

Welcome Dayton Committee Meeting Minutes

April 14, 2023, in person at Dayton Metro Library, 215 E. Third St. Dayton, OH 45402

Attendees:

Welcome Dayton Committee Members: RJ Francisco, Rachel Gut, Dani Heeter, Matt Joseph, Karla Knox, Jean de Dieu Mukunzi, Claire Preston, Jorge Ramirez, Mary Reid, Bryan Stewart, Tom Thompson, Tom Wahlrab, Pete Williams, Nozipo Glenn, Anthony Whitmore

City Staff: Jeannette Horwitz, Martha-Jeannette Rodriguez, Mike Squire, Adama Diakhate

Guests: Jyl Hall

I. Call to Order

Commissioner Joseph called the meeting to order at 3:31 p.m.

II. Approval of the Minutes

Commissioner Joseph asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the February 10 Welcome Dayton Committee meeting. Rachel Gut moved to approve. Tom Thompson second. The minutes were approved.

III. Welcome and Introductions

Commissioner Joseph welcomed everyone to the meeting. A quick round of introductions followed where everyone shared their favorite drink. Coffee and water for the win!

IV. General Updates

Commissioner Joseph welcomed and introduced new members to the committee: Jorge Ramirez, Jean de Dieu Mukunzi, Pete Williams, Chen Shterenbach (in Israel), Hubert Matumaini. Jyl Hall is in process.

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

No updates.

VI. Coordinator's Updates

Jeannette Horwitz shared that Welcome Dayton hosted a Miami Valley Community ID Drive on March 11 with 121 IDs issued, over half to the local Ahiska Turkish population this time. ID Orientation was provided in English, Spanish and Russian. To date, 805 IDs have been issued. The next drive is May 13. Registration opened and closed in one day with 150 registered. ID materials are now available in Russian and Turkish. RJ Francisco shared that Premier Health is in process of signing the MVCID partnership agreement and it should be finalized any day.

Welcome Dayton hosted an International Women's Day Celebration on March 18 at the Dayton Metro Library (Main) with about 120 attending.

A Meet & Greet with immigrant and refugee-run non-profits and churches wanting to help refugees took place on April 12 with 24 in attendance. There are many new non-profits working with immigrants and refugees and Welcome Dayton wanted to provide an opportunity for everyone to get together.

Jeannette, who is also the City's Language Access Coordinator, is providing Language Access Training to City of Dayton staff. To date, she has worked with front-facing departments including staff in Community Engagement, City Commission staff, City Hall front desk staff, Public Affairs, and Housing Inspection. Additional training for other departments will take place throughout 2023.

World Refugee Day Celebration is scheduled for Saturday June 10, 11:00 – 2:00 at the Dayton Metro Library (Main) Eichelberger Forum.

Jeannette added that Welcome Dayton Committee members should make sure they participate on a subcommittee if they are not already doing so. Commissioner Joseph suggested those who are new to the WD Committee listen closely to subcommittee reports and let Jeannette know which committee they'd like to serve on.

VII. Subcommittee Updates – Subcommittee Chairs or Representatives

a. Business and Economic Development – Gwen Eberly

No report.

b. Education – Dani Heeter

Committee meets monthly. Next meeting is Tuesday, April 18 at 10:00 a.m. Calendar invite is sent out for the next meeting one month at a time. One-hour long meetings at Montgomery County Business Solutions center, 1435 Cincinnati St. #300 (3rd floor) or virtually. Get link from Dani.

The committee keeps working on the New American Employer Roundtable. The next one takes place on June 8. The topic is “onboarding” and both local employers and employees will be participating. Registration is available through the Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce website and Welcome Dayton will also be sending out flyers.

<https://daytonareachamberofcommerce.growthzoneapp.com/eventcalendar/Details/new-american-employer-roundtable-june-2023-787860?sourceTypeId=Website>

c. Community, Culture and Arts – Rachel Gut

Rachel pointed out that this is the most fun committee to serve on! At the most recent meeting, planning goals for 2023 were made. The Third Annual New American Artist Exhibit will take place on the 2nd floor of the Main Library November 1 – December 31. An opening reception for the exhibit is scheduled on Saturday, November 4, 11:00 a.m. –

2:00 p.m. It will include visual art pieces and music. There will also be a guided painting activity. Montgomery County recently published an online resource guide. The committee is exploring translating it. The committee has also been discussing ways to incorporate mental health outreach and possibly sponsoring some soccer viewing parties. The committee will participate in the planning of International Women's Day 2024.

