

FLORIDA COUNCIL ON THE SOCIAL STATUS OF BLACK MEN AND BOYS

MEETING MINUTES

A Teleconference meeting of the Florida Council on the Social Status of Black Men and Boys was held on Tuesday, June 21, 2011.

Council Members Present:

Eddy Regnier, Chair
Albert Simpson, Vice Chair
Ron Henderson, 2nd Vice Chair
Argatha Gilmore
Matthew Gregory
William Harden
Ben Shirley
Shila Salem
Andre Smith
Lois Scott

Council Members Absent:

Janetta Cureton, 1st Vice Chair
Wansley Walters
Gypsy Gallardo
Gary Siplin
Perry Thurston
Stephen Wise

Others:

Ms. Ana Sanchez (for Wansley Walters)
Taneka Bango (for Gary Siplin)

First Agenda Item: Welcome

Chairman Eddy Regnier thanked everyone for being on the conference call and thereafter requested the roll call to begin.

Second Agenda Item: Roll Call

Roll call was executed by Council staff Tawanna Leven-Forbes.

Third Agenda Item: Opening Invocation

The invocation was rendered by Rev. Simpson.

Fourth Agenda Item: Call to Order

Chairman Regnier called the meeting to order at 2:10 p.m. and moved to the next agenda item.

Fifth Agenda Item: Chairman's Comments

Chairman Regnier stated that this has been a tough month to get quorums and get business taken care of, but hope to have a solution to this problem soon. He stated that he would try to avoid lengthy meetings. Chairman Regnier stated that he would like to talk about how to get members more involved in Council business. He moved to the next agenda item and opened the floor for member comments.

Sixth Agenda Item: Member Comments

There were no comments from Council members.

Seventh Agenda Item: Adoption of Outstanding Minutes

Chairman Regnier stated that the adoption of meeting minutes will be deferred for a later date due to the lack of a quorum.

Eighth Agenda Item: Subcommittee Volunteers

Chairman Regnier asked Council staff to read the names of members who volunteered to serve on each subcommittee. He asked for those members that have not volunteered to join the committee of their choice.

Mr. Matthew Gregory volunteered to serve on the Employment & Economics and Education Subcommittees.

Ms. Argatha Gilmore volunteered to serve on the Education Subcommittee.

Chairman Regnier stated that an email was sent by Council staff to all Council members of the Subcommittee meeting schedule. He stated that he would like to look at the structure of the 2010 Annual Report and review each section looking at how it is organized and plan for the structure of the 2011 Annual Report.

Mr. Ron Henderson stated that there has not been any feedback on any of the recommendations made by the Council in the Annual Reports. He stated that the Council should go back and review all recommendations and focus on them.

Chairman Regnier agreed with Mr. Henderson and suggested that each Council member review copies of the Annual Report from the past. He moved to the next agenda item.

Ninth Agenda Item: Discussion of Absenteeism Letters

Chairman Regnier stated that for the last two years the Council has had problems in establishing a quorum and attempts had been made in the past to get better participation. He stated that the problems exist on teleconferences as well as face to face meetings. Chairman Regnier stated that if absenteeism continues it will undermine the Council.

Ms. Scott stated that her director contacted her regarding a letter that was sent by the Council regarding attendance. She stated that the letter implied that she was not participating on the Council. Ms. Scott asked if there was a discussion at a previous meeting about sending out this letter.

Chairman Regnier stated that the intent was to send letters to the appointing authorities to educate them about the Council, stating that it is a requirement by statute that members participate. He said that the letter was not meant for embarrassment or to

cause difficulty to anyone for not participating. Chairman Regnier stated that the letters was only meant to educate and to get help from the appointing authorities and department heads in assuring the presence of member's. He stated that the letter was sent out with packaged information which included the Council's Bylaws and meeting schedules.

Rev. Simpson stated that when the discussion of the letter was fostered the Council was in Miami; and the letter was discussed because of the new transitions in government, saying that the new administration was not astute to the purpose of the Council and the statutory responsibilities of the appointees.

Ms. Scott thanked Chairman Regnier and Rev. Simpson for explaining the purpose behind the letter and stated that she understood the purpose of the letter, but her concern was the tone of the letter.

Mr. Henderson stated that he understands the purpose of the letter and agreed with sending the letters out to the department heads, but the tone of the letter gave his department head the appearance that he was a slacker and had abandoned the Council.

Chairman Regnier stated to Mr. Henderson that it is his intensions to call his department head to discuss any negative ideas about him. He added that his purpose is to correct the problem so the Council can establish a quorum and conduct business. Chairman Regnier stated that he does not want to create any negative impressions for people who are loyal and participates.

Ms. Scott stated that if there are issues with members of the Council that are not attending, absenteeism should be addressed to those individuals and there appointing authorities.

Chairman Regnier said that in a previous meeting he stated that he will try and make the meeting brief. He asked if there were any further comments from the Council and there were none. He moved to the next agenda item.

Tenth Agenda Item: Data Collection Questions

Chairman Regnier stated that he would like to discuss data collection questions and what are the correct questions to ask for certain data.

Mr. Smith stated that in coming up with the correct questions it should be discussed during the subcommittee meetings. He stated that the education subcommittee will develop at least eight to ten questions focusing on the issues of dropouts and dropout prevention; and send them to the superintendents to see if we can get them to respond. Mr. Smith stated that the information would be incorporated into the Annual Report and the recommendations of the Council would be based on the superintendent's response.

