

Equity Committee  
Record of Action for June 24, 2024

**Committee Members Present:** Supervisor Federal D. Glover, BOS District 5, Committee Chair;  
Supervisor John Gioia, BOS District 1, Committee Vice Chair

**Staff Present:** Kendra Carr and Peter Kim, Co-Directors, Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice (staff to Committee); Emlyn Struthers, Deputy County Administrator, County Administrator's Office; Ellen McDonnell, Public Defender; Nicole Bilich, Manager, Human Resources Department; Lavonna Martin; Gilbert Salinas, Chief Equity Officer, Health Department; Shannon Ladner-Beasley, Program Manager, Health Department; Stephanie Rivera, Chief Health Equity Officer, CC Health Plan, Health Department; Cindi Mallory, Employment and Human Services Department; Sonia Bustamante, Chief of Staff, BOS District 1; Jill Ray, District Representative, BOS District 2; Peter Myers, Deputy Chief of Staff, BOS District 3; Alejandra Sanchez, District Representative, BOS District 4

**Public Attendees:** Gigi Crowder; Catherine; Cyndi Mallory; Kerby Lynch; 925-519-6547; Akili Nuez-Mixon; Alejandra Sanchez; Alfonso Edwards; Angela F; Angela Irvine; Ashley Green; Auriel Shelton; Billy Lowe; Bree Woods; Brenda Lowe; Barbara Howard; Bishop; Britnee; Carleta Robinson; Carol E; Cassandra H; Chaplain Jeralynn Brown-Blueford; Crystal Farmer; Dale Witherspoon; Damon Owens; Desirae Herron; DJA; Dr George; Dr Lamont Francies; Dr. V; Eddie G; Desiree Rushing; Elsa Stevens; Erica Shepherd; Fanny Roberson; Felicia Wilson; Jackie; Jan Warren; Jane Courant; Jazz Noble; Jeanetta Jones; Joan Ediae; Kennedy Williams; Kenneth Robinson; Kiara Clark; Kia'Ora Henson; Kingdom Blendz; LaTanyua Thompson; LaDenya Tabor-Baton; Lakiesha Kelly-Redmond; Lea Murray; Lu Taylor; Lynette Hart; Marc King; Michael; MyKeisha Lewis; Mz Hill; Nakiesha Leslie; Nana; Nicole Sanjurjo; Odessa Lefrancois; OG Strogatz; Patt Young; Barbara Howard; Nikki Anthony-Edwards; Ramon Quintana; Rev Dr Versil Milton; Rachel Rosekind; Robin Falls; Roxanne Carillo-Garza; Sabrina McCowan; Shantell Owens; Sharronda; Sherae Frost; Tachina Garrett; The Core; Tiffany Cymanda; TMilton; Tonia Lediju; Torrie Spikener; Traci Fuqua; Stand Together Contra Costa; Stephanie Taddeo; Tiffany Cymanda; Techina Garret; Solomon Belette; Teki Flow; Zelon Harrison; Phil Arnold

## 1. Introductions

*Due to technical problems with Zoom and audio, the start time of the meeting was delayed. Supervisor Glover convened meeting at 8:47 AM.*

*Committee Chairs introduced themselves and staff assigned to the committee, Kendra Carr and Peter Kim, Co-Directors of the Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice (ORESJ).*

## 2. Public Comment

*Gigi Crowder: In regard to the Measure X H3 program funding, I have an issue with not having Black-led grassroots agencies awarded, In order to ensure that services are equitable for*

*community members most impacted by homelessness, we must have Black-led organizations on the ground who have the credibility to be funded.*

*Supervisor Glove: Due to the limited time, we will pause Public Comment and resume after the next priority item.*

- 3. RECEIVE and DISCUSS** the recommendation from the African American Holistic Wellness and Resource Hub Feasibility Study Steering Committee regarding the review and consultant selection, **PROVIDE** direction on next steps and **AUTHORIZE** the ORESJ Co-Directors to forward the recommendation to the Board of Supervisors for final approval of the consultant.

