

## Welcome Dayton Committee Meeting Minutes

February 10, 2023, in person at Dayton Metro Library, 215 E. Third St. Dayton, OH 45402

### Attendees:

Welcome Dayton Committee Members: Gwen Eberly, RJ Francisco, Nozipo Glenn, Dani Heeter, Yunus Ibraghim, Matt Joseph, Katie Kersh, Karla Knox, David Larson, Claire Preston, Mary Reid, Bryan Stewart, Tom Wahlrab

City Staff: Jeannette Horwitz, Desire Ntwayingabo, Martha-Jeannette Rodriguez

Guests: Youssef Elzein, Jyl Hall, Pete Williams

### I. Call to Order

Commissioner Joseph called the meeting to order at 3:32 p.m.

### II. Approval of the Minutes

Commissioner Joseph asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the December 9 Welcome Dayton Committee meeting. Dani Heeter moved to approve. Nozipo Glenn second. The minutes were approved.

### III. Welcome and Introductions

Commissioner Joseph welcomed everyone to the meeting. A quick round of introductions followed where committee members shared which language(s), if any, other than English they speak.

### IV. General Updates

Commissioner Joseph welcomed Gwen Eberly to the Committee. She will chair the Business and Economic Development Subcommittee. He also congratulated and thanked five members who have been reappointed for their willingness to serve an additional three years (Dr. Kate Conway, Dr. Ashley Lackovich, David Larson, Katie Kersh, Bryan Stewart)

### V. Federal Immigration Updates – Katie Kersh, Senior Attorney and Project Director, ABLE

Katie shared that the Administration has announced a parole program for Haiti, Nicaragua, Venezuela and Cuba. Individuals must be sponsored and cannot presently be in the United States. This program is like the *Uniting for Ukraine* program. Individuals can remain in the US for two years. It is unclear what will happen after that. David Larson added that parole programs are a double-edged sword because if you show up at the border asking for parole, you cannot get it. You must seek from your home country.

### VI. Coordinator's Updates

Jeannette shared that she continues to work on the recertification for "Certified Welcoming." Evidence for the Audit Action Plan is due to Welcoming America May 12.

Tom Wahlrab asked for more details on language access, one of the two areas needed to be addressed in the Audit Action Plan. Jeannette explained that it entails doing more to educate City employees on working with a Limited English Population and training on how to use the City's designated language service provider, Propio LS. Jeannette also shared that there is a first of three New American Employer Roundtables taking place March 2; Miami Valley Community ID Drive March 11; International Women's Day Celebration March 18; Meet & Greet for Immigrant/Refugee Non-Profit Organizations on April 12.

**VII. Subcommittee Updates – Subcommittee Chairs or Representatives**

**a. Business and Economic Development – Gwen Eberly**

Gwen stated that it's good to be part of the Welcome Dayton Committee and added that she has been a member of the Business and Economic Development Subcommittee for a few years and is excited to take over as Chair. She has begun scheduling meetings for 2023 and in the first meeting plans to discuss what went on last year and set goals for this year.

**b. Education – Dani Heeter**

Dani reported on the "rebirth" of the New American Employer Roundtable and that this is an opportunity to share with local employers what it means to hire New Americans. A reboot was held in October 2022 with 33 employers attending, hardly anyone with New Americans on their workforce. This year, there will be a series of three roundtables based on surveying participants at the October 22' event. Themes include recruitment, onboarding and retention. An immigration attorney will be present at each event to provide updates and answer questions about employment authorization. There will also be a job fair in September at St. John's ESOL Program. The first roundtable is taking place March 2 and Dani asked those present to share the flyer. The Education subcommittee has been discussing how to get computers to those who don't have them. Does anyone know of companies who might consider donating when upgrading? Transcript review and evaluation is another discussion topic. How do we better help those trained in a different country to work in their field in the US?

Next meeting: Monday, February 13 at 2:00 p.m. in person at Montgomery County Business Solutions Center or via Zoom.

**c. Community, Culture and Arts – Rachel Gut**

No report.

