

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE MEETING
MT. CALVARY AME ZION CHURCH
800 LASALLE STREET
MONROE, NC 28110
www.monroenc.org

October 12, 2023 – 6:30 P.M.

AGENDA

Meeting will be conducted in the sanctuary.

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of Minutes
 - a. Minutes from June 8, 2023 meeting
3. Old Business
4. New Business
5. Adjournment

Mission Statement

The City of Monroe is committed to ensuring that barriers of inequality are removed and all voices are heard. We will develop and improve socio-economic opportunities. We pledge to promote open and inclusive conversations to foster cultural sensitivity that creates a sense of belonging.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee
Meeting Minutes
June 8, 2023 – 6:30 P.M.

The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee met on Thursday, June 8, 2023, at 6:30 p.m. at Mt. Calvary AME Zion Church in Monroe.

Staff Present: Debra Chestnut Reed, Human Resources Director, Liaison, and Sheila Couick, Minute Taker

Members Present: Chairperson Surluta Anthony, Councilman Freddie Gordon, Benita Sanders, Cress Barnes, Melissa McKeown, Melvin Tate (Co-Chairperson), Michael Hall, Selina Campbell, Tamara Williams

Members Absent: Althea Richardson-Tucker, Cynthia Baez, Lanny Lancaster, Swindell Edwards, and Tiffany Wilson

Guest: Jessica Eason, Human Resources Manager

Chairperson Anthony open the meeting at 6:35 p.m. by welcoming everyone to the meeting stating that we had a quorum present for the meeting.

Minutes from May 11, 2023:

The minutes from the May 11, 2023 were accepted and approved as presented. Motion was made by Tamara Williams to accept the May 11, 2023 minutes. Cress Barnes second the motion. Chairperson Anthony conducted a vote with all members.

Ayes: Chairperson Surluta Anthony, Councilman Freddie Gordon, Benita Sanders, Cress Barnes, Melissa McKeown, Melvin Tate (Co-Chairperson), Michael Hall, Selina Campbell, Tamara Williams

Nays: None

Minutes were approved by all in attendance by vote.

Old Business:

Chairperson Anthony stated under Old Business it was suggested that ideals on committee goals and procedures was to be discussed at this meeting.

Benita Sanders suggested participating in the Juneteenth celebration at Belk Tonawanda Park. Benita Sanders stated that she had completed registration paperwork for her organization to participate at the Juneteenth Celebration and commented that the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee could share a table with her. The City of Monroe is hosting this event. Benita stated that this would show the community that the City of Monroe has a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, which would help get the information out to the public. Benita stated even though we don't have materials to hand out

we could have a one-page handout with information on it. Cress Barnes asked if it was too late to get a table.

Benita Sanders stated that we would need to check with the City of Monroe's Parks and Recreation Department. Chairperson Anthony stated that she could contact Kelly Corcoran-Walters in reference to getting a table. Cress Barnes stated that her restaurant could donate drinks and snacks for the table.

Chairperson Anthony asked what the consensus of the group was on participating in the Juneteenth Celebration. The consensus from the group was to participate in the Juneteenth Celebration by show of hands.

Chairperson Anthony stated that the budget has to be spent this month and thanked Cress Barnes for the donation of drinks and food, however, we need to spend some money. The training budget of \$9,000 will be used to secure a consultant, the budget for shirts and pins has \$347.47 remaining, promotion and publication has \$985.00 remaining, programs/projects has \$1,000 and miscellaneous has \$2,000. The Juneteenth Celebration would fall in the programs/project budget. Money has been spent on shirts in the amount of \$652.53 and printing of flyers in the amount of \$15.00.

Chairperson Anthony stated that with Tiffany not being at the meeting she could not provide an update on the tablecloth. Chairperson Anthony stated that she needed other committee members to step-up to the table to assist with purchasing of items.

Chairperson Anthony stated that she heard someone say something about having materials to pass out at the Juneteenth Celebration. She stated that we needed a pamphlet that provided information on who we are and what we are doing. This would go in the promotional items category but it could also go in the program/project category. Chairperson Anthony stated that we could order more shirts. Chairperson Anthony stated that we may need to have a call meeting before the end of the month to discuss budget.

Chairperson Anthony asked if anyone was willing to work on a pamphlet or brochure for the committee. Melissa McKeown stated that she could do that and asked for the logo to be sent to her electronically. Sheila Couick stated she could send the logo to her.

Chairperson Anthony asked Melissa to make the pamphlet colorful. Melissa stated that she had a program that she uses to make programs and brochures.