*Staff and a representative of the Steering Committee (Desirae Herron) presented on the review and selection process, including the role of the Steering Committee, the Review Sub-Committee, and the steps involved in ensuring a transparent, community-led process that resulted in the recommendation of Ceres Policy Research as the top applicant. (See attached memo and PowerPoint in Agenda Packet).*

*Glover: I want to thank the Steering Committee for all their work on this and want to recognize their time and effort.*

*Gioia: I also appreciate the Steering Committee's work, especially the Review Committee, and commend the intentionality and thoughtfulness put into the recommendation. I'd like to also hear from Ceres Policy Research if they are here to share more about their work.*

*Dr. Kerby Lynch shared details and a summary of their experience and credentials, including:*

- Ceres Policy Research was founded by Angela Irvine, but now operates a 3-person co-op/co-owner structure, Irvine as an owner/principal and Kerby Lynch and Aisha Canfield as owners/directors. Lynch holds a doctorate in Geography and Canfield holds a Masters in public policy, both of whom will carry this feasibility study project forward, Lynch serving as the project lead; Irvine, a nationally recognized statistician, will provide 40 hours to the project. Two sub-consultants will be Tanya Lediju (CEO of SF Housing Authority) and Ryan Drakelee (long history and experience on Wall Street and in private equity). Irvine is white, and Lynch, Canfield, Lediju, and Drakelee are Black. Ceres Policy Research was the contracted research partner of the Core Committee and led the research process that helped establish the ORESJ. Lynch leads reparations efforts throughout California, and along with her parents have generational roots in Richmond. has parents and I are from Richmond, and is committed to improving the long term socioeconomic health and wellness for Black communities in Contra Costa County.*

**Public Comment:**

*Phil Arnold: There is an absence of Black men in whole process. I was the only black male but I'm 75 years old. I chose Jeweld Legacy as my recommended consultant. There may also be a conflict of interest due to the relationship between ORESJ and Ceres Policy Research.*

*Gigi Crowder: My vision for this hub has always been to have every part of the process be by us, for us. I supported this work in Alameda County and Berkeley, both of which were by black-led. We need an organization that is black-led and owned, that is more crucial than the issue of timing. Ceres is not Black-owned.*

*Jane Courant: As a resident of Richmond and member of the Progressive Alliance, I am in support of past two speakers. I have worked with NAMI and the Racial Justice Coalition, I respect their work, and I endorse their statements.*

*Zelon Harrison: As a member of both the review committee and steering committee, I am listening, and I agree that we need more black males, but we need to keep moving forward; we have to for our community.*

*Willie Robinson: As a Black male from Richmond and as president of Richmond NAACP, I am very concerned with this decision based on what I've heard from community today.*

*Shantell Owens: We must build bridges not walls; Genesis Church is dedicated to serving the people and I disagree with holding this process up. NAMI is a white agency with a Black director and does positive work, so why would CERES not be able to do the same? This effort to dismantle the process is childish.*

*Desiree Rushing: We started the 40 Voices before I knew half of the people here; the criteria for the AfAm Hub was created by 40 Voices, not NAMI, and it prioritized Black-led organizations. Jeweld Legacy was eased out of the process.*

*Barbara Howard: I am deeply disturbed that we are here, I agree with Gigi. It should be led from beginning to end by a Black organization. We must honor 40 Voices and how this work all got started and recognize that it must be African American-led, period. We can heal ourselves.*

*Cheryl Sudduth: I would like more information. As a contracting officer, I still haven't heard about the procurement process, about how it was transparent and legitimate, or not. I am also interested in the increased participation of Black males in the process.*

*Erica Sheppherd: There is a lot of I's happening, lots of comments pertaining to individual groups getting credit, but we need to focus on the welfare of the community as a whole. We must respect the work and hours put in by the review committee, and allow this process to move forward. We cannot delay any longer in moving the work forward for our community's sake.*

*Jeralynn Brown Blueford: I am in support of 40 Voices advocating for an African American-led consultant. We're here because the Black community needs a Black-led organization to do all pieces of this work to bring the African American Wellness Hub to fruition.*

*Latonya Thompson: Our real interest will and always be the people, and 40 Voices works directly with formerly incarcerated people, children, the homeless. We can't rush the process to ensure that we have what we need, and that the generations that will come after us have what they need.*

*Marc King: I work with Leave No One Behind and this work is needed right now, we don't have the time to fight between ourselves. I work with teenagers, mothers with babies, folks in the streets without housing, they need us to get the work done immediately.*

*Auriel Shelton: I'm looking at the logistics, whether there is consistency in the process; Kerby [Lynch] said that the work will be Black-led and they sound like they will do the work effectively. I support moving ahead.*

*MyKeisha Lewis: This is all very disheartening, I work in the mental health community in Cherry Hill Hospital and in the detention facility. We are overworked with too many patients in both places. True, there may not always be a male at the table. But as a former division director, I stand behind the process. We must look at the process and move forward; we cannot undermine the need to address the pain that is happening now*

*Brenda Lowe: If God or Jesus was here, they would say move forward. There is a lot of anger on this line. We need to keep the needs of our people at the top of mind above all else.*

*Kiara Clark; We cannot disrespect the process, we must honor the Steering Committee's decision.*

