

## Welcome Dayton Committee Meeting Minutes

June 10, 2022, via Zoom

### Attendees:

Welcome Dayton Committee Members: Rachel Gut, Yunus Ibragim, Katie Kersh, Karla Knox, David Larson, Claire Preston, Bryan Stewart, Tom Thompson, Tom Wahlrab

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

Guests: Veronica Halfacre (HRC), Mary Reid (CSSMV), Alyssa Stanko (HRC)

### I. Call to Order

Jeannette Horwitz called the meeting to order at 3:33 p.m. and mentioned that Commissioner Joseph is out of the country and will not be attending today's meeting.

### II. Approval of the Minutes

Jeannette Horwitz asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the April 8 Welcome Dayton Committee Meeting. Rachel Gut moved to approve the minutes. Tom Thompson second. The minutes were approved.

### III. Welcome and Board Updates

Jeannette Horwitz welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked for brief introductions.

### IV. General Updates

Jeannette Horwitz shared that RJ Francisco, Yunus Ibragim and Claire Preston all have been appointed to the Welcome Dayton Board by the City Commission and are in the process of scheduling their swearing-in ceremony with Regina Blackshear, Clerk of Commission. Jeannette also mentioned that Mary Reid with Catholic Social Services is joining today's meeting.

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

Katie shared that the U.S. Department of Homeland Security has designated Afghanistan for Temporary Protective Status (TPS) and that it has been decided that the TPS can be renewed to create some sense of stability for Afghans in the U.S. ABLE is in the process of launching a program to assist with Afghan evacuees in Dayton. In collaboration with Catholic Social Services and other refugee resettlement agencies in Ohio, ABLE will offer legal clinics to Afghans. Sudan has also been designated for TPS. Finally, the Presidential administration has announced a new asylum process where those crossing the border and claiming asylum do not have to prove their case twice. They are interviewed at the border and that begins the asylum process. There is concern that the new process/policy may create some confusion and ABLE is working with Catholic Charities and El Puente to try to get some information out about the new process before it goes into effect.

Jeannette Horwitz asked about Ukrainians coming to the area as Welcome Dayton has seen an increased number contacting the office. Katie explained those contacting ABLE are those applying for asylum. The Uniting for Ukraine program (<https://www.uscis.gov/ukraine>) allows people to enter the US and stay for two years. Mary Reid added that Catholic Social

Services are getting additional calls about the Uniting for Ukraine program and explained it is a parolee process where people get access to certain benefits, but they are being sponsored by someone (an individual, not Catholic Social Services). Katie added that there is no special path to lawful permanent residency simply for being Afghan or Ukrainian at this point. The current options are to apply for temporary protective status or asylum, or Afghans may apply for a special immigrant visa. ABLE hopes to offer special legal clinics to look at eligibility. ABLE does not have a program like this for Ukrainians yet. Those needing free legal services can reach out to ABLE. However, ABLE does not have a social services arm and cannot help people apply for public benefits but if someone has applied and feel they were wrongfully denied, ABLE can look into it.

Contact information for ABLE:  
130 W 2<sup>nd</sup> St, STE 700, Dayton, OH 45402  
Phone: 937-228-8104

**VI. Coordinator's Updates – Jeannette Horwitz**

Jeannette shared that Welcome Dayton has been busy getting ready for World Refugee Day on Saturday, June 11, 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Grace United Methodist Church. 14 organizations will host resource tables, there will be a health fair, entertainment, and food. WD is collecting personal care items for Catholic Social Services at the event.

**VII. Subcommittee Updates**

**a. Business and Economic Development – Jacqueline Radebaugh**

No report but Jeannette Horwitz shared that the committee will next meet on June 21 at 4:00 p.m. via Zoom.

**b. Education – Dani Heeter**

On behalf of Dani Heeter, Jeannette Horwitz shared that the committee meets monthly and that the next meeting will be on June 15 at 9:00 a.m. on TEAMS. Additionally, if you requested to be a part of the New American Employer Roundtable preparation meeting and didn't already receive an email and calendar invite from Dani, please let her know. The meeting is set for Friday, June 17, at 2:00 p.m. on TEAMS.

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

Rachel shared that the committee last met April 11 and will meet again June 13 at 11:00 a.m. Representatives from the Levitt Pavilion in Dayton will attend the June 13 meeting to share some initiatives they are working on with regards to world music and reaching Dayton's New American population. The committee will host the second annual New American Artist Exhibit this November-December. A flyer is ready, and Rachel asked committee members to share with anyone who creates art the opportunity to display a piece at the exhibit. The committee is also working on a resource guide for New Americans, combining resources from already existing guides and updating information from a guide put together by Latinos Unidos a few years ago. Gabriela Pickett, New American Specialist at the Dayton Metro Library, will be working on the guide.

Jeannette Horwitz will send the art exhibit flyer to the Welcome Dayton Committee.

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

David shared that the committee last met May 3 with Tom Thompson leading the meeting. Guest speaker at the meeting was Pierce Reed, Director, Policy and Engagement, with the Ohio Innocence Project at the University of Cincinnati College of Law. The committee is involved with the Miami Valley Community ID Card Program. The next drive will be held Saturday, July 9. David added that the Health and Human Services subcommittee is interested in getting foreign nurses credentialed in the US and David is making some connections whom he has invited to the Government and Justice committee meeting on July 13. Jeannette Horwitz added that she and David have been working to add more members to the committee, including folks from Dayton Police Department, UD Law School and the Miami Valley Immigration Coalition.

