

FLORIDA COUNCIL ON THE SOCIAL STATUS OF BLACK MEN AND BOYS

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

A Teleconference meeting of the Florida Council on the Social Status of Black Men and Boys was held on Tuesday, April 26, 2011.

Council Members Present:

Dr. Eddy Regnier, Chairman
Rev. Dr. Albert Simpson, Vice Chair
Mr. Ronald Henderson, 2nd Vice Chair

Council Members Absent:

Dr. Janetta Cureton, 1st Vice Chair

First Agenda Item: Welcome

Chairman Eddy Regnier welcomed everyone on the conference call to the meeting 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

There was none.

Fourth Agenda Item: Call to Order

Chairman Regnier called the meeting to order at 10:54 a.m.

Fifth Agenda Item: Chairman's Comments

Chairman Regnier talked about two issues of focus for the Council to work and getting them accomplished for the year. He stated that in the past the Council looked at issues involving crime but not really focusing on it as a preventive model. Chairman Regnier stated that the first focus is black on black crime such as crime against women and murder rates, things that cause disparity, prison sentences which prevent men from working. He said that while reviewing the data the Council will look at the sentencing guidelines, look at what happens in the judicial process, who gets sentenced to jail and the rates of incarceration for minorities verses other ethnic populations. Chairman Regnier stated that the second focus is dropout rates in schools; data on who are the dropouts and what are the issues that influence dropping out of school.

Chairman Regnier moved to the next agenda item and opened the floor to members for comments.

Sixth Agenda Item: Member Comments

Rev. Albert Simpson stated that black on black crime and the dropout rates in schools are two significant topics. He suggested that when looking at the minority verse majority the Council must specify who is in the majority.

Mr. Ronald Henderson stated that he was in favor of narrowing the focus, but there are many issues that affect black men and boys. He stated that it is a great idea to focus on the black on black crime and dropout rates in schools.

Chairman Regnier moved to the next agenda item.

Seventh Agenda Item: Discussion of 2010 Accomplishments

Chairman Regnier stated that he recalled a discussion that began with Rev. Simpson on how he was organizing a local council in Jacksonville.

Rev. Simpson stated that he mentioned the Urban League in Jacksonville. He stated that his approach in Jacksonville was not to say that there was money involved but encouraged people that the local community needed help. He stated that Ms. Gallardo was very instrumental to adapting in following the recommendations of the former Chair by engaging the Urban League in the St. Petersburg area.

Mr. Henderson stated that he used the same approach in Palm Beach County that Rev. Simpson used in Jacksonville. Other accomplishment was the 2010 Annual Report.

Chairman Regnier moved to the next agenda item.

Eighth Agenda Item: Status of Committees

Chairman Regnier stated that the vacant chair positions in the subcommittee and the local council will be discussed at the next scheduled full Council meeting.

Mr. Henderson posed the question, if this year's focus will be on black on black crime and drop-out rates in schools, why should filling the vacant positions be necessary.

Chairman Regnier stated that the Council is committed in having the four subcommittees. He stated that he realized that health is an important part with AID's being the fastest killer in the country.

Mr. Henderson stated that other issues should not be minimized; health and economic conditions are significant parts in the black community. Health is a large factor in educational challenges.

Chairman Regnier agreed with Mr. Henderson saying that health and economical conditions will be incorporated into the main focus. He explained that while looking at crime and education rates in schools, the Council will also look at the health issues and economical dilemmas in the two areas of focus.

Rev. Simpson stated that choices are what we need to look at, individuals has to make choices versus bad decisions.

Chairman Regnier replied with better choices comes with a better life, and the reverse does not come with good results in life. He moved to the next agenda item.

Ninth Agenda Item: Discussion of 2011 Strategies

Chairman Regnier stated that the Council should focus on the research and collected data of black on black crimes and drop-out rates in schools. He stated that there are two parts associated with the research, getting the data and analyzing it. Chairman Regnier asked Mr. Henderson for ideas to accomplish the task.

Mr. Henderson stated that it would take funds to accomplish some things like social media campaign to attempt to get the importance of education and stopping violence. The Council needs the funding to support this type of public service announcements.

Rev. Simpson stated that the Council has members in place who have access to the data needed, like Andre Smith with the Department of Education and Secretary Wansley Walters with the Department of Juvenile Justice. He said that the Council needs to utilize the tools that we have in a workshop setting and breaking down the steps.

Chairman Regnier stated that black on black crime and dropout rates in schools are two correlated issues that go hand-in-hand. He said that if the Council could increase the number of kids that gets retained in schools and improve the quality of education we may also impact crime rates. He moved to the next agenda item.

Tenth Agenda Item: Discussion of Better Participation

Chairman Regnier discussed ways to get better participation from Council member. He stated that he will draft a letter to the Council encouraging member's to get involved. Chairman Regnier stated that he will submit the letter via email to the Attorney General's office staff.

Mr. Henderson stated that if the Council does not take the business of the Council serious, no one else will take it serious. He said that it seems as though some member's are not taking the issues of black men and boys seriously, when they don't participate.

Mr. Nuss stated that at one point citizens would call during the conference calls and attend the forums and criticized the Council because there were never enough members attending the meetings to get a quorum. He added that people would say, if the Council itself did not care enough, why should the citizens.

Rev. Simpson posed a question asking how could the member's interest be rejuvenated. He said that using the media could help.

Mr. Henderson posed the question asking could the Council have a press conference at the Miami meeting and talk about the plans for the upcoming year. He stated that

maybe by having a press conference it could simulate some interest in the members again.