*Elsa Stevens: I am Latina, an ally, but as an Richmond Progressive Alliance member, I say move forward with the process. Black women are also suffering like Black men, so let's not devalue their contribution to this work and in these spaces.*

*Traci Fuqua: I am frustrated by this idea of a delay; pushing it back to have another decision is disrespectful. Please allow this process to move forward, we must prioritize the need to heal the community.*

*iPhone (Pastor Elder Jeremiah Stevens): I really agree that we should move forward with this. It's not about us, it's about the people. There is so much work that needs to be done; we have to come together to address all the needs, and it's very important that we understand that. The enemy sows the seeds of confusion.*

*(iPhone) Bishop Peters: I agree that we should continue on, however, we as Black people have organized to be involved in the feasibility study, so whoever is chosen must have Black people involved and it must be Black-led.*

*Damon Owens: We cannot minimize the hard work and progress of the Steering Committee. I resent those using the color of my skin as a way to discriminate against other groups; white*

*supremacy dressed in black face, sowing confusion and division amongst us. We also have Black women involved, leading efforts, and that must be recognized and cannot be diminished.*

*Torrie Spikener: This cannot be about who started what, or about who should get the glory. We need the funds now; the time is overdue. As a mother, I have called upon services in SF in the past which were helpful, but in Contra Costa there are fewer opportunities. This needs to change. I sense the spirit of chaos and it is so upsetting.*

*Mz Hill: I ask that we do not delay, our children and communities need this work to move ahead now. Thank you.*

*Mariana Moore: So excited to see this moving forward, and encouraged by the possibility of working together. I want to lift up the process of both steering and review committees, and the review process as a whole needs to be lifted up. My personal experience with CERES around evaluation of our organizing effort in the past was extremely positive, it was an amazing community-centered job that engaged community members in deep and meaningful ways.*

*Wanda Johnson: I want to thank Federal Glover about his earlier comments, and as part of 40 Voices, we began this effort to have Black people lead the way and be involved at every step. There is a difference between having an organization led by Black people, and just having Black workers there.*

*Jeaneta Jones Stevens: I live and worship in Antioch, and it is imperative for the health of the people that this feasibility study be led by Black people.*

*Reverend Dr. Versil Milton: the possibility of the African American Wellness Hub poses such an opportunity for innovation and resources, especially for the Black community, for culturally sensitive services that meet our unique needs. Let's not forget that this is what binds us; the Devil's greatest trick is to divide and conquer, so resist that temptation.*

*Fanny Roberson: The steering committee was chosen by the Supervisors for a reason, I think they did a great job; they put in the time, and I want to thank them. Our community, families, and children are hurting and suffering, so we cannot slow down the process. Please come together and move forward.*

*Felica Wilson: As a black mother in this County, with one son struggling with mental illness, and another son having been murdered, I can say that we need this work to happen right now and we cannot wait. Too many people are hurting and dying.*

*Lea Murray: I'm very disheartened around the lack of unity and one voice. I know we all want what is best for Black people. I'm happy to hear Dr. Kerby say that Black people will be centered in the feasibility study, and that the hub must always center blackness. I will be paying close attention to what happens next.*

*Jackie: I'm bothered and perplexed by all that I've heard today. I am a mother of a daughter with mental illness and every day is a blessing; time equals life and I do not take a single moment for granted. It seems to me that the process has been done, that everyone has done what they were asked to do. Why are we not moving forward?*

*VWM: I wanted to affirm my support of Dr Kerby and team's selection; they confirmed that 2 of the 3 owners are Black, and the white founder as leading statistician; I affirm my support to move this forward.*

*Dr. Lamont Francies: I appreciate the work of the steering committee, however, we believe that representation matters. Black people are the only group that allow others to sit at their table and make the decisions that are theirs to make. We need to stay Black-owned every step of the way. A delay does not mean delayed indefinitely.*

*Teki Flow: I want to thank the Steering Committee's work. I heard today that CERES work is not Black-led? Why are we discrediting and disrespecting Dr. Kerby who is a black woman and has all her amazing work to show for, this is baffling to me. Aisha Canfield is also a black woman. We are getting what we asked for.*

*Roxanne Carillo-Garza: as member of MX CAB, we have been in full support of the activation of the African American Holistic Wellness Hub; I really hope that the partnership and collaboration of community will always be at the table to design the Hub. I want to respect the steering committee's work. I also want to lift up the work of CERES that I have witnessed to put in the work of engaging community in real ways.*

