

# 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, May 10, 2011.

### **Council Members Present:**

Dr. Eddy Regnier, Chairman  
Rev. Dr. Albert Simpson, Vice Chair  
Ms. Gypsy Gallardo  
Chief Argatha Rigby-Gilmore  
Mr. William Hardin  
Mr. Ronald Henderson  
Ms. Shila Salem  
Ms. Lois Scott  
Mr. Ben Shirley  
Mr. Andre Smith  
Rep. Perry Thurston  
Dr. Shairi Turner, M.D  
Sec. Wansley Walters

### **Council Members Absent:**

Dr. Janetta Cureton  
Mr. Matthew Gregory  
Sen. Gary Siplin  
Sen. Stephen Wise

### **Others:**

Mr. Shington Lamy  
(Leon County Board of Commissioners)

### **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 thereafter announcing a quorum was present.

### **Third Agenda Item: Opening Invocation**

The invocation was not rendered

### **Fourth Agenda Item: Call to Order**

Dr. Regnier called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. and moved to the next agenda item.

### **Fifth Agenda Item: Chairman's Comments**

Chairman Regnier stated that the Council has the task of presenting an Annual Report that he would like to take form at the Miami meeting and would like to make the December deadline. He stated that he would like the Council to focus on two issues for the next six months which he would discuss further into the agenda. Chairman Regnier stated that there is an issue that is pressing that was not discussed in the Executive Committee meeting which is the Restoration of Rights issue that has not made any progress. He stated that Ms. Gallardo was to write a letter for review by the Council but

the letter was not been provided. Chairman Regnier stated that he would like to brainstorm on some issues that the Council can move forward on and get something done before the year expires. He said that a bad economy has an impact on schools, businesses, crime rates, health and is disproportionately affecting people of color. He moved to the next agenda item and gave Dr. Shairi Turner the floor for an announcement to the Council

**Sixth Agenda Item: Member Comments**

Dr. Turner stated that she would be leaving the Department of Health effective June 30 upon a voluntary separation to pursue other interest. She stated that the Council is in excellent hands with Mr. Ronald Henderson. Dr. Turner expressed her gratitude to the members and past chairs for all the work that had been done by the Council. She stated that it had been an honor working with the Council. Dr. Turner said that she will be around until her departure to continue services with her Department.

Chairman Regnier stated that he would personally miss Dr. Turner and that she will be greatly missed by the Council. He moved to the next agenda item.

**Seventh Agenda Item: Adoption of Outstanding Minutes**

Chairman Regnier stated that the meeting minutes for the April 26 Executive Committee meeting will be provided for the May 18 meeting in Miami. He moved to the next agenda item.

**Eighth Agenda Item: Subcommittee Chair Assignment**

Chairman Regnier stated that there is a vacant chairman position in the Criminal Justice and Gangs Committee. He asked if there were any volunteers, Chief Argatha Gilmore volunteered as chair of the Criminal Justice and Gangs Committee.

Rev. Albert Simpson stated that when the Council was developed the subcommittees were implemented. He added that the subcommittees aided in the pleasures of the Council Chair by helping in the areas of expertise in developing a report.

Chairman Regnier stated that each Council member must volunteer to participate in two subcommittees.

Albert Simpson volunteered to serve on subcommittees Criminal Justice & Gangs, and Health & Families committees.

Shila Salem volunteered to serve on subcommittees Criminal Justice, and Gangs and Employment & Economics committees.

Gypsy Gallardo volunteered to serve on subcommittees Education, and Employment & Economics committees.

Andre Smith volunteered to serve on subcommittee Criminal Justice & Gangs Committee.

Ben Shirley volunteered to serve on subcommittees Employment & Economics and Health & Families Committees.

Ron Henderson volunteered to serve on subcommittee Health & Families.

Bill Hardin volunteered to serve on subcommittees Education, and Health & Families Committees.

Chairman Regnier moved to the next agenda item.

**Ninth Agenda Item: Local Councils Coordinator Assignments**

Chairman Regnier stated that the vacant positions in the local councils needed to be filled which were the local council statewide coordinator and the local council coordinators for Orlando and Tampa.

Mr. Henderson stated that due to travel restrictions in his department there is a possibility that he will not be able to serve as local coordinator for the West Palm Beach area but is willing to assist.

Chairman Regnier stated that a replacement for the West Palm Beach area will also need to be filled. He asked for a volunteer for the statewide coordinator position. There were none. Chairman Regnier stated that the process for getting a volunteer for the statewide coordinator's position will continue at the May 18 meeting in Miami. He continued with asking for volunteers for the vacant positions for the local coordinators.

Gypsy Gallardo asked if the Council had people in the vacant geographical areas that are currently serving on the Council.

Tawanna Leven-Forbes stated that Council member Senator Gary Siplin is located in the Orlando area.

