

Kate Brown  
Governor



Oregon Commission on Black Affairs  
"Advocating Equality and Diversity"  
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## MINUTES

Oregon Commission on Black Affairs  
Saturday, February 20, 2016, 9:00 AM-12:00 PM  
Portland Community College Cascade Campus  
Margaret Carter Technology Education Building (TEB), Room 113  
Portland, OR 97217

### ATTENDANCE:

**Chair:** James I. Manning, Jr.  
**Vice Chair:** James Morris  
**Commissioners:** Robin Morris Collin, Kayse Jama, Musse Olol, Gwendolyn Trice,  
Representative Frederick  
**Absent:** Senator Monroe  
**Guests:** Theresa Powell; Tremetrius Cook; Lawanda Manning; Ray Leary, I Am  
Academy; Cameron Whitten, Know Your City; Gary Sims, Oregon  
Department of Corrections  
**Staff:** Lucy Baker, Nancy Kramer, Ty Schwoeffermann

**I. Meeting Called to Order** - The meeting was called to order at 9:05am.

**II. Review and approval of agenda** – The agenda was accepted by common consent.

### **III. Review and approval of OCBA December 2015 Meeting minutes**

MOTION (Collin/Trice): To accept the minutes as written. CARRIED.

**IV. Public Comment** – There was no public comment.

Representative Frederick provided a brief rundown of bills of interest to the OCBA early in the meeting due to a memorial service he will attend for Senator Boquist's son.

#### Successes:

The Senate passed the Cultural Competence bill (HB 4033) sponsored by Rep. Frederick unanimously and it will be signed by Governor next week.

The Law Enforcement Profiling Work Group, established in 2015, due to sunset in 2016, was extended through 2017 (HB 4003), to continue the important work they are doing.

The Minimum Wage bill (SB 1532) passed. It will take six years for the minimum wage to reach maximum level. Demonstrators advocating for a higher minimum wage increase disrupted the Senate. Rep Frederick was photographed engaging with an activist and made [the front page of the Chicago Tribune](#).

Other bills:

The Court Fees bill (HB 4123) that would allow the use of community service to pay off delinquent fines of incarcerated individuals was well-received by legislators but did not pass this session because the details of how this program would be managed requires more conversation with stakeholders. This bill will likely be reintroduced in the 2017 session. A four bill package for housing will likely pass that may include implementing a 90-day eviction notice and Inclusionary Zoning.

HB 4087 passed, allowing a judge to rule that if there is a credible threat to a specific police officer the name can be withheld from the public for 90 days.

Chair Manning thanked Rep Frederick for always meeting with OCBA Commissioners when they are in Salem, and thanked him for his leadership for the community.

## **V. Unfinished Business**

A. 2016 Black History Month proclamation, proclamation signing and reception at the Governor's mansion recap

Chair Manning thanked Representative Frederick for his support at the Black History Month proclamation signing with Governor Brown on February and thanked all those who were able to attend. Multnomah County Commissioner Loretta Smith and Multnomah County Circuit Judge Adrienne Nelson spoke. He also thanked Serena Stoudamire for efforts to make the day special.

B. OCBA Commissioner recruitment

The Commissioners discussed the 3 open positions on the OCBA. The OCBA's recruitment process now includes Senior Policy Advisor, Serena Stoudamire, meeting with each proposed candidate. Vice Chair Morris reached out to Mariotta Gary-Smith, daughter of Sharon Gary-Smith, who recently addressed the OCBA. Mariotta is a strong supporter of women's reproductive rights. He also spoke to Dr. Lisa Bates, a Portland State University professor, who spoke at an OCBA meeting last year. She recently was awarded top professor in the nation.

Hermiston, Ontario and Medford all have emerging African immigrant and refugee communities. The Commissioners agreed to look to these cities in particular for recruiting new Commissioners and would like to travel one of these cities. June was proposed as a time to do this. Chair Manning asked OACO staff to send a doodle to schedule a planning session for OCBA's June meeting tentatively being held outside of Portland or Salem.

