

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
SOCIAL EQUITY COUNCIL | REGULAR MEETING - **DRAFT**
SEPTEMBER 3, 2024 Meeting 10:00 A.M.
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

1) Call to Order and Welcome

Chair Andrea Comer called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m. She welcomed council members, state officials, representatives, and members of the public. Following her opening remarks, she initiated the roll call.

2) Attendance

Kyle Abercrombie
Fanita Borges
Corrie Betts
Avery Gaddis
Subira Gordon - Absent
Andréa Hawkins
Michael Jefferson
Daniel Karpowitz
Melvin Medina - Absent
Ojala Naeem
Edwin Shirley
Shirley Skyers-Thomas - Absent
Kelli-Marie Vallieres
Kevin Walton

Executive Director: Brandon McGee

3) Approval of August 6, 2024 SEC meeting minutes

Andrea Comer acknowledged the presence of a quorum and welcomed Brandon McGee, recently appointed as Executive Director. She expressed the council's enthusiasm about his leadership. The meeting then proceeded with the approval of the August 6, 2024, meeting minutes.

Motion – by Daniel Karpowitz
Second – by Kyle Abercrombie
In Favor – All
Opposed – None
Abstentions – None
Motion passed unanimously.

4) Executive Session

a) Discussion on Pending Litigation

The Council moved to enter an executive session to discuss pending litigation.

Motion – by Edwin Shirley
Second – by Kelli-Marie Vallieres
In Favor – All
Opposed – None
Abstentions – None
Motion passed unanimously.

Andrea instructed the participants to leave the Zoom meeting and join the executive session via a separate Teams link, and she thanked the public for their patience during this transition.

5) Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Brandon McGee provided a detailed report, beginning with a warm acknowledgment of council members and the public. He welcomed new Council Member Fanita Borges and invited staff members to introduce themselves, including Ana Rosa (Administrative Assistant), Jennifer Edwards (Program Manager), Jennifer Stevens (Associate Accountant), and Karen Colebut (Paralegal Specialist and Policy/Governance Liaison).

McGee discussed staffing updates, including plans to make an offer for the legal director position, highlighting the candidate's extensive experience in state work. Michael Jefferson raised a question about the candidate's identity, and McGee responded that he would share further details once the offer was accepted. Andrea Comer clarified that the candidate was initially selected by the former Executive Director, but the process was paused to allow McGee input on the team-building process.

McGee then moved on to contracts, informing the council that the contract with Oaksterdam had been terminated. He emphasized plans to reassess other contracts and seek alternative partnerships, particularly within Connecticut's community college system, to support workforce development programs.

Michael Jefferson raised concerns about the council's involvement in contract termination decisions, questioning whether such decisions should be discussed with the council beforehand. McGee acknowledged the need for clear communication and transparency and deferred to Andrea Comer for further clarification. Comer explained that the contract language grants the Executive Director the authority to terminate contracts when deemed in the state's best interest. She noted that the council had been informed via email and suggested that if contract language changes were desired, they could be addressed through the Policy and Governance Committee.

Councilman Avery Gaddis supported the termination of the Oaksterdam contract, citing the availability of local talent in Connecticut. McGee acknowledged the concerns raised and promised better communication moving forward.

McGee also discussed the council’s budget, reporting that they were working closely with the Department of Economic and Community Development to ensure financial oversight, including the allocation of \$50 million in the loan program and \$5.6 million for reinvestment, which must be spent by June 30, 2025.

McGee concluded with updates on the council’s programs, strategic planning efforts, and an upcoming audit from the state comptroller’s office. He emphasized his commitment to collaboration with council members and stakeholders to ensure the council's success in supporting communities impacted by the war on drugs.

6) Good of the Order

Andrea Comer opened the floor for committee updates. She acknowledged that committees had not met the previous month but welcomed any updates from committee chairs.

Councilman Daniel Karpowitz provided an update on behalf of the Strategic Planning Committee. He highlighted ongoing discussions with a vendor regarding the scope and cost of services for the council's strategic planning efforts. He emphasized that, moving forward, Executive Director Brandon McGee would be central to all future conversations with the vendor to ensure the planning process is aligned with the council's vision. Karpowitz noted collaboration with Councilman Walton and Councilwoman Hawkins on restructuring the planning process, ensuring McGee’s involvement from the start.

After Karpowitz's update, Andrea Comer invited additional committee updates or questions, but none were presented, concluding the agenda item.

7) Adjourn

Avery Gaddis called a motion to adjourn.

Motion – by Avery Gaddis

Second – by Edwin Shirley

In Favor – All

Opposed – None

Abstentions – None

Motion passed unanimously.



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Date: September 3, 2024

RE: Minutes: September SEC Council Meeting Minutes Minutes (Draft)

Please be advised that the above-referenced typewritten minutes are a true and accurate description of the proceedings obtained from 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,

Brenda LaFleur

Brenda LaFleur
Owner, A Plus Reporting Service, LLC

I certify that this document is a true and accurate description of the proceedings obtained from the recorded conversations contained in the listed audio file.

Boden Truitt

Boden Truitt,
Transcriber