Welcome Dayton Committee Meeting Minutes

May 8, 2019

Members Present: Commissioner Matt Joseph, Melissa Bertolo, Kandise Bobo, Claudia Cortez-Reinhardt, Rachel Gut, Dani Heeter, Mike Lehner, Gabriela Pickett, Jessica Ramos, Joe Spitler, Amy Schrimpf, Michelle Streeter-Ferrari, Teresa Troyer, Tom Wahlrab

Ex-Officio/Staff: Erica Fields, Monica Harris, Martha-Jeannette Rodriguez

Guests: Gwen Eberly

1. Commissioner Joseph welcomed attendees and called the meeting to order at 7:33 am. The Commissioner asked new member Gabriela Pickett to introduce herself and talk briefly about her work.

2. The Commissioner asked for comments on the minutes for the March 2019 meeting and a motion to approve minutes. Tom Wahlrab motioned to approve and Joe Spitler seconded.

3. The first topic of discussion was the Chair’s Remarks.
   a. Welcome Dayton Sub-Committees
      i. The Commissioner stated that there have been several new members recently and that has changed sub-committees. He would like to use this time to refocus the work of the sub-committees.
      ii. The original sub-committee model was to put a lot of faith and trust in the sub-committees to do the [Welcome Dayton] work. However, due to turnover in sub-committee chairs, this model has not been as effective.
      iii. He would like reinvigorate the Committee work with him, Monica Harris, and Erica Fields continuing to work to provide support and find funding.
   b. Update on Welcome Dayton evaluation
      i. The Commissioner gave background for the evaluation project. The Welcome Dayton team first had a conversation with a Wright State professor 2+ years ago about doing a program evaluation. After 18 months of communicating with this person, no real progress was made and things did not work out. The team has since connected with another Wright State professor and is cautiously optimistic about the project moving forward with this new person.
      ii. The goal of the evaluation is to create a tool to measure how we are doing so that we can better move resources to immigrant communities. To do this, we need a repeatable, quantifiable analysis.
      iii. We have had previous conversations about sources of data and the structure of the evaluation. We will continue to have conversations with the new professor we have identified and hope that she will be able to move the evaluation forward.
   c. Committee Contact List
      i. We have received a request to share the Welcome Dayton Committee Contact List with the whole committee for the purpose of facilitating communication and collaboration between members; before we share, the Commissioner wanted to get permission from all members. The Commissioner asked if anyone had any objections to sharing their contact information on a contact list. Monica clarified that the information shared would include name, email address, phone number, position title, and affiliation.
Several members gave their okay and there were no objections [Note: Monica will follow up with those members who are absent from the meeting to get their permission]

Melissa Bertolo asked why the list had not been sent out, since the group had been receiving it in previous years. The Commissioner indicated that it was his decision and hesitation to do so, since there have been so many new members.

4. General Updates
   a. DPS Advocacy Group Update (Tom/Melissa)
      i. Tom gave a background of the group: The group has been meeting since August. Members raised questions to the Superintendent when she attended a previous Welcome Dayton Committee meeting. As requested, the Superintendent provided written responses to group members; the group reviewed these responses and provided a report to the School Board.
      ii. The group has continued to receive feedback from DPS teachers about what has been happening [in the DPS ESOL program]. Members of the group spoke at the last School Board meeting and offered a report of anecdotal assessments from ESOL teachers.
      iii. The group also held a public event for parents and students [involved in the ESOL program] at St. John’s Church; the event included opportunities for parents and students to share their experiences at their schools.
      iv. Melissa noted that the group will be providing a formal report to the School Board with recommendations about continued issues and concerns.
      v. Current challenges/issues include:
         1. During the registration process, students are not being identified as English Language Learners and teachers are not notified when a new ELL student comes to their schools.
         2. ESOL is an intervention service, which means that students are only pulled out of class if needed (and only at the 7th – 12th grade levels). Students are being pulled out at inappropriate times (i.e. during core classes), so we are hearing of parents refusing services because ESOL classes are not required for graduation and the core classes are.
         3. Most ELL students are not being offered interpreter during registration process.
      vi. Tom stated that he sent Monica a statement to share with the Committee, and Melissa also has a statement that she read to the School Board; information from these documents and other feedback from teachers will be compiled into a report to be shared with the School Board. Monica will share both Tom’s and Melissa’s statements with the Committee.
      vii. The Commissioner brought up last year’s listening sessions at Belmont High School, where students shared devastating stories about their experiences in school. He asked if the situation at Belmont has improved, or whether we need to re-engage there.
      viii. Tom said that he senses an acute tension for ESOL teachers to speak about DPS issues; there is some fear of reprisals [for speaking out] and some are being forbidden to speak out.
      ix. Gabriela added that the DPS School Board has some knowledge of what has been happening in the schools, but the experiences of teachers, parents, and students are different.
b. Federal Immigration Policy Changes Update (Jessica)
   i. Jessica Ramos shared that federal immigration policy changes have resulted in increased enforcement for offenses that would not have been pursued previously. One case she worked on was for an undocumented woman who had been married for 25 years and abused. When she tried to report the abuse, her husband called ICE and ICE detained her. Jessica was able to win her client a 6 month reprieve and release from detention. She noted that even those within the Administration realize that current levels of enforcement activity are abnormal.
   ii. Another example: San Ysidro border crossing averages 200 asylum seekers arriving per day; previously, average was 5 per day.
   iii. Child separation is still happening, despite court orders to stop it.
   iv. Government has implemented the “Migrant Protection Protocol”:
      1. Those who apply for asylum at the southern border are returned to Mexico to await determination on their cases.
      2. This creates challenges, including with attorneys on the U.S. side of the order having difficulty crossing to Mexico in order to communicate with and help their clients.
      3. In addition, pro bono attorneys [who cross the border to work with these asylum seekers] have been put on a watch list; they are being questioned and detained upon their return to the U.S.
   v. Border Patrol and ICE do not make asylum determinations; this is reserved for highly trained asylum officers (who do asylum interviews and make credible fear determinations), who are usually fair. However, a new memo has been issued instructing asylum officers to take a skeptical and aggressive approach to asylum interviews; this means the interviews are no longer impartial.
   vi. Most of these policy changes are being challenged in court and winning, but the issue then becomes: Who enforces these court decisions (if Executive branch is enforcement arm and also the one responsible for the policies)?
   vii. Martha-Jeannette Rodriguez shared that she knows of several cases where people have been stopped for traffic violations, but the drivers do not have identification so ICE is called.
   viii. Commissioner Joseph asked if there is a chance to talk with councils and mayors in other cities about Chief’s Biehl’s engagement strategy; is this good timing? Joe responded that the timing is always bad but it is possible.
   ix. Amy Schrimpf said that there is a mayors’ and City Managers’ meeting tonight in Centerville. The group has a new executive director, and Amy can foster an introduction to the new director. The Commissioner and Joe would like to go along to any meeting with the new director.
   x. Jessica added that the Administration is working to exempt all law enforcement from following any local sanctuary-like policies (i.e. to act as Warrant Service Officers). The problem is that most ICE warrants are non-judicial.
   xi. Martha-Jeannette said that these cases remind her that the Community ID Card is important and will be helpful for the community. She asked if people feel that it is needed or if it would be helpful.
1. Jessica responded that the card is only useful if law enforcement is on board, and currently only DPD is on board. She believes the ID Card would not have prevented ICE stops outside of Dayton [city limits]. She also brought up the recent legislative response to the DPS Welcoming Schools Resolution; this legislation is one of multiple anti-immigrant bills coming through the legislature. The Community ID Card would be received as a project for immigrants because of Martha-Jeannette’s involvement.

