**State of Maryland Commission on Civil Rights**

**Commission Meeting**

**March 14, 2023 – 10am**

**Meeting Held by Google Hangouts Meet**

**MINUTES**

**Commissioners Present:** Stephanie Suerth, MPA, CCEP, Chair; Eileen M. Levitt, SPHR, SHRM-SCP; Magdalena S. Navarro, MSc; Diane E. Bernier; Isabella Firth Shycoff; Jeff Rosen; Gina McKnight Smith

**Management Present:** Alvin O. Gillard, Executive Director; Cleveland L. Horton II, Deputy Director; Terrance Artis, Assistant General Counsel; Kara N. Hunt, PhD, Director of Education & Outreach; Martine Chery, Assistant Director for Administration

**Members of the Public**: Tonya Jones, ,MD. Dept of Housing and Community Development

**Staff Present:** Gerald T. Ford, Executive Associate; Alesha Bell, Unit Supervisor

**Meeting called to order at 10:03 am**

**Motion to approve the January minutes are approved.**

**Chairperson’s Report**

* At the next meeting the Chair wants to begin strategizing on ways to engage the public in attending Commission meetings. .

**Executive Director’s Report**

* The Executive Director thanked the Commissioners for their participation in Human Rights Day in Annapolis.
* The Executive Director thanked the Commissioners for their participation during this legislative session. This session has seen a number of bills introduced which directly impact the work we do and specifically many of these bills seek to amend Title 20.
* On March 23rd, MCCR will be participating in a communications workshop for all staff. Elizabeth Winters of H. R. Fluent Consulting Services will be leading us in a workshop specifically focusing on the Myers Briggs Type Indicator Test. Commissioner Levitt shared information about the origins of the test and how it was reportedly developed by the Nazis to weed out minorities and women. She will send a link to the story she is referring to for staff to review. She thought it was important to have this information so that the exercise is put in a proper context.

**Deputy Director’s Report**

* The Deputy Director highlighted a few points from the Case Processing Unit’s written report.
* Case Processing have submitted 82 closures to HUD at this time. With four months left in the contract year, we anticipate closing 120-130 cases.
* We continue to see an increase in the number of source of income complaints. We have received about 35 or 36 of those in the last 12 months. It is believed these numbers are increasing because more people are now aware of source of income protections.
* Case Processing has completed 220 employment closures. Our EEOC contract is for 560 and we are on track to reach our goal.
* MCCR has received several inquiries pertaining to casinos and their requirements for females to wear heels as a condition of employment. MCCR is reviewing these policies.
* MCCR has settled approximately $180,000 in monetary benefits between the housing and employment units.

**General Counsel’s Report**

* Highlighted the General Counsel’s written report.

**Director of Education & Outreach Report**

* We have a women's History Month event at the Busboys and Poets Venue in Columbia and the Lt. Governor will open the event with remarks.
* WMAC meeting had a guest speaker from Safe Space, Cumberland, who has requested support with regard to some challenges and barriers that they are facing. Specifically, they asked MCCR for a letter of support for their program as they are experiencing what they perceive to be discrimination in terms of the licensing and building occupancy process. Kara will get more background information to provide to the Commissioners.
* In April, there are two Fair Housing forums being planned. One on the Eastern Shore and one in Southern Maryland, more details will be forthcoming.

**Administration Report**

* For FY23 we have a balance of $1.2 million, with 63% of the budget having been spent.
* MCCR has submitted its FY24 budget supplemental request. This request includes funds for additional FTE positions and additional funding (General Funds) to cover the cost of the recently hired contractual staff that began employment during FY23

**Old/New Business**

* The next Commission meeting will be an in- person meeting. The Chair hopes to have at least one in-person meeting per quarter.

**Meeting adjourned at 10:45 am.**