North Carolina Martin Luther King Jr. Commission

Tuesday, October 6, 2020
10:00am – 12:30pm
Virtual Microsoft Teams Meeting with a Call in Option
(This meeting was recorded and said recording is available upon request.)

Meeting Minutes

Members Present: James Williams, Jr., Nervahna Crew, Jamilla Hawkins, Rev. James White, Rabbi Lucy Dinner, Immanuel Jarvis, and Kiana Rivers (late appearance)

Members Not Present: Emmanual Ellie, Larry Jones, Jr., Walter Rogers, Carolyn Stroud, Jacqueline Jeffers, Walter Rogers

Government Staff Present: Betty Marrow-Taylor, Shanon Gerger, Catherine Rivera

Welcome/Call to Order
Chairman White welcomed the MLK Jr. Commission to the meeting. He reminded the Commission members of how we still have to push forward even in this time of challenges. Commissioner Smith will no longer be able to continue with the Commission due to health reasons and asked the Commission members to keep him in their prayers.

Invocation
Rabbi Dinner gave an Invocation to the Commission.

Virtual Public Meetings Norms/Rules
Catherine Rivera provided updates on new regulations of conducting a virtual public meeting. Rivera reminded the Commission that members need to be identified when role, when they speak and prior to voting if their camera is off; all forms of communications are public records if it pertains to the meeting; quorums are established at the beginning and can be lost when a member leaves during the meeting; voting is called by roll call; and, if you leave before the end of the meeting please put time you left in the chat box for quorums purposes.

Ethics Statement
Chairman White read the Ethics Statement to the Commission. No conflicts were identified.

Roll Call and Approval of Minutes
Rivera called the role. A quorum was not established.
**Grants Discussion**

We are running behind schedule for this grant cycle. Gerger shared her screen showing the draft grant proposal to show the portions of the grant that the Commission needs which includes: purpose, eligibility requirements, total per grant funding window, and timeline for submissions to be received.

Deputy Secretary Betty Marrow Taylor asked if the draft was the same that was sent to the Commission with the meeting package. Gerger stated yes but wanted to make sure the Commission was aware of what is needed and why there are highlighted and blanks spaces. She stated that the timeline for getting the contracts and funding out may be rushed but can still be done in the timeline established from previous years.

Chairman White stated that there are critical areas of this document that needed to be completed today and suggested that the Commission talk through the document today. The Theme Committee, Chairman White and Commissioner Williams proposed that the purpose stay with rural communities but try to work on a little bit wider purpose than last year and stay with the idea "all labor has dignity" and that the dignity of the work will shape our destiny.

Dinners felt the concept is right on but not sure that applicants will understand unless we add a paragraph that describes what the Commission mean.

Rivers agreed with the essence of the theme but suggested the Commission say it in a catchy way.

Williams expressed that what Dr. King was capturing in his speech "All labor has dignity" was what needed to happen to make America a just and equitable society and a radical restructuring of the American economic structure. His speech was in regard to the sanitation workers and how all workers, regardless of their employment, has dignity in the labor.

Rivers suggested a subcaption to state "A grant purposed in continuing Dr. King's fight for economic justice."

Jarvis stated "work equals worth" and regardless of what they're doing or earning, there is something transcendent, when working with communities even volunteer work is work, there is a dignity and a worth instilled in those individuals. He would like to have a grant that encourages organizations to create opportunity for volunteerism to serve in their community which would transcend into worth.

Rivers suggested adding "social justice" in the subcaption as well which would include volunteer work.

Jarvis stated volunteer work could involve a litany of opportunities in the communities. It will allow those to appreciate the little things they have and instills values in the youth. He would suggest adding a theme of "work is worth". It not about what they are doing but giving them an opportunity to be activated in serving. Williams stated he feels that it is important that we honor and celebrate Dr. King but that we don't detract from his vision and passion for an America that was economically
just. People should not be denied the basics of what they need for a decent life and thinks the Commission needs to reaffirm that core economic message.

Dinner stated that the Commission should add "creating and sustaining a work ethic." Everything discussed falls into the theme of reinvesting in the value of work. She believed everyone can find that dignity in whatever they are doing.

White stated that we need to remember Dr. King's words and how they apply in 2020. In some communities what is needed is for youth to understand the power of organizing, to bring people together to have a voice. He wants this grant to give to communities that work with youths to organize them to move them to be what they need to be.

Marrow-Taylor stated that the Commission can attach a clarifying statement or FAQ to the grant application or be available to questions from applicants if needed.

White stated these are themes that our community needs to hear and asked if the Commission wants to limit the grant to rural areas?

Dinner asked any member if they had any insight to know if rural areas had the resources to do what we are asking of them. Several Commission members responded saying that they believe these counties are capable and in need of this funding.

White asked the Commission to review the language input on the Grant application form "A grant rooted in creating, organizing, and sustaining a work ethic that promotes economic and social improvements in rural areas." The Commission members agreed to this language.