Commissioner Joseph added that if something akin to World Soccer Games are brought back, it should be scheduled for spring and not fall when the school soccer season is in full swing.

Tom Wahlrab asked about "Speak & Be Heard," something that was sponsored by the City of Dayton about 10 years ago and provided a venue for youth to gather and protest. Tom asked if students/youth are involved in the art exhibit. Rachel shared that the International School at Residence Park had numerous students submit artwork for the 2022 exhibit, both individual and group, as Martha-Jeannette reached out to DPS to encourage involvement. Youth will once again be welcomed to submit artwork and the committee will reach out to DPS again.

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

No report.

e. **Health and Human Services**

The committee has a new chair, Mary Reid, Director of Social Services with Catholic Social Services of the Miami Valley. Mary mentioned that she would like there to be a greater focus on mental health in the committee. She is looking to schedule first meeting of the committee on May 25 at 2:30 p.m., virtually.

Mary also shared that CSSMV is currently very busy with an increase in refugee arrivals. Up to 148 refugees are scheduled to arrive in April, 56 arrived last week. CSSMV is looking for hygiene and household items to be dropped off at CSSMV's office. Save the date for the annual Shine Dayton Celebration to take place on October 6. Proceeds will support the CSSM Refugee Resettlement Program.

f. **Natural Helpers** – Jeannette Horwitz

No report.

VIII. Old Business

Montgomery County Educational Service Center Grant for Afghans in Dayton

Claire Preston reported on the two-year grant project. Four events have been held so far, two on jobs and careers and two on excelling in U.S. schools. The Afghan community has responded very well showing up and participating. Bryan Stewart helped create a LinkedIn group for Afghans to connect professionally. An Iftar to break the fast for Ramadan is taking

place tonight, April 14, at 7:30 p.m. at the Islamic Center of Centerville. At this family event, different organizations will be present to share resources, including Welcome Dayton. Two more events are planned this year, one centered on soccer and the other on sewing. Tutoring is also going on. Commissioner Joseph asked what committee members can help with. Claire shared about the newly formed AFG Foundation and suggested individuals support the non-profit. The grant project does not cover food and food helps bring people together so if anyone would like to donate food and drinks for events, please do.

IX. New Business

Countywide Exploratory Committee

Commissioner Joseph shared that the window to apply for membership on the subcommittee has closed. He thanked those from the Welcome Dayton Committee who applied. Discussions about whom to appoint to the subcommittee are currently taking place.

X. Closing Remarks and Adjournment

Commissioner Joseph shared that 13 tickets are available to the June 23 Dayton Dragons game at 7:00 p.m., City of Dayton suite, pizza and drinks included. Jeannette will send out an email to with details. Please RSVP if you'd like to go. First come, first served.

Martha-Jeannette Rodriguez shared about Welcome Dayton's Hispanic Community Welcome Event April 15, 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. at Dayton Metro Library (Main). Jeannette added that the next welcome event (August) will focus on East and Central Africa given the influx in Congolese refugees.

Bryan Stewart shared \$1.5 million dollars was just secured for the Flight Line and applauded the importance of building more ways to connect people to Dayton.

Mary Reid mentioned that CSSMV is expanding programming and now has a Hispanic Community Coordinator in addition to Hispanic Outreach Navigators.

Mama Nozipo shared that she is happy Welcome Dayton works with the new Americans in Dayton. She shared a personal story of the importance of building relationships, the importance of creating a welcoming environment for everyone, and making sure others get involved as well. She would like to see more involvement of "others" in what Welcome Dayton does, not just those who usually attend and support Welcome Dayton events. She also pointed out the need to bridge the gap between African immigrants and African Americans in Dayton.

Anthony Whitmore shared that he advises the Turkish community and some African groups in Dayton.

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

XI. Next Meeting Date: Friday, June 9, 2023, 3:30-4:30 p.m. Conference Room 3A, Dayton Metro Library (Main).

Respectfully Submitted,

Jeannette Horwitz, Welcome Dayton Coordinator