

## **Kansas African American Affairs Commission Meeting Minutes**

**Location:** Microsoft Teams Virtual Meeting

**Scheduled Time:** Friday, December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020 11:00 pm- 3:00 pm

### **Call to Order and Welcome:**

KAAAC Chairman New called the meeting to order at **11:02 am**

Reading of the Kansas African American Affairs Commission KOMA Statement

**Roll Call:** Commissioners - New, Davis, McRoy, Lewis, Elmore, Westbrook – Present

**Chairman's Opening Comments:** Welcome and Introduction of Commissioner Mark E. McCormick

\*See attached Bio

Moment of silence to remember former The Honorable Judge Gregory L. Waller who passed away December 2, 2020.

**Mission:** The KAAAC members work to devise strategies to address public policy concerns of the African American community. The Commission will serve as a conduit for programs, grants, research, and policy advice for state and local organizations while addressing needs for change that are unique to the African American Community in the state of Kansas.

**Public Comment:** No Comments

**Minutes** – Friday, September 25<sup>th</sup>, 2020 – Tabled

### **Commissioner Comments:**

**Elmore:** Reminder that Commissioners must advocate for individuals as well as the collective members of their districts.

**McRoy:** Stay vigilant in our fight to combat the negative effects of COVID-19 in our communities by actively engaging in spreading the word about testing.

**Westbrook:** reflecting on the need for us to work towards unifying our country and communities as we transition to a new federal administration.

**Lewis:** COVID-This holiday season masks-up, social distance, and look for alternatives to traditional gatherings. Take advantage of the unlimited time access provided by Zoom during Christmas, New Years, and Kwanza. The Governor's Commission on Racial Equity and Justice has submitted its report to the governor for review. We can form commissions and committees, but we can't check-box our way through the work that needs to be done. We must continue to speak truth to power and the work of dismantling systems of oppression in our various communities.

**New:** Recruitment of technical advisors and commitment of Commissioners to chair one of the five KAAAC areas of focus:  
Schools and Educational Opportunity  
Health and Safe Communities  
Economic Opportunity and Asset Building  
Criminalization and Social Justice  
Civic Leadership and Advocacy

**Special Guest:** Governor Laura Kelly Conversation Highlights

- KAAAC legislative priorities play a critical role in driving the conversations and public policies to make Kansas a more equitable place for all.
- The last year has helped to shine a light on inequality embedded in our society. Unique barriers to employment, education opportunities, healthcare, housing, and other essential services and how profoundly they impact our Black and Brown communities.
- COVID-19 pandemic has disproportionately affected communities of color. Black and Brown Kansans are more likely to be infected by the virus and become seriously ill and succumb to its harmful effects. Barriers in accessing quality childcare and high-speed internet put our communities of color at a distinct disadvantage when school buildings were closed to mitigate the spread of the virus through federal funding provided to our state by the CARES ACT.
- The administration...
  - Has worked to strengthen our social safety net and increase Black Kansans' access to critical support systems.
  - Expanded unemployment insurance benefits
  - Implemented programs to support low-wage and essential workers.
  - Improved access to child care.

While continued support from our federal partners is essential, my administration will not stop looking for ways to make our government work better for Kansans who have been disproportionately impacted by this health crisis.

- Vaccine distribution plan...
  - The administration will continue to prioritize those who are high risk to keep Kansans in every community healthy.
- Get our kids back to school
- Protect our small businesses
- Convened a diverse group of stakeholders to address the systemic inequalities in our state, the Commission on Racial Equity and Justice...
  - Developing and recommending actions the administration can take to address racism in our state.
  - So far the group is primarily focused on law enforcement relations.
  - Commission has held dozens of listening sessions ranging in topics from juvenile justice, mental health, substance use, and other concerns.

- Commission's first report contained initial steps we can take to increase racial equity and justice in Kansas
- Detailed steps outlined in this report covered everything from enhanced anti-bias training curriculum for law enforcement trainees, increasing diversity in law enforcement ranks, state government, and expanding public defender offices.
- Committed to doing all I can to drive these policy initiatives
- Committed to improving the quality of life for African American communities.
- The administration has prioritized rebuilding our state's foundation. Reinvesting in four core government services
  - Education
  - Healthcare
  - Infrastructure
  - Economic Development
- Ensuring Quality Education For All
- Capital investments: supporting programs that provide resources to assist Black and Brown business owners like the office of minority and women business development houses in the Kansas Department of Commerce
- Expanding access to health care to the 150,000 Kansans who currently fall into the coverage gap.

## Commission Q&A

Contact: Becky Sabel | Director of Operations and Scheduling  
 Kansas Governor Laura Kelly  
 300 SW 10th Avenue, Room 241-S | Topeka, Kansas 66612  
 Office: (785) 368-6590  
 Kyle Freese

## Brief Commissioner District Highlights

### **District-4 Commissioner Elmore**

New City Regulation: Working on a project with a senior citizen who is having issue with the city's regulation forcing the home owner to remove or relocate a carport that was built 24 years ago. Organize meeting with County officials and accompanied individual to court.