Ben Shirley asked if the coordinators for the local councils had to be a member on the Council or could it be someone from the community.

Mr. Simpson stated that one should have a working knowledge of a state council because the coordinator has to give guidance.

Mr. Shirley state that he had spoken to former Council member Lillian Lima saying that her desire was to work with a council locally which is in Tampa because her communication was limited with the Council due to the Sunshine Law. He asked if there was something in the Bylaws stating that the local coordinators had to be a current member of the Council.

Rev. Simpson stated that Ms. Limas was the vice chair of the Council and she was looking into developing a local council in Tampa, but never got it off the ground.

Mr. Shirley stated that there is an advisory council in Tampa. He added that Ms. Lima is looking forward in assisting the Council.

Chairman Regnier and Rev. Simpson expressed their gratitude for Ms. Lima's desire to assist the Council. Chairman Regnier stated that there are avenues for those who are not members of the council who wish to participate and that is by completing a Community Participant application. He asked Council staff to create a list of resources of who's who in the local council's and to reach out to those people that was involved and find out what's the status of the council's. Chairman Regnier asked if there were any volunteer's for the position as statewide coordinator of the local councils.

Rev. Simpson stated that Billy Close served as statewide coordinator of the local councils but is no longer part of the Council. He asked if Dr. Close had to be part of the Council to continue to serve as the statewide coordinator.

Chairman Regnier inquired about Rev. Simpson's question to the Council staff. Ms. Leven-Forbes stated that Mr. Close could serve as a community participant. Chairman Regnier asked Ms. Leven-Forbes to reach out to Mr. Close to seek his interest in assisting with the needs of the Council. He stated that this issue will be revisited in Miami.

**Tenth Agenda Item: Discussion of Absenteeism**

Chairman Regnier stated that the Council is having problems with the attendance of members and have been for the past two years. He stated that he would like to have a discussion on how to improve attendance. Chairman Regnier stated that those that are often absent are the elected officials. He stated that he would like to address these people individually by letter including a copy of the Council's Bylaws that addresses the issue of absenteeism. He opened the floor for discussion to the Council.

Rep. Perry Thurston stated that he agrees with the Chair because it is important that every member attend the Council meetings.

Chairman Regnier stated that perhaps the teleconferences are to lengthy, maybe it's the time commitment.

Wansley Walters stated that she was in agreement with the Chair concerning lengthy teleconferences.

Rep. Thurston stated that reducing the time of the teleconferences may increase participation, but should first check with all member's to see if they have the time commitment for the Council.

Mr. Henderson agreed with Ms. Walters and Rep. Thurston to reduce the time frame of the teleconferences of the Council.

Chairman Regnier stated that perhaps the agenda could be reduced and schedule more meetings for better participation.

Rep. Thurston stated that it should be communicated to the Council member's that efforts will be made to cover the agenda in a timely manner, not to prolong the time.

Chairman Regnier stated that he will draft a letter to Council members with options added to see what is best for the whole body. Further discussions will be taken up at the upcoming May meeting in Miami.

The discussion was redirected to an issue that was brought up during the Executive Committee meeting on the Restoration of Rights Issue. Chairman Regnier stated that he is trying to get a meeting with the Attorney General Pam Bondi. He asked Rep. Thurston to bring the Council up to date on the issue of the Restoration of Rights.

Rep. Thurston stated that that was the first line of business of the Cabinet to dismantle the process that was in place and to effectively enforce anybody who had completed their sentence to wait an additional five years before they would be able to start the process of applying to have their rights reinstated.

Chairman Regnier stated that since the issue is still going on it is very important that he continue to pursue the attempt to meet with Attorney General Bondi. A letter has been drafted for a meeting with the Attorney General.

Rev. Simpson expressed his appreciation for Rep. Thurston's advocacy.

Shila Salem stated that under the reorganization of the Florida Department of Corrections she was placed in a new position as the Assistant Regional Director for Re-entry. She said that she is finding that a great deal of inmates that are in the custody of the Department do not realize the impact of the change in the process of the Restoration of Rights. Ms. Salem stated that she is seeking guidance on where she could find a myth buster to dispel the myths about the Restoration of Rights and what it means to the citizens of Florida.

**Other Discussion:**

Chairman Regnier recognized Mr. Shington Lamy, Leon County Board of Commissioners.

Mr. Lamy stated that the issue in which he wanted to speak about involved two separate deaths that occurred involving young black men in Leon County. He stated that the Leon County Board of Commissioners wanted to hold a summit on the status of black

men. The thoughts of the Board are to establish a local council on the status of black men in Leon County.

