

Black Affairs Advisory Board Minutes

September 10, 2025

Stephen P. Clark Government Center/10th Floor/1011

Quorum: Yes

Present: Mr. Pierre Rutledge (Chair); Mr. D.J. Fabien; Ms. Delphine Gervais; Dr. Tisa Thomson; Ms. Johnetta Nuby-Powell; Mr. Jihad Rashid; Ms. Sandy Sears; Ms. LaCriscia Fowlkes

Absent: Mr. Issaih Edwards; Mr. Edgar Wright; Mr. Brandon Bartley; Ms. Priscilla Dames Blake; Mr. Cleveland Bell; Mr. Cliff Thomas, Dr. Germany Dixon; Stephen Hunter Johnson, Esq.; Dr. Jonathan Spikes (excused); Ms. LaChanze Thomas

Guests: Michael Johnson; Carla Hill; Thomas Mingo, III.

Staff: Retha Boone-Fye (Program Director); Ms. Shirley Ellison; Ms. Edryse Meus, Yvans Morisseau.

The meeting was called to order at 10:21 a.m. by the Chair, Mr. Rutledge. Ms. Boone-Fye called the roll. Following roll call and introductions, the Chair called for a moment of silent meditation. Ms. Boone-Fye requested approval of the July minutes. It was moved by Mr. Rashid and seconded by Ms. Simpkins. The vote was taken and the minutes were approved.

Public Comments: Ms. Carla Hill, representing Ransom Everglades, a private school located in Coconut Grove, extended an invitation to the board as well as attendees to become familiar with the institution and to contact her should they desire to receive more information on the school.

Chair's Report

Mr. Rutledge urged members and attendees to support the upcoming 50th Anniversary celebration of the Marshall L. Davis African Heritage Cultural Arts Center. He also announced that a meeting has been scheduled with the Miami-Dade Sheriff's Office and indicated that interested members of the board were welcome to attend.

Program Director's Report: Ms. Boone-Fye announced that there are a few community members who are interested in joining the board and requested assistance from current members. Dr. Thomson, Ms. Nuby-Powell and Ms. Delphine Gervaise volunteered to assist in the process. She also reported that reetired MDPD Director Stephanie Daniels unfortunately cannot join our board at this time as she is a volunteer with two other County boards. She has to wait for her term to expire on one of the boards, which is in one year.

As of July 16th, County Ordinance 25-74, relating to advice and policy recommendations made by County Advisory Boards, indicated that the board must seek approval from the BCC prior to implementation. This means our recommendations must first be presented to the BCC before going public or sent to any local, state or federal agent. Any violation of this action will result in some type of disciplinary action. Oath of Office Requirements: As of August 15, 2025, nominees will no longer be required to submit a notarized Oath of Office. She indicated that we are beginning to send out the requests for the 2025-2026 edition of the Black World Guide and requested the board's assistance.

Restoration of Voting Rights for Returning Citizens: We need to pay attention to this bill, as it impacts citizens who are unaware of their right to vote based on not knowing how much they owe in fines. Representative Felicia Robinson has proposed a bill that will establish a coordinated database which will list all fines or other monies owed, which would help to clear them and allow them to vote legally. Need a board volunteer to follow up with this issue.

The partnership with the Dolphin Foundation for three years; the document has been approved with the signature of the BCC Chair and provides a three-year payment of \$3k each year. The presentation will be made at a Miami Dolphins game later this month.

There is also a new requirement that prior to any events being sponsored by the board, the funds must be already in the Trust Fund.

Committee Reports:

Housing: No report submitted.

Black Heritage Planning: The agreement between the Dolphin Foundation and the board has been signed, providing support to the Annual Pillar Awards.

Education: Ms. Boone-Fye will follow up with Ms. Thomas regarding the meeting with the Superintendent. There is an extension of the George T. Baker Aviation school that needs to be discussed at our upcoming meeting. Also, we need to explore a partnership with the Barrington Irving Aviation program.

Health Care: Ms. Gervais reported that September is “Suicide Prevention Month” and that she is involved in a number of activities in observance of this issue which is rarely discussed in our community. Ms. Sears spoke of the importance of vaccinations and how current events are impacting the Black community. They will follow up on these issues.

Crisis Intervention/Respect Life! No report submitted.

Economic Development: Mr. Rashid will be attending a meeting later this month regarding programs and processes that impact our demographic’s involvement in the local economy. He will make a presentation at the next meeting.

Social Media & Marketing: Mr. Fabien again recommended that members send photos, activities and other information to him or Mr. Bartley as well as share our posts on social media. He also recommended that members scan the Black World Guide’s QR code and keep it on their phones to share with community members.

HAERC: Mr. Fabien again commented on the situation in Haiti and informed the board that he will continue to monitor and report to the members.

New Business: Ms. Boone-Fye informed the board that a request for funding from a group affiliated with the University of Miami’s African association and asked any interested members to contribute.

Old Business: None

Announcements: The Miami Herald WishBook is requesting submissions; Congresswoman Frederica Wilson (D) is hold a “Military Day” on October 4th , the Black Police Precinct is holding “Meditation Mondays” -contact member LaCriscia Fowlkes for details.

Motion to Adjourn: It was moved by Ms. Simpkins and seconded by Mr. Fabien that the meeting adjourn, which occurred at 11:58 a.m.