2. Martha-Jeannette replied that this is the reason the ID Card is necessary, because it is for all community members (not just immigrants), and that it does not need to be her that is working on it; her desire is just for the ID card to exist.

3. Melissa said that there is a need to do work of outreach to build coalition of multiple partners.

4. Martha-Jeannette added that Public Health is considering being involved and looking at the model and related information.

5. Commissioner Joseph suggested proceeding on two fronts [for the ID Card]: 1) ID Card group should continue meeting; 2) Commissioner Joseph and Amy will talk to the group of mayors.

6. Mike Lehner believes that having the County on board offers the best chance of success.

7. Commissioner Joseph asked Monica to report back on the next meeting. He also said to be careful about how we proceed, so as not to give the community false hope.

5. Sub-Committee Updates:
   a. Community, Culture, and Arts (Rachel Gut): Ambassador Reception is scheduled for Thursday, May 23rd at 3:30 pm at the Main Library’s Bassani Theater. Monica will send the invitation to the Committee.
   b. Education (Dani Heeter): Next meeting of the Education Sub-Committee will be held on May 15th, 10 am at the Business Solutions Center. Dani asked if someone from the DPS working group could come and give an update about DPS issues. Tom said that he can probably come.
      i. Dani also said that the Sub-committee has met with representatives from higher education about the lack of internships for international students and international student retention issues.
      ii. The World Refugee Day Celebration will be held on June 20th at St. John’s Church. Dani and HRC are working on the flyer and will send it to everyone when it is ready.
   c. Government and Justice: The Sub-Committee met on April 3rd.
      i. Joe Spitler gave an update on House Bill 169: The proposed bill would require state and local authorities to cooperate with the federal with the enforcement of immigration law sand to sanction those who fail to do so.
      ii. Amy asked if it was possible that the bill was introduced for show and those involved are not really wanting it to pass. Jessica replied that she does not know, but there have been similar actions and crackdowns across the country. She added that Governor DeWine has a history of being somewhat moderate on some immigration issues.
      iii. Joe noted that the bill has 2 sponsors and 10 co-sponsors.
iv. Tom commented that the City Commission tracks legislation and asked how we can ask the Commission to track this bill.

d. Natural Helpers: Melissa reported that the Sub-Committee is getting an intern to lead the Natural Helpers Program. Monica has created a position description and sent it to the University of Dayton’s Bonner Leaders Program, which would be able to pay a potential intern. Tom added that the position description provides a good overview of the program.

e. Business and Economic Development: Monica thanked Amy for agreeing to be the new Chair of the Sub-Committee and gave her an opportunity to share. Amy said that Stephanie Keinath will be helping her with recruitment for the Sub-Committee. She named several potential members, including Kandise Bobo, Claudia Cortez-Reinhardt, and Gwen Eberly. She will be reaching out to certain members of the Committee about being involved this month.

6. Other Updates: Mike shared that CSSMV has open positions in the Refugee Resettlement program; one, the Employment Specialist, is due to a long-time staff member leaving the organization.

7. Monica asked for a motion to close the meeting. Rachel motioned to close and Joe seconded. Meeting was adjourned at 8:35 am.

Next Meeting: July 10th, 7:30 – 8:30 am, City Hall 6th Floor Training Room