## **VI. New Business**

A. Reducing youth incarceration and recidivism rates – Ray Leary

Mr. Leary thanked Chair Manning for the opportunity to speak to Commissioners. He is the founder of I Am Academy Recidivism Program. The program is in Roosevelt and Franklin High Schools and also the Vernon and George Elementary Schools. The current school system is not meeting the needs of communities of color, with one example being discipline rates for young black males increasing in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade, when they become the same height or taller than their teachers. Teachers do not look like the students they serve. Having more black teachers in schools would be invaluable to these young men. I Am Academy's purpose is to help young black men develop a new, more positive vision of themselves and break the school to prison pipeline. The youths conduct a rigorous self-analysis, meet positive role models and are encouraged to be leaders in the community. Ray briefly shared the story of a young black student who was arrested, incarcerated for 45 days, and when

returned to school he enrolled in I Am Academy and earned a 4.0 GPA the following year. There is hope for every student.

I Am Academy works with Maria Chavez-Haroldson at the Oregon Youth Authority, who OCBA is working with on a public policy research internship. Mr. Leary also noted that Gary Sims, Director of Diversity at the Oregon Department of Corrections and a frequent guest at OCBA meetings spoke to a group of high school students about preventing the school to prison pipeline as part of the Academy curriculum and the audience was riveted.

Mr. Leary requested that the OCBA assist I Am Academy by writing a letter of support to the Portland Public School (PPS) board, encouraging PPS to work with I Am Academy as a means of offering positive outlets and alternatives to young people in school. Regarding teachers looking like their students, Representative Frederick would like to see recent data of the number of African and African American teachers who have applied to PPS but not been hired.

The Commissioners discussed several aspects of this issue, including implicit racism in the system, a new program at the Oregon State Bar to address this issue and interest in writing the letter of support to the school board for I Am Academy.

MOTION (Morris/Olol): To write a letter to school board in support of I Am Academy. CARRIED.

The Chair and Vice Chair will draft a letter with Lucy and send it to the OCBA, with the goal of having it completed by Friday, 2/26. Chair Manning asked Commissioners to use REPLY ALL even if they have no comments.

Several Commissioners expressed interest in speaking with Mr. Leary outside of the meeting. Nancy will make sure everyone is connected.

Chair Manning thanked Ray Leary for his excellent presentation and looks forward to working with him to improve the lives of black students in Oregon.

B. University of Oregon apprenticeship program – Johnny Earl was unable to attend today’s meeting and will come at a later date.

C. Know Your City – Cameron Whitten, Executive Director, Know Your City  
The Commission welcomed Cameron Whitten, Executive Director of Know Your City. Know Your City is a nonprofit founded in 2009 to develop civic artistic empowerment for Portland with an emphasis on marginalized communities. A current project, "Our Stories Matter", focuses on the implementation of SB 739, which passed in 2013, to expand public school curriculums to include the history of all Oregonians. Additional funding is needed to develop this new curriculum. Know Your City will develop this more inclusive curriculum for the 2017-2018 school year.

Discussion followed. The OCBA agreed that it will review an existing letter of support that the Coalition of Communities of Color has prepared in support of Know Your City’s programs and either become a signer of that letter or prepare a letter of support independently.

D. Urban League – Due to time constraints and legislative session the Urban League was not able to send a representative to talk with the OCBA. They will attend an upcoming meeting.

E. OCBA’s Joint Lobby Day with Urban League, 2/24

The Urban League’s 6<sup>th</sup> annual Lobby Day is this Wednesday, February 24<sup>th</sup>, from 9am – 3pm. OCBA will again join UL for its lobby day and visit legislators on key issues. Chair Manning, Vice Chair Morris, Commissioner Jama and Commissioner Collin will attend. Ty will schedule key appointments with legislators for Commissioners.

F. Policy Research opportunities

1. Meeting with OCBA and Oregon Youth Authority (OYA)

Chair Manning and Commissioner Collin met with OYA’s Deputy Director Joe O’Leary, Maria Chavez-Haroldson and OYA’s policy analyst Paul Bellatty to discuss developing a public policy research project for a 3-L law student from Lewis & Clark College about analyzing juvenile offenders’ cases and the potential of re-sentencing them if they have been exemplary role models during their time at OYA. It was explained that OYA houses two kinds of offenders: juvenile offenders who will carry out their sentences only at OYA, and juveniles who, due to mandatory sentencing, will remain at OYA until they reach adulthood and then be transferred to the Department of Corrections facility to carry out the rest of their sentence. OYA offers a more supportive re-entry process for an inmate, as opposed to the adult facilities.

The OCBA is interested in having the 3-L student examine data from OYA to conduct an analysis of the potential benefits of having a court review a juvenile offender’s sentence before he is moved to an adult facility. Paul Bellatty is knowledgeable of the kinds of data OYA stores and could provide the appropriate information for a student to analyze with the oversight of a mentor.

