

**MEETING MINUTES OF THE COMMISSION ON AFRICAN AMERICAN
AFFAIRS
October 19, 2022 09:00 A.M.**

1. Meeting called to order by Dell Gines at
2. Roll Call at 09:17
 - a. Vernon Joseph (Not Present)
 - b. Clarice Jackson (Not Present)
3. Invocation by Femi Awodele
4. Motion for approval of minutes from July 20, 2022, was made by Dell Gines. Glenn Freeman seconded the motion which, unanimously carried by members present.

COMMITTEE MEETING REPORTS –

5. Executive Committee – Nominations for new Chair and new members. Dell announced he will be resigning due to his work schedule.
 - a. LaShawn has agreed to resume her position as the chair of the Executive Committee. DeMoine Adams stated he agrees LaShawn should continue serving since her initial term was short due to illness. LaShawn stated another person is needed to replace Dell on the executive committee. Exec. meetings have been held bi-weekly for the past year but could be moved to monthly if needed. The executive committee will be more hands on since the Executive Director resigned.
 - b. Femi nominated himself to be on the executive committee to replace Dell Gines. Lashawn Young seconded the nomination for Femi to serve on the executive committee. Members present unanimously approved the Nomination.
 - c. Dell will continue to help transition his departure and make the introductions and share information concerning his contacts at the State Department of Human Resources.

- d. Karine Sokpoh asked if Dell was resigning from the whole Commission or just the executive committee. Dell responded he is leaving the whole Commission due to his other work and time commitments.
6. Financial Committee – Connie reported the balance is as noted on the handout sheet. Glenn reported the finance committee had a great meeting and Connie worked hard in getting things organized.
 - a. Connie stated she was concerned that all of the funding allocated to programming was not used for that purpose as intended and may be lost if it is not utilized. If the state were to do a budget cut, it may be about 25% and leeway was allotted for that contingency should it happens. The budget estimates were broken down by categories for both fiscal years. (The Bi-Annual Budget).
 - b. Dell asked how else could the \$181,000 that was underutilized be used for programs, if we currently have no programs? How can those funds be utilized in a meaning way in the next nine months? Connie stated the program funds cannot be used for salaries. It was discussion held that the commission would establish the programs that the money will be spent on.
 - c. Dell asked if the money from the Morehouse College donation was relationship based or just donated to the Commission. The concern is since Christopher Banks left will those funds still be donated to the Commission.
 - d. The funds appropriated in 2021-2022 will expire in 2023. And should be used accordingly.
 - e. Leban Njuguna asked for clarification on the question if the commission can partner with other community organizations for programming, so that the money allocated for that purpose could be properly utilized.
 - f. Dell inquired if the commission will be required to spend the dollars allocated to specific programs. Connie stated the Commission has discretion reappropriate money to fund community programs with

greater need if required. Travel expenses could also be included in those costs.

- g. Connie made motion to approve budget, seconded by Femi.
 - h. Gwendolyn Easter asked if there will be a process in place for a person that wants to serve on a committee to appeal to the commission if they had a concern of not being able to serve on a particular committee within the Commission.
 - i. Gwendolyn expressed concerns about not able to speak on behalf of the commission when she is approached by persons in the community about the commission. She inquired if a Commissioner could speak publicly on behalf of the Commission or just as an individual.
 - j. Discussion was held the policy should dictate the process for speaking as a commissioner when person from the community ask questions. It was determined that those policies are forthcoming after the Bylaw are adopted by the Commission.
 - k. By Laws Committee – Connie stated the voting on the bylaws should be delayed until every commissioner has had an opportunity to review them. Dell asked that the vote be delayed until October 26, 2022. Final draft for approval (with any amendments) will be sent out on November 2, for virtual vote. If the majority agrees, the By-Laws will be adopted.
7. Strategic Planning Committee – Dell stated not having an Executive Director makes the executive committee more challenging.
8. Femi stated he would lead the Strategic committee meetings to get things moving forward. Outreach and legislative engagement are two areas that most time is spent on the other commissions.
9. Gwen recommended funding for programming for housing and children should be a priority and the commission should consider allowing funding for those purposes. Connie responded the commission is not intended to be a grant funding organization. Femi recommended we work with organizations

in the community to get appropriations for organizations to carry out their funding programs.

- a. John Carter removed himself from the Strategic committee since Femi is now on the executive committee.
 - b. Dell stated the commissions primary focus should be funding and appropriations for community organizations and legislative members to assure African American goals and needs in the community are being addressed.
 - c. Connie stated the strategic committee should be focus on getting something to the legislature this upcoming legislative session, for example having a representative from the commission on the crime commission to monitor legislative impact on African Americans.
 - d. Gwen wants to be reappointed on the commission for children and families, but as a representative from the commission on African American Affairs.
 - e. Glenn stated he hopes the strategic committee will go to the community to find out what the community needs and not just make assumptions of what the community needs rather than meeting with and asking. He also expressed concerned that meetings for the commission are not held in Omaha. Glenn stated he thinks it is important to contact members of the community directly as commissioners and not necessarily rely on information that has been compiled or put together by organizations. Glenn stated that in his opinion, crime is not necessarily the problem with the black community, but education of the children on what to do to succeed in the world.
10. Connie stated the commission should be meeting with and talking to organizations like teammates, that DeMoine serves with, to find out we can be more effective in the community in finding people that may be qualified to serving with as a partners in community issues.
11. Policy Committee – Policies will be established once the Bylaws are formerly adopted. Vernon Joseph, Leban Njuguna, Gwendolyn Easter, Glenn Freeman and John Carter are members on the policy committee.

12. Executive Director Report – Candidates were identified for an administrative assistant to be hired to handle the day-to-day administrative duties for support. The space is already ascertained. The commission just need to find a person to get the phones, website, office setting and other things set up and working. The state does have an initial list of candidates that applied when Christopher was executive director, but they had not been interviewed. Karine suggested if the process of hiring will be lengthy, an outsourcing agency be hired to answer the phone and handling some admin duties.
13. A national search firm has been suggested to search for the next executive director. Gwen stated she would like the commission to interview three final candidates instead of two. The purpose of the search firm will be to find at least three or more qualified candidates for final interview by the executive committee.
14. Old Business – None
15. New Business – Notification of open positions to the governor. The person(s) interested can apply via the state website. As a commission we will not endorse any individuals to serve on the commission.
16. Public Comments – None
17. Executive Session – Dell made motion to move to executive session 11:00. Seconded by Toni. Unanimously approved by commission members.
18. Dell motioned to come out of executive session 11:17. Seconded by Toni. Approved by unanimous vote.
19. Adjourn - Motion to adjourn was made by Dell at 11:18 a.m., and seconded by Gwen.

Respectfully submitted by:
John Carter