### **District-2 Commissioner Lewis**

Continuing to work with the Lawrence/Douglas County Community Remembrance Project Coalition is working towards getting an Equal Justice Initiative historical marker created for the 1882 lynching's that happened in Lawrence, Kansas, and planning activities around its dedication. Also working with Salina.

### **District- 2 Commissioner New**

[Topeka United](#) Mission: Building Community, One Relationship At A Time. Group is working on a project called Mosaic Partners. An Initiative the pairs people in the community from diverse background to build a relationship that can promote unity.

**District- 1 Commissioner Davis** Virus updates. Coordinating with Reverend Dee Williamston, the United Methodist Church District Superintendent to identify mobile testing sites.

### **Brief Executive Director Update**

- KAAAC Website Refresh Update: 3 pages of updates and corrections submitted to OITS.
- Possibility of another Intern from Washburn.
- COVID Testing / Vaccine Updates
  - KAAAC has helped KDHE identify approximately 25 potential mobile testing sites in predominantly African American communities across the state of Kansas. special thanks to Commissioner Elmore and Commissioner Davis for sitting in on meetings with KDHE.
  - KLC- Kansas Beats the Virus - To combat the spread of COVID-19, the Kansas Leadership Center launched “Kansas Beats the Virus,” a public health partnership with the State of Kansas. For its part, KLC called on its partners and alumni to hold 1,000 community meetings across the state by December 31.
  - [GOGETTESTED](#)
- Annual Legislative Summit: Partnership with Kansas Black Legislative Council  
December 12<sup>th</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> District Commissioner Mcroy will be the moderator  
**Presentations:**
  - **Payday Loans** – Shanae’ Calhoun, Topeka Jump
  - **Medicaid Expansion in Kansas** – April Holman, Exec. Dir. Alliance for a Healthy Kansas
  - **Bail Bond Reform** – Judge Karen Arnold-Burger, Chief Judge of the Kansas Court of Appeals
  - **Foster Care Reform** – Min. Nina Shaw-Woody, Executive Director Kansas Family Action Network
  - **Suspended Drivers Licenses** – Mike Fonkert, Campaign Director Kansas Appleseed
  - **Redistricting & Lack of Public Defenders for Juveniles** – Kansas Senator David Haley
  - **Legislative Advocacy**- Kerry Gooch
- Scott Allegrucci Director of Appointments for the Governor’s office update: Governor Kelly has made 500 appointments 19% have been POC 60% have been women.
- Federal Appointments – [The Plum Book](#)
- Update on Rep. Finney Evergy Bill HB2321
- 74-9906. Appointment of Technical Advisors and Assistants:  
Schools and Educational Opportunity – **Commissioner Lewis**  
Health and Safe Communities – **Commissioner McCormick**  
Economic Opportunity and Asset Building  
Criminalization and Social Justice  
Civic Leadership and Advocacy – **Commissioner Mcroy**

**Motion:** KAAAC Commissioner will recruit technical advisors to assist in the mission work of commission and ED Cox will send a list of the KAAAC 5 Focus Areas to Commissioners. Motioned by Commissioner Mcroy; 2<sup>nd</sup> Commissioner Elmore

**Action Item:** ED Cox is to draft form email/invitation that Commissioners can use to recruit advisors.

**Action Item:** Commissioner McCroy will send ED Cox information on a legal intern from Washburn for KAAAC legislative work.

- MLK 2021 update- This year's event will be virtual. This event will be presented in partnership with the Kansas Volunteer Commission.

**Action Item:** Commissioner Beryl New will confirm with Mr. Kevin Wilmott  
**The Governor's Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration- Proclamation Request & Information**

**Date:** Thursday, January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2021

**Theme:** Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community?

**Lead Quote:** "Let us be those creative dissenters who will call our beloved nation to a higher destiny, to a new plateau of compassion, to a more noble expression of humanness." — Martin Luther King Jr.

**Goal/Reflection:** Where do we go from here? Which will we choose Chaos or Community?

After one of the most contentious election on record, how do we return to the pathway "forward" towards ...National reconciliation, civility, truthfulness, forgiveness, kindness, humility, and inclusiveness, or will we continue to detour backward towards dissension, division, deceitfulness, accusation, hostility, anger, pride, intolerance

**Keynote:** Kevin Willmott, Oscar award-winning director, screenwriter, and professor of Film and Media Studies at the University of Kansas

**Graphics:**

The poster is divided into several sections. On the left, a vertical banner reads '2021 COMMUNITY or CHAOS' in large, bold letters. Below this is a black and white photograph of Martin Luther King Jr. speaking at a podium. The top right section is a teal box with the text 'The Kansas Governor's MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. VIRTUAL CELEBRATION Monday, January 18, 2021'. Below this is a white box with 'with Guest Speaker KEVIN WILMOTT' and a portrait of him. Further down is the 'Kansas' logo with 'Office of the Governor African American Affairs Commission' and the 'KANSAS VOLUNTEER COMMISSION' logo. At the bottom, it says 'in partnership with the ... KANSAS VOLUNTEER COMMISSION KANSASVE.ORG' and 'A program of the Kansas State Department of Education'.

**Adjournment:** Meeting called to adjournment at 1:56 pm