**d. Local Government and Justice – David Larson**

David discussed the continued success of the Miami Valley Community ID Program. He mentioned participating in a "Know Your Rights" session organized by the HRC (Human

Relations Council) and explained that Welcome Dayton are organizing “Interacting with the Police” sessions with the immigrant community with a recent one taking place at the Osman Gazi Mosque. Officer Dan Mamula from Dayton Police Department frequently participates in these sessions. David brought up issues with interpreters for court in Montgomery County. Commissioner Joseph added budget issues and not enough funding allocated for interpreters. A suggestion was made for David to investigate this perhaps together with the Dayton Bar Association. Jeannette added that WD Committee members should come to an MVCID drive as it is a great community event. At the March 11 ID Drive, Tom Thompson and Sinclair PD will provide drinks and donuts. Martha-Jeannette added that 150 people signed up in less than 24 hours for the March 11 drive. She also shared that results from a survey sent out about MVCID usage among ID holders are very positive. RJ Francisco added that he has shared information about the MVCID with executives at Premier Health. Currently, patients with no ID are registered under an alias. The MVCID would allow for registration under patients’ real names.

Next meeting: Wednesday, April 5 at 12:00 p.m. via Zoom.

e. **Health and Human Services**

No report.

A new Chair is needed for this committee. Please reach out to Commissioner Joseph or Jeannette if interested or with suggestions.

f. **Natural Helpers** – Jeannette Horwitz

No report.

**VIII. Old Business**

Commissioner Joseph shared that discussions have been taking place on how to move forward with the countywide welcoming effort. It has been agreed that the best move forward is to create a subcommittee of Welcome Dayton that will work for one year or more and eventually be spun off into its own countywide welcoming effort. It makes sense to do it this way since there is staff and support from an existing organization (Welcome Dayton) that can aid in beginning the effort. Two individuals (Youssef Elzein and Jyl Hall) will speak briefly about their interest in chairing the subcommittee, titled “Countywide Exploratory Committee.” Voting for chair will take place electronically over the new few days via a link Jeannette will send out. The subcommittee will create plans for the county to become more welcoming and work with Welcome Dayton to ensure the City and County [Montgomery] are working together but not duplicating efforts.

Ms. Jyl Hall and Mr. Youssef Elzein each shared why they are interested in chairing the Countywide Exploratory Committee.

**IX. New Business**

Claire Preston (Montgomery County Educational Service Center) shared about a grant the MCECSC has received to work with Afghans in the Dayton area. There is a planning meeting February 16 at 4:00 p.m. discussing how to partner. Claire appealed to members for assistance. The grant does not include refreshments, so anyone is welcome to share ideas about funding this. Many Afghans have moved out of the City of Dayton as one particularly “strong” family moved to Centerville and others have followed. How can we keep people in the City? The grant must be used between now and June 30, 2023 and will then repeat in 2024. A Pashto interpreter is needed so please reach out to Claire if you know of anyone. Events will take place at different locations in the Dayton area. Information will be emailed out when available.

**X. Closing Remarks and Adjournment**

Dani Heeter asked if a student with a permanent residence card must report for Selective Service. David Larson explained it is not a scam and that he should register. However, if you are on a non-immigrant visa such as an F1 student visa, then there is no requirement to register.

Dani Heeter mentioned that Aspire has been awarded a grant for those wanting to be certified as a manufacturer. The class is supposed to start at the end of February. A stipend for up to \$1,200 is included.

Yunus Ibraghim mentioned that the Osman Gazi Mosque has been holding a fundraiser at the mosque (1508 Valley St.) to collect items for earthquake victims in Turkey. A full trailer will be going to Chicago this weekend and then shipped to Turkey. At this point, the mosque cannot take more items, but monetary donations are accepted. Yunus will share information with Jeannette who will send out information.

Youssef Elzein added that equipment is also needed in Turkey and Syria to assist with the devastation of the earthquake and that the U.S. should lift sanctions against Syria.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:47 p.m.

**XI. Next Meeting Date:** Friday, April 14, 2023, 3:30-4:30 p.m. Conference Room 3A, Dayton Metro Library (Main).

Respectfully Submitted,

Jeannette Horwitz, Welcome Dayton Coordinator