

**State of Maryland Commission on Civil Rights
Commission Meeting
January 11, 2022 – 10am
Meeting Held by Google Hangouts Meet
MINUTES**

Commissioners Present: Stephanie Suerth, MPA, CCEP., Chairperson; Janssen E. Evelyn, Esq., Vice Chairperson; Diane E. Bernier; Eileen M. Levitt, SPHR, SHRM-SCP; Rabbi Binyamin Marwick; Gina McKnight-Smith, PharmD; Gary C. Norman, Esq.; Magdalena S. Navarro, MSc; Jeff Rosen; MBA

Management Present: Alvin O. Gillard, Executive Director; Cleveland L. Horton II, Deputy Director; Nicolette Young, Assistant Director; Glendora C. Hughes, General Counsel; Kara N. Hunt, PhD, Director of Education & Outreach

Staff Present: Dia Drake-Sprague, Education and Outreach Associate

Guests Present: Heidi Arndt, Chief of Staff, Associated Black Charities; MacKenzie Garvin, Deputy Director/COS, Baltimore City Mayor's Office of Employment; Jatna Gomez, Director Equity and Community Engagement, University of Maryland SAFE Center for Human Trafficking Survivors; Shirl Hux, Sales, Nelson Coleman Jewelers

Meeting called to order at 10:03 am

- Motion to approve November 9, 2021 minutes. Request by Chairperson Suerth to add Vice Chairperson Evelyn's attendance to the November meeting minutes. Motion by Commissioner Bernier, seconded by Commissioner McKnight-Smith; minutes with revision approved unanimously.

Chairperson's Report

- Chairperson provided remarks thanking Executive Director Gillard for helping her set the agenda and looks forward to serving in the role of Chair and will collaborate with everyone to carry out the work of the Commission board and agency.
- Chairperson was a guest speaker at the Maryland Equity and Inclusion Leadership Program (MEILP) graduation. She was excited to attend the graduation and impressed with the quality of the program and graduate presentations. The Chair congratulated Kara Hunt, Director of Education and Outreach, and her team on a successful program.

Guest Speakers

- Kara Hunt, Director of Education and Outreach, provided an overview of the MEILP program and introduced the 2021 Class of MEILP graduates.
- Guest speakers provided a synopsis of their class presentations, experiences in the program and how they can apply coursework to their current work environments.
 - Heidi Arndt, Chief of Staff, Associated Black Charities – MEILP Presentation - *Ensuring that a Race Equity Lens is Used When Recruiting for Positions*
 - MacKenzie Garvin, Deputy Director/COS, Baltimore City Mayor's Office of Employment – MEILP Presentation - *Why Would Anyone Work Here? How to Look Within to Improve Job Quality and Retain Your Workforce*

- Jatnna Gomez, Director Equity and Community Engagement, University of Maryland SAFE Center for Human Trafficking Survivors - MEILP Presentation - *8 Weeks and Paid Parental Leave-Why not Maryland*
- Shirl Hux, Sales, Nelson Coleman Jewelers - MEILP Presentation - *The Cost of Everything*
- Guests answered questions from Commission board members.
- Commissioners and management staff provided positive feedback about the MEILP program and congratulated the Education and Outreach staff on another successful year.

Executive Director's Report

- Executive Director looks forward to working with the new Chair and Vice Chair.
- Staff has gone to an exclusive telework schedule in January due to the Omicron variant. Later this month, senior management staff will reassess coming back into the office on a hybrid telework schedule in February.
- The executive management team is working internally to discuss staffing capacity and the appropriate number of staff to effectively perform the duties and responsibilities of each unit. An assessment will be provided to the Commission board prior to the February meeting.

Deputy Director's Report

- Reviewed submitted written report.
- MCCR actively working to fill the staff vacancies as quickly as possible.

Assistant Director's Report

- Reviewed submitted written report.
- Provided an update on efforts to fill staff vacancies.
- Shared an update that the FY 2023 Governor Allowance will be released the week of January 17, 2022.
- MCCR's House legislative budget hearing will be held virtually on Wednesday, January 26th at 1:00 PM. The Senate legislative budget hearing is scheduled for Friday, January 28th at 11:30 AM. Commissioners will be notified if there are any updates to the hearing schedules.

General Counsel's Report

- Reviewed submitted written report.
- Courts continue to be backlogged due to the virus.
- Shared updates about the 2022 legislative session.

Director of Education & Outreach's Report

- Thanked everyone for their positive feedback about the MEILP program and will strive to continue the momentum.
- Reviewed submitted written report.
- Chairperson Suerth asked about the high percentage of dismissed retaliation cases. She appreciates the work of the unit and wanted to know if any of the unit training modules

address retaliation. Ms. Hunt responded that training does address retaliation but there haven't been a lot of requests to focus specifically on this issue.

Old/New Business

- General discussion about the 2022 legislative agenda.
 - The General Counsel will be sending Commissioners guidance on the upcoming session and expectations down the road.
 - Agencies must post positions by each Friday.
 - Recommendation is to meet with Commission board and management staff to discuss legislative positions on Wednesdays or Thursdays.
 - General Counsel is tracking bills that may impact Title 20.
 - Agency will submit testimony to provide either information or support. Very rarely testimony is submitted in opposition of legislation. Will communicate with bill sponsor to discuss technical issues.
 - Anticipate most hearings will be held virtually this session.
 - General Counsel requested Commissioners let her know if there are bills they are interested in reviewing.
 - HB 78 may potentially change the agency's statute. Working with the sponsor to see if the language can be revised.
 - Chair will circulate an email to Commission members to confirm their weekly meeting day and time to discuss legislation.
- Executive Director advised Commission members that the gala might need to either be canceled or rescheduled due to the surge in new COVID-19 cases.
 - Consensus among Commission members is to reschedule the gala to later this summer.
 - New dates will be circulated to the Commission board so a decision can be made within the next two weeks.
- Chairperson Suerth would like to do more collaborative partnerships with local health departments to disseminate information to the public about MCCR services.
- Commission board members are interested in engaging in opportunities to create more synergy between board members and MCCR staff.

Meeting adjourned at 11:53 am.