Rev. Simpson stated that in the earlier stages of the Council the former Attorney General Bill McCollum did a press conference in his office in Tallahassee and pulled some of the Council members in to answer questions and the Council was doing well. He said that Miami would be a great place to hold a press conference.

Mr. Henderson posed a question to the Attorney General's staff asking could the arrangement of a press conference be possible for the Miami meeting.

Mr. Nuss stated that the Attorney General's office could do the typical statewide release but he would inquire about a press conference, and will follow-up with the Chair of his findings.

Chairman Regnier moved to the next agenda item.

Eleventh Agenda Item: Discussion of Absenteeism

Chairman Regnier stated that there are hard times with budget cuts, but the Council has to take time to do prevention planning.

Mr. Henderson asked if absenteeism according to the Council's Bylaws had been enforced before by removing a member from the Council if there is no participation.

Mr. Nuss stated that in the five years of working with the Council letters had been sent to member's stating the importance of attendance along with other attempts. He stated that no one had ever been released for the reason of absentees. Mr. Nuss stated that the Council Bylaws should have been enforced from the beginning.

Chairman Regnier stated that he wanted to enforce the use of the Bylaws, not to create ill feelings but to eliminate delays in the mission of the Council. He added that he wanted to add in the letter the requirements according to the Bylaws for effective participation.

Chairman Regnier moved to the next agenda item.

Twelve Agenda Item: Proposed Business Meeting and Public Forum for Miami Quarterly Meeting (May 18-19)

Chairman Regnier stated that he would work out a rough draft for the Miami meeting.

Rev. Simpson stated that he would like for the Council to meet in a workshop setting for the upcoming Miami meeting in May.

Mr. Henderson was in favor of Rev. Simpson's suggestion in having a workshop setting for the upcoming meeting in Miami. He suggested having community members, law

enforcement and others to make recommendations to the Council on what they think it would take to reduce black on black crime in the state of Florida. He stated that the Council would then take the suggestions, review them and take them to the legislature.

Rev. Simpson stated that by engaging the community members, law enforcement and others the Council could elaborate with them and encourage them to go back and speak with their legislative leaders.

Chairman Regnier stated that the Council should start arranging to invite various people to meet with the Council. He requests that the Council staff arrange to send a letter inviting those that will be attending the conference in Miami asking them to present to the Council. Chairman Regnier stated that the focus would be how to reduce crime rates in the black community and how to improve the retention rates in schools.

Rick Nuss stated that a letter should be sent to those that will be attending the Conference. He stated that the conference coordinator is located in the Attorney General's office and he would communicate the Chairman's request.

Rev. Simpson stated that the Council needs those who would get things done and get policies implemented. He stated that Chairman Regnier mentioned from a previous meeting that he was going to make an attempt to meet with Attorney General Pam Bondi, and Rick Nuss stated that he would try to coordinate that meeting for the Chair.

Chairman Regnier stated that he is hoping that the Council could interest Ms. Bondi in getting involved.

Mr. Henderson stated that if the Attorney General is present at the May meeting hopefully there is enough time to discuss the Councils focus and priorities. He stated that he would like to devote a great deal of time towards the meeting making recommendations.

Chairman Regnier & Rev. Simpson agreed with Mr. Henderson's idea of the agenda arrangement. He moved to the next agenda item. He moved to the next agenda item.

Thirteenth Agenda Item: Community Participants

Item will be discussed for next meeting.

Fourteenth Agenda Item: Discussion of Letter to the Attorney General Restoration of Rights Issue

Rev. Simpson stated that there were some strong controversial issues that needed to be worked out and a meeting needed to be arranged with Attorney General Bondi. He stated that Chairman Regnier is the key in minimizing some of the tension in those issues.

Chairman Regnier stated that he did have a discussion with Mr. Nuss about making the arrangement for a meeting with Attorney General Bondi, and is working on that arrangement.

Mr. Nuss stated that the Council is fully supported by the Attorney General and she has a stand in the Civil Rights and makes it publicly known where she stands. He stated that he had talked to his direct supervisor Director Gainey about the meeting and he is doing the best he can. Mr. Nuss stated that Attorney General Bondi is all over the state in meetings and it is hard to schedule something with her. He stated that Ms. Bondi will be at the Miami meeting.

Rev. Simpson stated that the agenda should include the Attorney General Bondi for the May 18 meeting to discuss some issues. He stated that he thinks she should meet with Chairman Regnier before the Miami meeting. Rev. Simpson stated that Ms. Bondi should get to know who the Council is and embrace us. The Council should have the opportunity to know who she is and hear what she has to say.

Chairman Regnier stated that he was in agreement with Rev. Simpson or a much needed meeting with the Attorney General. He stated that in a previous meeting of the Council, Gypsy Gallardo stated that she would draft a letter of concern to submit to the Council for review, but have not received the letter. Chairman Regnier requested that Council staff reach out to Ms. Gallardo requesting the letter.

Rev. Simpson stated that the Council is to help a troubled population and it was created to help them, perfect policies and not further incriminate them.

Chairman Regnier agreed with Rev. Simpson and moved to the next agenda item.

Fifteenth Agenda Item: Future Council Meeting Dates and Locations

Item will be discussed for next meeting. Chairman Regnier moved to the next agenda item.

Sixth Agenda Item: Adjournment

Chairman Regnier stated that agenda items thirteen and fifteen will be discussed in the May 10 meeting. He asked for a motion for adjournment; Rev. Simpson motioned the meeting be adjourned; Mr. Henderson seconded the motion. Chairman Regnier declared the meeting be adjourned at 12:24 p.m.