

STATE OF CONNECTICUT | SOCIAL EQUITY COUNCIL Reinvestment Workforce Committee  
(DRAFT)

February 21, 2024, Meeting 2 P.M.

Virtual Meeting via Microsoft TEAMS

MEETING MATERIALS

- Meeting agenda
- December 20, 2023, meeting minutes
- February 1, 2024, meeting minutes
- Social Equity Reinvestment Plan and Timeline

1. Call to Order

Committee Chairwoman Naeem called the meeting to order at 2:05 P.M.

2. Attendance

Present:

Corrie Betts

Avery Gaddis

Andrea Hawkins

Michael Jefferson

Ojala Naeem

Paul O. Robertson

Shirley Skyers-Thomas

Kelli-Marie Vallieres

Kevin Walton

Absent:

Andrea Comer

Subira Gordon

Staff present: Ginne-Rae Clay, Executive Director, SEC

3. Approval of December 20, 2023, Meeting Minutes

Committee Chairwoman Naeem requested a motion to approve the minutes of the December 20, 2023, meeting.

Motion – by Michael Jefferson

Second – by Kevin Walton

In Favor – All

Abstention – None

Motion passed.

4. Approval of February 1, 2024, Meeting Minutes

Committee Chairwoman Naeem requested a motion to approve the minutes of the February 1, 2024, special meeting.

Motion – by Michael Jefferson  
Second – by Paul O. Robertson  
In Favor – All  
Abstention – None  
Motion passed.

5. Reinvestment/Workforce Update

o Workforce Update

Executive Director Clay stated the position has been posted and was looking forward to going through the interview process.

Councilman Jefferson questioned the status of workforce development and job training for the cannabis industry.

Executive Director Clay responded that there were challenges in getting the two positions approved, a workforce program manager in the Office of Workforce Strategy, who will focus on the industry and creating training programs for potential cannabis employment, and a program manager for the Council itself. Once that person gets on board, they will begin talking to companies, identifying their common needs for training programs, working with people in the industry to put out RFPs to create those programs, and also providing financial assistance to the organizations creating the programs. The contract with Oaksterdam is also being finalized for work in the areas of training as it relates to the second round of the lottery and getting people involved in workforce development.

Councilwoman Vallieres added that Tiffany Araujo is now on the OWS team reviewing all the workforce plans that come in and is starting to get an understanding of that information. She related some discussions with the Cannabis Chamber of Commerce on developing regional sector partnerships in cannabis to help identify the needs businesses have to grow and to develop training programs around those needs. She explained that when the Reinvestment and Workforce Committees were separate, there was discussion of specific workforce development investment and believed that had become less prioritized when talking about reinvestment. She hoped to get that back on the priority list.

Councilman Walton asked if there was any direction from partners in terms of the jobs the SEC should be looking to train for and what types of businesses the Council would like to see people trained in for working in the cannabis industry.

Councilwoman Kelli-Marie Vallieres responded that those partners will be part of the conversation moving forward. She wanted everyone to be aware of the limitation that people who work in the cannabis industry are not eligible to use their employment status for a federal loan. She felt that it was pertinent to ensure opportunity for people in DIA areas to work in cannabis but also to potentially select other areas of interest that will provide stability and economic mobility for those individuals.

- Social Equity Reinvestment Plan & Timeline Discussion

Executive Director Clay provided a high-level review of the Reinvestment Plan and Timeline. The recommendation was to take the funding and reinvest in communities in two areas, violence prevention and community collaboration, and to distribute money regionally, focusing on the areas noted in the community assessment: crisis housing, food insecurities, and community-based childcare. She also reviewed the grant and grant-making criteria. For the community-based violence prevention grants, there was a consideration of a minimum of \$25,000 and maximum of \$150,000. She also reviewed the timeline and noted the key dates, noting it was important to forward this plan to the full Council for a vote on March 5. Staff would then be able to go out and find grant makers to get the money on the street through the procurement process.

Councilwoman Hawkins questioned whether the Community Review Teams could be a barrier to distribution of funds. She also asked if those people would be the same trusted messengers used before.

Executive Director Clay explained that the Community Review Teams were not a barrier; they would be made up of people in the community eager to ensure that good programs get the funding. She noted it could be the same trusted messengers or not but would be people with knowledge of the needs of the community. Those teams will review, rate, and rank applications and then send recommendations to the Social Equity Council. The Council will have the opportunity to look over every request before anything is approved.

Councilwoman Vallieres felt that having a maximum amount in the violence prevention grants would mean spreading the money out too much and suggested increasing or taking away the maximum. She also suggested adding workforce development in the priorities for community collaborations, whether in cannabis or other industries.

Executive Director Clay explained that the minimum/maximum were meant to be guidelines for grant makers but was fine with removing the maximum. She discussed more about the needs the communities were looking for and the state resource partners she has been meeting with in this regard. She also described that the SEC budget includes funding for development of workforce training programs and assessing

workforce development needs, currently almost \$1M for assessment, which she expected to grow.

6. Vote on recommendation to adopt the Social Equity Reinvestment Plan & Timeline

It was discussed that the Committee was voting to make a recommendation to the full Social Equity Council in March, and then the Council would vote and Staff would begin work on the Plan.

Councilwoman Vallieres requested to vote on adding workforce development as part of the community collaboration funds.

Councilman Jefferson felt it was not necessary to vote on that and believed any motion on this item should include workforce development.

Committee Chairwoman Naeem noted she would entertain a motion to recommend the Reinvestment Plan and Timeline to the Council for approval, adding workforce under the community collaboration piece and removing the maximum cap on funding requests for reinvestment.

Motion – by Michael Jefferson  
Second – by Avery Gaddis  
In Favor – All  
Abstention – None  
Motion passed.

7. For the Good of the Order

There were no updates or discussions.

8. Adjournment

Committee Chairwoman Naeem entertained a motion to adjourn.

Motion – Michael Jefferson  
Second – Kevin Walton

The meeting was adjourned at 2:45 P.M.

/ab

February 23, 2024

**RE: Transcript: February SEC Reinvestment Workforce Committee Meeting Minutes  
Draft 32152**

**Please be advised that the above-referenced typewritten transcript is a true and accurate transcription of the recorded conversations to the extent that the audio could be clearly heard/understood. Portions that could not be heard/understood have been notated with a (an “inaudible” or “?...”).**

Sincerely,

*Mary A. Goehring*

**Mary A. Goehring  
CEO, Transcription Plus, LLC**

**I certify that this document is a true and accurate transcription of the audio voice file indicated above.**

*Anne Bruno*  
**Anne Bruno**