White asked the Commission if they needed to add addition information in the Purpose section of the application of if the language agreed upon is enough. This area restates the grant's focus and some activities that should be included. He restated Commissioner Jarvis's statement of service oriented activities not necessarily focused on income.

Rivers stated that the activities should focus on service oriented activities serving on marginalized low income communities and thinks it would be repetitive to express the rural areas focus again here. She added the focus on youth leadership and training activities.

Dinner stated that this section seems focused on service and if the Commission is focused on leadership training on jobs and careers then the word "work" should be added to "work or service oriented."

Jarvis stated that part of the goal is to help ensure and build toward the economic viability and wellbeing of these communities and that should be somewhere in the purpose section of the grant. Rivers provided wording which she added into the chat to be added into the grant application for this section. Gerger will include that agreed upon language to the application.

White asked Gerger what is needed in the Eligibility Requirements section of the application. Gerger provided some highlighted language and asked if the requirements
from the previous years should be carried forward. White asked for consideration by the Commission member on the requirements. White explained that last year's focus was on youth and therefore added an age range in this section of the application.

The Commission didn’t have strong opinions on the age range but it was suggested that the range be increased to 30 years old to allow for college and career focused programs.

White explained that the next section of the application includes a section on how much the Commission can give. Gerger reported that typically the Commission gives five (5) $1,000.00 grants. Marrow-Taylor reported that the Commission is operating off last year's budget and would confirm the Commission has the same amount to give this year with the CFO. Gerger stated that if the Commission is still planning on 5 grants the language in the application will stay the same. The Commission agreed with the $1,000.00 amount.

Gerger will take the language from the theme discussion and include it to the "Outcomes" section of the grant, remove several unnecessary or inapplicable language, clean up the format and finalize the grant for publication.

Deputy Secretary Taylor confirmed with the Chief Financial Office that the Commission has $5,000.00 to designate as grant funds for this year.

**Subcommittee Reports**

Communication Subcommittee: Commissioner Rivers reported that most of what the subcommittee discussed was previously discussed, the grant criteria discussed how it would be good to give priority to be given to organizations that have not applied in the last two (2) years; targeted marketing areas should be to rural/low income communities, marginalized communities, groups engaging in civic engagement, and group engaging in work directly related to the theme; methods of communication/distribution to be facebook, email blast, phone banking, calling community leaders; provide information or training about how to register organizations as a 501(c)(3). Commissioner Rivers to provide her presentation to Gerger to input the target marketing area into the grant application. Commissioner Rivers to work on the Commission’s facebook, work with other members and staff to send out the application to community leaders in some of the target areas. Gerger reported that previously the grant application is sent out with a press release, email and commissioners distributed.

Grant Review Subcommittee: Commissioner Hawkins reported that the committee was unable to meet. Hawkins will check in the committee to review the previous year’s guidelines and see if anything needs changed. Chairman White asked about the timeline, BMT stated that the process was already behind, Gerger state that she had the criteria from last year and will send to Subcommittee, she explained the in-house process from last year which will be done by the Subcommittee this year.

November 15th deadline to get applications back; that means the Review Subcommittee would need to meet around Thanksgiving time to be ready for the meeting at the beginning of December for voting, and get contracts out to grantees by end of the year. Gerger reported that she would finalize the application by Friday to be distribution by Monday. Deputy Secretary Taylor will capture this timeline in an action items list for the Commission.
Commissioner Rivers asked if the grant application have a flyer or announcement that she could use for distribution and can make one if the Commission does not. Chairman White expressed the importance of the press release and Deputy Secretary Taylor explained the process to get the press release and stated that she will reach out to the Department’s communication division.

**Announcements/Updates/Next Meeting Date**
Chairman White announced that Commissioner Jeffers has again been awarded the Governor’s award for volunteerism.

Commissioner Williams announced that he is a member of a group called the Orange County Community Remembrance Coalition and they are hosting an series of webinars celebrating the life of Ida B. Wells and other African American journalist throughout October. He will send out the link if any Commissioner wants to attend.

Commissioner Jarvis has access to the facebook page and these items should be added to the Commission’s page; Chairman White asked if Commissioner Rivers would be available to work with Commissioner Jarvis on updating the facebook page.

Rivera announced that the Census was extended to October 31, 2020.

Chairman White announced that next week the Martin Luther King Committee will be on NC Central University to interview Eric Holder. He will provide more information as it comes out.

**Motions/Role Call Votes**
Commissioner Williams, made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from the previous meeting, Commissioner Crew seconded the motion. The vote to approve the meeting minutes was made via roll call and the minutes were approved unanimously.

Commissioner Dinner made a motion to approve the work the Commission did on the grant application today and the work of the committees, Commissioner Williams seconded the motion. The vote to approve the motion was made via roll call and the motion was approved unanimously.

**Next Meeting Date**
The Commission’s next meeting will be December 8, 2020.

**Meeting Adjourned**