Chairperson Anthony asked if there was a group photo. A group photo was taken however it was with the larger group before changing the size of the committee.

Debra C. Reed commented that at the last meeting there was discussion about Dr. Samuel being brought back. Finance indicated that timeline that we are up against is that the \$9,000 for training has to be in a contract to roll forward into the fiscal year 2024 budget. The remaining dollars have to be used by June 30. We need to get a contract with Dr. Samuel in place by June 23. Debra commented that the committee needed to decide on what they want Dr. Samuel to do because this time would be more for guidance than training. There are some items that Dr. Samuel will need to bring and we need to see if the dollar figure is acceptable. The Chair will need to contact Dr. Samuel as soon as possible so that a contract can be sent to him.

Chairperson Anthony stated that Dr. Samuel would not be used for training but for consulting. Debra stated that Dr. Samuel could help the community understand the committee's mission. Debra stated that the funding would be better spent if the committee would meet to discuss what they would like for Dr. Samuel to do.

Chairperson Anthony asked if anyone was available to help work on a draft contract for Dr. Samuel on June 12, 2023. Debra stated 10:00 a.m. would work on June 12, 2023. Benita, Tamara, and Ms. Anthony will meet with Debra to discuss the contract on Monday, June 12, 2023 at 10:00 a.m. Debra indicated meeting of June 12 should be cancelled due to not being able to conduct meetings outside of the main meeting without proper notifications. Chairperson Anthony will meet with Debra to discuss the contract with Dr. Samuel on June 12, 2023.

Chairperson Anthony stated that we had someone working on a pamphlet and we need workers for the Juneteenth Celebration.

Chairperson Anthony stated that we needed to order more shirts to have on hand. We may use them as a giveaway item and then to have some as spares. Chairperson Anthony asked if anyone had a contact for shirts. Cress Barnes asked who did the original shirts? Chairperson Anthony stated that it was a local company that was used, but it was not Sports to You. Sheila Couick commented that it was a company in Monroe and that she had the invoice. Chairperson Anthony asked if everyone was satisfied with the shirts? The question was asked if the logo would peel off in time? Michael Hall stated that the shirt was good but it would be better printed than an iron-on logo. Michael Hall stated the logo will start breaking down after several washings due to the iron-on logo.

Benita Sanders asked how would the items be paid for – does DEI have a credit card? Debra C. Reed stated that this is the only committee to have funding and each person will have to pay for the items and submit an original receipt for reimbursement.

Benita Sanders asked Melissa to send her the vendor information for a banner and she would work on that item. Chairperson Anthony stated that would be under promotional items in the budget.

Chairperson Anthony stated that we need invoices in by June 23. Debra C. Reed stated that the contract needed to be done by June 23 and the remaining needed to be invoiced by June 30.

Chairperson Anthony stated that we had committee members working on pamphlets, brochures, giveaway bags, and talked about more shirts.

Melissa McKeown asked if a vote was needed for her to spend the remaining money in promotions/publications. Chairperson Anthony stated that she could spend the money and she needed a motion.

Co-Chairperson Tate stated with us being out in the community could we spend the money on promotional items. Do we need a motion? Chairperson Anthony stated that once we had a plan we would make one motion.

Chairperson Anthony stated that the Juneteenth Celebration would fall under programs/projects. We need to get permission for our own table and get giveaways. Co-Chairperson Tate asked if Cress Barnes could provide refreshments. Cress stated that she was going to donate the refreshments but if funding needed to be spent then that was fine.

Chairperson Anthony asked committee members who would be willing to work the table at the Juneteenth Celebration event? Cress Barnes and Chairperson Anthony volunteered to work the table. Cost is \$50 for a table. Chairperson Anthony stated she would call about getting a table at the Juneteenth Celebration.

Co-Chairperson Tate commented that we needed something related to Juneteenth to hand out at the event. Chairperson Anthony asked the committee for suggestions. Benita stated that Althea Richardson Tucker handed out bags of candy last year and that she would contact her. Tamara Wilson stated that she could get the cloth and cut it and place candy in it. Chairperson Anthony stated that a receipt will be needed for reimbursement. Michael Hall asked if we had to make all of the decision tonight on spending of the funds. Chairperson Anthony stated that funds not used will be lost at the end of June.