He stated that he is hoping that the data and information could be used to monitor over time and become a core part of the Annual Report with updates on the progress.

Chairman Regnier said that Council member Gypsy Gallardo stated in a previous meeting that some of this information is in previous reports. He stated that each member should review the past Annual Reports before their assigned subcommittee meetings to see what data the Council currently has.

Ms. Salem stated that the Council may want to consider having someone from the Florida Prosecuting Attorney's Association (FPAA) to talk to the Council about their work as it relates to disparity and sentencing. She explained that after an arrest information is sent to the state prosecutors to determine what action should be taken in the judicial system. Ms. Salem stated that every state attorney in Florida is a member of the FPAA.

Rev. Simpson stated that it would be very beneficial to have a representative from the FPAA come and educate the Council on how they view disparity and sentencing and what the Council could do to help the population.

Mr. Hardin stated that the attorney's have the discretions to convert some of the African American youths to alternative programs.

Rev. Simpson stated that in Jacksonville he was engaged in discussions with other colleagues about individuals that were detained who had mental illnesses and characteristics of the disorder.

Chairman Regnier stated that his thoughts are that agencies does not make the decisions, the judge makes the decisions. He said that services are not available for the mentally disabled that are being detained.

Chief Gilmore stated that when a person has committed a crime most of the time dependent upon the severity of the crime the officer is bound to make an arrest. She explained that it is difficult for an officer to make the call of an arrest on the streets. Chief Gilmore stated that to have a Judge or re-entry person come before the Council in a panel setting could be very educational and could find out what the Council can do to help.

Ms. Salem stated that she could get the numbers of the incarcerated adult population of those who have been diagnosed with a mental illness with the Department of Corrections (DOC). She stated that as long as the individual(s) are in DOC's care they receive treatment for the mental health issue, but the individual must be willing to accept the health care that is offered.

Chairman Regnier stated that he is interested in knowing the number of the adult population with a mental illness that are incarcerated, but would also like to have the numbers for the juvenile population with mental issues. He stated that the Council needs to look into who could be contacted for inquiries about educating kids who drop-out of school, kids who come out of school with GED's or certificates of completion but cannot read or write.

Mr. Smith suggested that the Council utilize Mr. Jerrod Roberson as a resource for questions concerning education and drop-outs once he becomes the new Commissioner. He stated that Mr. Roberson was over the Black Alliance for education in Georgia.

Chairman Regnier stated that he would like to know the actual number for unemployment and what percentage of African American males who are affected by it.

Ms. Scott stated that demographics could be pulled for the state of Florida's population. She stated that the unemployment rates of minorities are higher than Caucasians.

Rev. Simpson stated that when looking at numbers in a statistician point of view, they look at variables such as geographical areas, gender, cultural and other factors which are collected from the census. He said that when looking at raw numbers some things may not been reported.

Chairman Regnier stated that things are so complicated but the Council has to start somewhere. He stated that the Council needs to know what's happening to people that have lost their healthcare coverage due to lay-offs and how they are getting their health needs met.

Mr. Harden stated that some are enrolling in Medicaid and ACHA; and he will get the significant number of those enrolling in Medicaid due to lay-offs.

Chairman Regnier asked if there were any further comments from the Council and there were none; he moved to the next agenda item.

Eleventh Agenda Item: Discussion of Business Meeting and Public Forum for Jacksonville Quarterly Meeting, September 8 & 9

Chairman Regnier inquired about the upcoming meeting in Jacksonville, Florida.

Ms. Forbes stated that the meeting is scheduled to take place in Jacksonville for September 8th and 9th. She stated that the September 8 meeting will take place at the Regency Hyatt Riverfront in Jacksonville. Ms. Forbes said that the secretary for Dr. Danford, president of the Jacksonville Urban League contacted her to say that he will be hosting the Council's September 9 meeting at the Urban League facility.

Chairman Regnier moved to the next agenda item.

Twelfth Agenda Item: Future Council & Subcommittee Meeting Dates

Chairman Regnier stated that the November meeting is undecided on which day in November the Council will meet. He said that the Black Caucus would rather meet on the 18 but is still working on their agenda. Chairman Regnier asked the Council if they would like to follow the same format from September's meeting of a two day meeting for November and have a meeting on both the 17th and 18th.

Ms. Scott stated that having separate meetings with subcommittees to determining what will be in the reports ahead of time will make it easier for the person(s) who will be pulling the report together

Mr. Henderson stated that the question is who will be doing the editing of the Annual Report, and would that person need time for clarifications, and would the Council need time with them to go through the report and ask questions. He stated that these are the types of things that should be address and to make sure the Annual Report does not miss its due date of December 15.

Chairman Regnier asked Council staff about who was used in the past to edit the Annual Report and who could the Council use this year.

Mr. Nuss stated that each year the Annual Report was done by different people. He said that if the Council cannot find anyone that the Attorney General's office would have to edit the report. Mr. Nuss stated that it would be best to get someone outside of the agency.

Chairman Regnier asked if there were any comments, and there were none. He moved to the next agenda item.

Fourteenth Agenda Item: For the Good of the Order

Chairman Regnier said that his desire is that each month the Council would make a quorum. He said that he has been working hard to make things happen in order to get business done.

Fifteenth Agenda Item: Adjournment

Chairman Regnier asked for a motion for adjournment. Lois Scott motioned that the meeting be adjourned; Albert Simpson seconded the motion. Chairman Regnier declared the meeting adjourned.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:20 p.m.