**e. Health and Human Services – Kate Conway**

No report but Jeannette Horwitz shared that the committee is an integral part of World Refugee Day on June 11 with Dr. Conway and Wright State Physicians and Boonshoft School of Medicine along with Ebenezer Healthcare Access and Premier Health (R.J. Francisco, Welcome Dayton Board member) doing the health fair, “Healthy Living,” as part of the event. At the health fair, free screenings will be provided, and participants can connect with healthcare resources in the area. Jeannette added that the committee meets monthly and starts with a brief “Member of the Month” presentation for members to get to know each other better.

**f. Natural Helpers – Jeannette Horwitz**

Jeannette is part of Welcoming America’s yearlong program, “Community of Practice: Advancing Immigrant Civic Leadership through Natural Helper Programs.” She shared that the next workshop she will attend takes place June 22.

**VIII. Old Business**

World Refugee Day is happening June 11.

Alyssa Stanko from the HRC asked if HRC should bring a tent, but a tablecloth will suffice since the event is indoors.

**IX. New Business**

Miami Valley Community ID Drive – Saturday, July 9, 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. at the Dayton Metro Library (downtown.). The next drive after that is scheduled for Saturday, September 10, same time, place TBA. Afghan Welcome Event – Saturday, August 5, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. at the Dayton Metro Library (downtown) to welcome newly arrived Afghans.

Jeannette thanked Rachel Gut and the Dayton Metro Library for hosting so many events.

## **X. Closing Remarks and Adjournment**

Jeannette thanked everyone for their time and reminded those present about the next board meeting on Friday, August 12, 2022, from 3:30 – 4:30 p.m. via Zoom.

Claire Preston asked about the Afghan Welcome Event on August 6 and Jeannette explained the event is specifically for the Afghan community with speakers from the community who have lived in Dayton for a while. Anyone from the Welcome Dayton Board is welcome to attend and interact with those present. Let's make our new neighbors feel welcome!

Tom Wahlrab shared a story about a group of Butanese immigrants he met with weekly at the Dayton Metro Library to illustrate the importance of the library to the community. Rachel Gut added that she is thrilled DML can use their buildings for so many different activities including tutoring and ESL instruction and general support.

Tom Wahlrab asked for an update on Welcoming America's Recertification of Dayton as a "Certified Welcoming" city. Jeannette Horwitz reported that the audit will take place July 19 – 21 and that she is in the process of scheduling meetings of stakeholders Welcoming America would like to meet with while in Dayton. Jeannette will provide an update on the Recertification at the August 12 meeting.

Bryan Stewart shared he attended a conference in New Orleans, "Jobs for the Future Horizons." In a session titled "Talent Pipelines: Investing in Immigrant and Refugee Workers," Amazon spoke about initiatives to include immigrants and refugees. Bryan asked if anyone knows of Amazon doing anything locally to hire immigrants and refugees. Mary Reid added Amazon is not on CSSMV's list of companies though quite a few of CSSMV's clients are placed in warehouse type of jobs. Mary will connect Bryan to the employment team at CSSMV for further discussion. Jeannette Horwitz suggested the New American Employer Roundtable group may be interested in discussing this also.

Katie Kersh asked if anything is being planned for Citizenship Day (September 17). David Larson suggested adding it to the agenda of the Government and Justice Subcommittee to discuss further. Jeannette Horwitz will also look into it. She is making plans for Welcoming Week, September 9-18, and Citizenship Day coincides with this.

Jeannette Horwitz added she's been connecting with the League of Women Voters. They are planning on putting together short vignettes on how to vote in different languages. They are finding many naturalized citizens are registering to vote but end up not voting. The League of Women Voters also shared that Naturalization Ceremonies will be held at different locations in the community, including the Dayton Metro Library, as of this summer.

Tom Thompson asked Jeannette to share information about the citizenship classes Aspire is offering. Jeannette will send out a separate email to the WD Committee with this information.

Yunus Ibraghim added that on June 25, Huber Heights will hold a Multicultural Festival. Yunus asked about A World A'Fair and when it will return. Karla Knox, delegate from Panama at the event, added that a private company now owns the Dayton Convention Center and it is not interested in hosting the event. Other venues are being considered and hopefully the festival will return in 2023.\*

*\*Note from Commissioner Joseph: The City did not sell the Convention Center. We transferred it to the Montgomery County Convention Facilities Authority because we couldn't afford to operate it at \$100,000 annual loss any longer. The Convention Facilities Authority contracted with a management company to manager the Center. That management company told World A'Fair that they would no longer offer them the discounts that the City had given them for years, and that World A'Fair would need to pay regular prices. Only the Board of Directors of the Convention Facilities Authority could change this policy. The County Commissioners do appoint the Board of Directors but it's unclear if they have any persuasion over rates charged to any given user of the convention space.*

Jeannette Horwitz thanked David Larson for helping to secure Grace United Methodist Church for World Refugee Day. Jeannette will send out a follow-up email with flyers, dates and other information discussed in today's meeting. The minutes from today's meeting, agenda for the August 12 meeting and Zoom link will be sent out one week prior to the next meeting.

**XI. Next Meeting Date:** Friday, August 12, 2022, 3:30-4:30 p.m. via Zoom

Respectfully Submitted,

Jeannette Horwitz, Welcome Dayton Coordinator