistance as far as passing legislation.
- Looking at unemployment according to education attainment levels show that minorities and non-minorities have very low levels of unemployment when it comes to higher educational attainment levels. These levels increase the reason that especially minorities' statistics across the board particularly for the African American and Hispanic communities are lower than the white population particularly. Because the higher level of educational attainment rate is lower for those communities, one of the areas the statistics find influence as far as creating changes to improve educational attainment levels for minority communities whether it is African American, Hispanic, Native American community are three communities the data supports.
- Another area we can find important for determining outcomes is home ownership rate. Minority home ownership rate is lower than the non-white homeownership rate. Cost burden rates that owner occupied is statistically lower than it for renters and that is for both minorities and non-minorities.

Dr. DaCosta emphasized her satisfaction with the quality of the work and information included in the abstract. The information in the abstract is something that has been required of CMA. The first report that came out in 2017-2018 was inadequate. This year CMA will present a high-quality document that will be sent to the commissioners, governor's office and each member of the General Assembly will receive a copy. It will be placed in the library and disseminated around the state as a reference tool for organizations to use the statistical information that's included.

Shireese Bell's rebranding and commercial update advised Dr. DaCosta and the board that the Public Information Division is working on a social media refresh. Andrea is taking the lead on this project to make sure our content is consistent with our colors our fonts and templates, so it is easy to recognize the CMA brand.

- Andrea is also working on moving the Cultural Connections from a quarterly to a

monthly newsletter. Content distribution will increase through more frequent e-blasts. CMA will share more research briefs from Dr. Fenton and his team.

- CMA's intern Daniel is working on a new podcast. More information will be released about that.
- One of the goals for the public information division is to increase CMA's community engagement. Some of the staff attended the Juneteenth Freedom Festival and partnered with DHEC there. Mauricio will be out in the community on John's Island for the Berkley Electric Cooperative Spanish and Latino outreach.

Shireese stated that her goal is to send out a community outreach event calendar. The goal of the commercial is to focus on our community partners. It is through our partnerships that we can do the work we do in the community. The commercial will be played statewide.

Dr. DaCosta wants to get the name of the agency out more. She wants more people aware of the agency and to be acknowledge us as a viable agency in the state. She advised commissioners that we will be looking for them to travel with us. She will take the lead and go out to the Congressional districts getting CMA out there. Dr. DaCosta extended an invitation to the commissioners to visit congressional offices and other community organizations with her after September.

### **Final comments**

Vice Chair Juwan Ayers wanted to know if CMA will be the only tenants in the new building. Dr. Da Cost explains that CMA will be the only state agency in the new building for now. Fortis College is on the first floor and the second and third floors are vacant.

Juwan asked if any of the viewing public had any questions. Dr. DaCosta advised that no one had any comments. She expects once CMA begins having in person meetings we may have questions or comments.

Vice Chair Ayers asked the date of the next meeting. Dr. DaCosta said we need a standard meeting day whether it's the third Thursday of the third month in the quarter. Chief Harris suggested that dates be sent out for the commissioners to decide. The decision was made to send dates and let the commissioners decide which dates.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 2:51 PM