Councilmember Gordon commented that the dollar amount originally granted was \$14,000 and we have spent \$667. 53. The amount of money that the City committed to this committee was actually done in February 2023. Councilmember Gordon stated that we should not be under the gun to spend the remainder of this funding by June 30. Councilmember Gordon commented that this could be discussed amongst the Councilmember to see if the remainder could be spent at a later time. Debra C. Reed commented that Finance told her that we needed to spend the funds or that they would be forfeited. Debra stated the staff report indicated a timeframe of February to June for the spending of the funds. Finance is telling us that these funds cannot be rolled forwards. Councilmember Gordon commented that this is June 8 and June 30 will be here quickly. You will not be able to find a vendor that will be able to do that quick of a turn around on items. Melissa McKeown asked if we just needed to have it on order and an invoice but not have received it by June 30. We will need to have a receipt.

Councilmember Gordon commented that he would be glad to talk Council about the funds if it would help, rather than loose the funds, and get the unused funds rolled forward to fiscal year 2024. Councilmember Gordon asked if we had any type of agreement in place or had we talked with Dr. Samuel. Chairperson Anthony stated that it was up to us to create the contract for Dr. Samuel. Debra stated that normally we get the contract from the vendor and asked if a conversation had taken place with Dr. Samuel. Debra C. Reed asked Councilmember Gordon if he planned on talking to Council on Tuesday, June 13 in reference to the funds being rolled forward. Councilmember Gordon commented that he would be glad to talk to Council about rolling the funds into FY24. Chairperson Anthony stated that would be a great help and would allow us to use the funds wisely. Melissa McKeown stated that marketing materials will not go bad so we could go ahead and get those items.

Chairperson Anthony asked the committee about hosting an event and inviting the public in to meet the committee. This would use the funding in the miscellaneous account.

Chairperson Anthony asked members who would be willing to work on a presentation for the community. Selina Campbell, Michael Hall, Tamara Wilson, Melissa McKeown, Chairperson Anthony, Benita Sanders, and Councilmember Gordon. The community event would include refreshments.

Chairperson Anthony stated that sometime in the future we will need to discuss the possibility of accepting new applications.

Chairperson Anthony stated that we could order more shirts and spend the remainder in that budget.

Tamara Wilson made a motion for Melissa McKeown to spend the remaining funds of \$985 for promotional/publication materials and for funds to be spent in other budget items. Co-Chairperson Tate second the motion. Chairperson Anthony ask for a vote on the motion.

Ayes: Chairperson Surluta Anthony, Councilman Freddie Gordon, Benita Sanders, Cress Barnes, Melissa McKeown, Melvin Tate (Co-Chairperson), Michael Hall, Selina Campbell, Tamara Williams

Nays: None

The motion was approved by all in attendance by vote.

Chairperson Anthony stated that the job fair was a success with 258 residents attending. We were given credit for the high attendance due to them not having that many in attendance in the past. A report was done listing everything that was done by the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee for the job fair and sent to Pat Kahle. Pat would like to recognize the committee with an award at a City Council meeting. This presentation is scheduled for the June 13 Council meeting if that date changes Chairperson Anthony will let everyone know. Debra C. Reed stated that you needed to be on the agenda prior to the meeting. Cress Barnes states that things can be added to the agenda and ask Councilmember Gordon if he could add this to the agenda. Councilmember Gordon stated that the Mayor and Mayor Pro-tem can add items to the agenda not him. Chairperson Anthony stated she would talk to Mayor Holloway in reference to adding this to the meeting agenda.

Chairperson Anthony asked Co-Chairperson Tate to step in and handle the meeting while she stepped out. Co-Chairperson Tate stated that we are celebrating the job fair success but we are stuck with people still not recognizing this committee. Since we have started DEI another level has been added "A" for accessibility so it is now Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA). This includes people with disabilities. What can DEI do for people with disabilities? Partnerships should open us up to meeting people of different demographics and ethnicity. Need to remove the barriers for minorities. Co-Chairperson want to get to work on removing barriers. We should not abandon the motto because it will help make the difference. Monroe is the capital city of Union County and we are still deprived at the income level. We listed four bullets in the beginning that will take on tasks that will change the mind set and behavior to be more inclusive of the community and accept others.

New Business:

Cress Barnes commented that Union Pride would be held in September at Belk Tonawanda Park and that she would complete a registration form for this committee.

Co-Chairperson Tate asked Debra C. Reed if the City has a DEI position within the City and if not could it be established. Debra stated that a position could be established and asked what this position would do? Debra C. Reed stated that the budget had already been created for the new year and this position would have to be requested. Co-Chairperson Tate stated that this could be something that Dr. Samuel could help with.

Chairperson Anthony asked the members to read the mission statement aloud.

Chairperson Anthony adjourned the meeting at 7:36 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Sheila Couick.

Surluta Anthony, Chairperson