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Commission on Black Women and Girls

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Agency: Commission on Black Women and Girls

Date: May 29, 2024

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Summary

- The commission is creating a process for filling vacancies. It is outlining requirements for incoming commissioners who will represent students and the labor sector.
- Subcommittees will focus on several key areas that will advise the mayor and city leadership on matters pertaining to improving outcomes for Black women and girls.
- Commissioners seem committed to establishing a strong foundation to ensure the success of the group.

Follow-Up Questions

- Is the commission granted a budget from the city?
- How and when will subcommittee groups meet and can the public participate?
- What are the most important factors that will help set benchmarks and determine the success of the commission, both in the short and long term?

Notes

Commissioners in attendance:

Kathryn Hall, chair

Eugenia Cash-Kirkland, secretary

Stephanie Howse-Jones, council member, Ward 7

Taneisha Fair

Anastasia Sakairoun

Lita-Marie Wills

Dameyonna Willis

Shameka Jones Taylor

Rev. Lisa Goods

Other attendees:

Sierra Lipscomb, assistant law director

The Commission on Black Women and Girls' second formal meeting was called to order at 9:35 a.m. with approximately a dozen in attendance. The meeting began with the approval of the minutes from the April 23 meeting.

Old business

The commission is working to build its web page, which will provide biographies, pictures and contact information for all members within the next 30 days. The site will also serve as a hub for community input, fielding speaking requests and connecting with outside organizations. There are still open positions on the commission, including the role of vice chair.

Application process for commissioners

Willis and Jones Taylor have drafted [a process and list of requirements](#) for new commissioners. It is still a work in progress and was created to help guide the selection process.

Willis said there is one application applicants can use to apply for multiple positions. Another attendee said residency in Cleveland will be required, but employment in the city will not be.

Commissioners also said parental consent will be required for students participating from the Cleveland Metropolitan School District.

Commissioners determined that the applicant selected from the labor sector must be a union member in good standing for at least two years.

Willis said support is available for applicants throughout the application process.

Sakairoun proposed allowing letters of recommendation to accompany student applications. Howse-Jones said that students may not be connected to an adult who can provide them a recommendation letter. She suggested commission members review the current draft of the application process and return the next meeting with proposed timeframes for the selection process.

Mission and purpose

Cash-Kirkland said the commission is still new and is creating pathways to ensure execution of its mission and vision. The commission meetings are held once per month.

The goal is to have meetings available in person and via streaming. Previous meeting minutes are available, and a website for the group is forthcoming.

Hall gave an overview of the purpose of the commission, which is to develop, maintain and share information related to Black women. It serves in an advisory capacity to the mayor's office. The group will work to solicit grants and shape policy decisions. Areas of focus which will inform the subcommittees include:

- Research
- Public hearings
- Education
- Economic development
- Healthcare and mental/behavioral health
- Justice
- Civil rights

Commissioners will be assigned to one or more subgroups. Hall said that transparency, inclusiveness and collaboration are essential to the group's work. Future goals include hosting community listening sessions and working with other organizations in the city.

The commission is committed to establishing a strong foundation that will support its growth.

New business:

- Sakairoun has graduated from law school and is preparing for the bar exam.
- Lipscomb has joined the City of Cleveland Department of Law as House Counsel.
- Howse-Jones advised the commission to think about the quarterly reports that will be presented to City Council, with a report expected by the end of June 2024.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:48 a.m.

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