Chairman Regnier expressed his interest in Mr. Lamy's presentation to the Council and hoped to further discuss the development of the idea of a local council in Leon County. He asked Mr. Lamy to submit a community participant application to Council staff in the Attorney General's office. Chairman Regnier stated that he would like to discuss the Restoration of Rights issue in Miami.

Chairman Regnier moved to the next agenda item.

**Eleventh Agenda Item: Discussion of Alleviating and Correcting Underlying Conditions**

Chairman Regnier stated that there was new business he wanted to discuss before time elapse for the meeting. He stated that the Council has a duty to create an annual report that is due December 15. Chairman Regnier added that he would like the Council to put forward an agenda in the two areas of focus. He said that he would like the Council to look at ways to correct underlying conditions that leads to high black on black crime rates in the age groups of 14 – 18 years. He explained that this group was chosen because this is the group that has a high dropout rate in schools. Chairman Regnier said that he believes that there is a relationship between crime and dropout rates. He explained that if the Council could understand the patterns, then the Council could come up with a plan that could impact this population. Chairman Regnier asked for comments.

Mr. Henderson stated that he thought there was a great deal of data that the Council could gather, research and analyze to determine the causes of the two issues of black on black crime and the dropout rates in schools. He said that the Council has the opportunity to have small focus groups with young people who have dropped out and could get their perspectives on the reason(s) of dropping out of school.

Chairman Regnier favored the idea of Mr. Henderson. He stated that this year's focused age group population does not change much in the dropout rates. Chairman Regnier moved to the next agenda item.

**Twelfth Agenda Item: Discussion of Business Meeting and Public Forum For Miami Quarterly Meeting, May 18 - 19**

Chairman Regnier asked for discussions pertaining to the meeting in Miami.

Mr. Shirley asked if there was an exact meeting room location for the meeting in Miami.

Chairman Regnier gave the floor to Council staff Ms. Leven-Forbes for meeting information.

Ms. Leven-Forbes stated that on May 18 the Council will be meeting in the Jasmine room at 1:00 – 5:00pm, and on May 19 the Council will be meeting in the Knight Center from 2:30 – 4:30pm.

Chairman Regnier asked about getting the public invited to the Council's public forum.

Ms. Leven-Forbes stated that a statewide news release could be possible.

Mr. Nuss stated that what the Attorney General's office typically does for the Preventing Crime Conference and the Council meetings is to send out news releases through the communications office to different media's to help market the information.

Chairman Regnier stated that it would be better for the Council if local persons could help organize community meetings.

Mr. Nuss stated that each time the Council arranges a face-to-face meeting, local persons helps in planning and organizing the meetings.

Chairman Regnier stated that it would be ideal to have the community present at the Council meetings and have media coverage. He moved to the next agenda item.

**Thirteenth Agenda Item: Future Council Meeting Dates and Locations Approval**

Chairman Regnier asked Ms. Leven-Forbes if the schedule had been distributed to the Council members.

Ms. Leven-Forbes stated that the schedule was given to the Executive Committee for approval, after the approval it would be posted in the Florida Administrative Weekly, and distributed to all Council members. Ms. Leven-Forbes stated that the schedule will be available and disseminated at the Miami meeting.

Chairman Regnier stated that the schedule will be discussed at the meeting in Miami. He said the next face-to-face meeting is scheduled for September 8 and the Committee discussed having the meeting in Tampa/St. Petersburg area. Chairman Regnier stated that the decision was to meet in Tampa and requested an invite letter be drafted to Attorney General Bondi for the Tampa meeting.

Mr. Henderson suggested that the Council have a face-to-face meeting that will coincide with the Legislative Black Caucus in November to share some of the Councils priorities before they go into their committee meetings.

Chairman Regnier asked that the Council staff look into the information and make the arrangements for a meeting to coincide with the Legislative Black Caucus. The Council will look into having the full meeting schedule finalized in Miami.

Mr. Shirley stated that the Legislative Black Caucus has a meeting scheduled for November 17-19 from 9:00am – 4:00pm for a Regional Issues Conference in Orlando.

Chairman Regnier suggested that Orlando, Florida be an additional face-to-face meeting for the Council scheduling it for the 16 or 17 of November to coincide with the Legislative Black Caucus meeting agenda. He moved to the next agenda item.

**Fourteenth Agenda Item: For the Good of the Order**

Chairman Regnier stated that his words for the good of the order was that the future belongs to the youths but also to us who pave the way for the youths, if we don't act today there is nowhere for the youths to go, we have to be the leaders and pave the way. He stated that he hope that the Council takes the responsibility in leadership to pave the way. Chairman Regnier moved to the next agenda item.

**Fifteenth Agenda Item: Adjournment**

Chairman Regnier asked for a motion for adjournment. Mr. Ben Shirley motioned that the meeting be adjourned; Lois Scott seconded the motion. Chairman Regnier declared the meeting be adjourned.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:16 p.m.