*Reverend Dale Witherspoon: Just listening, I believe deep in my heart that we all acknowledge the issues of mental illness and trauma in our community, and the need to experience healing in order to be whole. I appreciate the work of the steering committee; I know there is no such thing as a perfect process. We need more Black men involved, we need more Black-owned businesses, but I respect this process*

*Stephanie Taddeo: Sounds like there was tremendous integrity involved in the selection of CERES, and the use of a fair rubric; and I hope that we move forward in collaboration and trust.*

*Supervisor Glover: I really appreciate the work that has been done so far, the amount of advocacy has been outstanding; we as the BOS have followed the lead of those doing the work, we set up a process that ensured Black voices are leading this process; I am disappointed to see that there is a divide within our community, to be unable to come together in one accord in order to put resources in place. I believe that the review committee did a good job and came to a sound decision, and I trust that the selected group will be able to produce what we need. We do not need to continue down a road of further decision. I am in support of the process and respect the recommendation that the committee has made, which does not mean I minimize the work of anyone or any group done up to this point. I want to move forward with the process of the selection and accept the recommendation.*

*Supervisor Gioia: Sometimes there is hard conversation in these processes. It seems to me that everyone on this call wants a Black-led, Black-established African American Wellness Hub; this is why I supported the project from the onset. I want to acknowledge 40 Voices, the other people who have leaned in, and the Steering Committee, an all-Black committee, that has worked hard to move this process forward. It would be disrespectful if we changed course and did not honor the promise we made from the onset which was to let community lead this process. Dr Kerby also stated clearly that they will lead with Black-led team of researchers and that the work will center the Black community. She is from this community, and will involve community. This does not diminish the other concerns, like the need for more black male voices, and in that regard, let me ask, Dr Lynch, how will you include black male voices and perspectives?*

*Dr. Kerby Lynch: I'd to emphasize that I'm in this with you all, in this process. We believe in intersectional analyses, of males, females, disabled, and will be sure to include all voices including Black male. Ryan Drakelee is a Morehouse man, originally from the Bay, and one of the few Black men on Wall Street and doing financial analysis; Dr. Tanya Ledijiu, as Director of Pub Housing for SF knows how issues impact Black men; Aisha Canfield has led efforts with probation departments on how to collect and analyze data on race more effectively for 10 years, and understands deeply the implications that has for Black males. Our proposal includes listening sessions in every district, a countywide community survey that includes \$15 stipend per first 1000 participants, and then translating what we hear into sound policy recommendations.*

*Dr. Tonya Lediju – I hear you loud and clear. Everyday I work to change lives, I know the voices of Black males matter, how important it is that they are heard, that they are seen. I am a mother of a Black son and grandmother of two Black grandsons, and I know that change is not enough, but true transformation is needed. We come with values that are aligned with each and every one of you; I am part of the black community. We hear you, and we are committed to doing a job of excellence that reflects our lived values. We will not provide a substandard product, it will be of excellence that has Black voices at the center and work toward creating human-centered policy. I am a 30-year public servant, and knows what it means to be working from a people-centered place. We will remove barriers to grow trust and include all voices.*

*Dr. Kerby Lynch: I was trained and mentored by Angela Irvine, and that has allowed me to do the work that I do today. I was motivated by being a victim of police violence to get my PhD from UC Berkeley, so my involvement is personal and I am dedicated is to train my people in how to do this work. I am invested in the skills of statistics and research to get to the heart of who we really need to serve. We know that we cannot rely only on race-based data due to Proposition 209, so we must be creative and innovative in how we collect the data we need. We will train and support the community to take the work and own it and then decide what to do with the data.*

*Supervisor Gioia: I want to honor the Steering Committee who took the time and effort to review the proposals, they did a great job. We want all the voices to be involved and participate in how we move forward.*

*Supervisor Glover: Even when we disagree, we must also rely on clear and fair process. It is important to hear every voice and their truth, and then we use processes to come to hard decisions.*

*The Equity Committee accepted this report and will move this proposed recommendation from the Committee to the full BOS for approval.*

*This item was passed.*

#### **4. Public Comment (continued from item #2)**

*Lea Murray: MX H3 process was not as equitable as this one, not as transparent, not as fair. That process did not have lived experience review committee members. I hope you reconsider the results from that process.*

*Willie Robinson: Lea has serious concerns. The language of the RFP was ambiguous at best, but resulted in the goalposts being moved. I am in support of internal systemic language that allows small businesses to participate fully in these procurement processes rather than create barriers.*

#### **5. Next Committee meeting** is currently scheduled for July 15, 2024 at 10:30AM.

*The July 15, 2024 meeting at 10:30AM was confirmed.*

#### **6. Adjourn**

*Committee meeting was adjourned at 10:36 AM*