2. Disproportionate Discipline – Commissioner Collin, will host a meeting with Dr. John English, ODE and Dr. Pat Burke, PSU Graduate School of Education, to draft the next research internship on disproportionate discipline in partnership with OCBA.

3. Apprenticeship to Journeyman: Policy Phase

Vice Chair James Morris is the champion for this policy research work. He plans to convene work group for proposing policy remedies to improve the number of Apprentices of color who attain Journeyman status in the trades. In partnership with BOLI he has invited Andrew Colas of Colas Construction, and will also reach out to Eleza Faison from Faison Construction to attend along with Kate Newhall, a lobbyist representing the Trades. Commissioner Olol will attend as time permits.

Chair Manning thanked everyone for their efforts on these projects.

G. Legislative discussion - Ty and Robin

1. Ratification of e-votes:

- a. SB 1575 Inclusionary Zoning
- b. HB 4001, Lengthen notice periods for rent increases
- c. HB 4003, Racial profiling workgroup
- d. HB 4017, Basic Health Plan
- e. HB 4033, Educators’ Equity Act

- f. HB 4123, Relief from court fees
- g. HB 4128, Notario fraud
- h. Testimony in support of raising the minimum wage

MOTION (Jama/Morris): To ratify the electronic votes of the OCBA to support the bills as read into the record. CARRIED.

2. Testimony and updates - Chair Manning thanked Ty for initiating weekly legislative updates for Commissioners about bills the OAC's are tracking. Ty provided a brief rundown of those bills (Representative Frederick provided updates on certain bills at the beginning of the meeting):
- The Inclusionary Zoning bill (SB 1532) has been significantly amended, needs support if it is to pass this session.
- Basic Health Plan (HB 4017) and COFA (HB 4071) - both bills are not currently progressing and may need more support for them to pass out of committee.
- Notario Fraud (HB 4128) – this bill is projected to pass.
- Minimum wage – this is considered the most significant bill of this session. Farmworkers were included in this minimum wage bill, which is a big win for Hispanic and African immigrants who make up the bulk of this labor force.

Commissioner Jama requested that OCBA invite the Law Enforcement Profiling Work Group (HB 4003) to attend a future OCBA meeting to discuss 10 policy accommodations they developed. AG Rosenblum chairs the work group.

## **VII. Commissioners' Comments**

Commissioner Oloj asked Commissioners to support a new company, PDX Yellow Cabs, which is owned and operated by Somali immigrants. He would like to invite a representative from the company to speak to the Commission.

Vice Chair Morris sits on the OYA Isolation work group which is looking at how isolation works at OYA. Because of the work group, OYA is tracking which staff sent the inmates to isolation. This will help determine if this is a staff issue or an inmate issue.

Commissioner Collin asked staff to send the wording of the new law that will expunge marijuana offenses from a person's record. The sale and use of marijuana is now legal in Oregon. Few people of color are taking advantage of this law to clear their record. The OCBA will consider how to build awareness about this new benefit. She also requested that equity be on the April agenda, and to invite Serena Stoudamire, the OAC's Senior Policy Advisor, to speak on this topic in April.

Chair Manning congratulated Commissioner Trice on winning the Oregon Commission for Women's 2015 Women of Achievement Award. He also congratulated Commissioners Oloj and Jama for being honored by the Roosevelt High School Rough Writers program as Freedom Fighters. Chair Manning recommends Vice Chair Morris and Commissioners Collin and Trice be considered for the next season of the program.

## **VIII. Administrator's Report**

- A. Discussion of 2017-19 OACO Staffing Plan - Lucy reviewed the accomplishments made in the OACO's staffing plan to date and recommended next steps: Write a Policy Option Package for the other .5 of the Policy Analyst position (Ty would become full-time) and a .25 Office Assistant to absorb the ongoing administrative detail work routinized by Nancy.

B. Review of policies affecting OAC support ballot measures – Lucy briefly reviewed statutory restrictions that do not allow OAC Commissioners to discuss current ballot measures at regular meetings or take positions on ballot measures. Before an issue becomes a ballot measure, and after it is voted on, the issue can be discussed by OAC's but not during the time that it is a current/active ballot measure.

C. Commissioner travel reimbursement procedure - Nancy spoke briefly about improvements she is making in the travel reimbursement process.

**IX. For the Good of the Order:**

Next mtg 4/16/16, PCC Cascade Campus, 9am–12pm (bldg./rm to be determined)

**X. Adjourn** - The meeting was adjourned at 12:17pm.