

AMERICA 250

CONNECTICUT

America 250 | CT Commission Governance Subcommittee Meeting Minutes Tuesday, November 28, 2023

Attendees:

Arienne Orozco, Governance Subcommittee Chair
(designee of the Secretary of the State, the Hon. Stephanie Thomas)
Megan Baker (designee of CWCSEO)
Jason Mancini
Denise Merrill, Am250 | CT Chair
Michael Werner (designee of CWCSEO)
Sheldyn Oliver
Cyndi Tolosa

This meeting was recorded. To view the recording, please visit: [America 250 | CT Governance Subcommittee Meeting \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

The meeting started at 3 p.m.

Committee Member Update

Steven Hernández accepted a new job and will no longer be the Executive Director for the Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity & Opportunity (CWCSEO). With his departure, Steven H. designated Michael Werner, Steven's colleague at the CWCSEO, to act as the CWCSEO representative that will sit on the Am250 | CT Commission (having a representative from the CWCSEO is required by Executive Order (EO) 22-2). Michael Werner will be working in tandem with his colleague, Megan Baker, to fulfill the duties and responsibilities of the Am250 | CT Commission (Commission).

Provided his schedule allows, Steven H. would like to remain connected to the Commission at the subcommittee level.

Minutes Approval

Motion: To approve the minutes taken from the November 28, 2023 Governance Subcommittee meeting.

First: Jason M.; **Second:** Denise M.

Yes: 4 **No:** 0; **Abstain:** 0

Motion passed.

Annual Report

The annual report was submitted to the governor's office on January 31, 2024.

Succession Process

Due to multiple instances of Commissioners leaving their appointed role, or potentially leaving their appointed role, the Governance Subcommittee thought it important to discuss whether a more definitive succession process should be written down and adhered to moving forward.

The Governance Subcommittee decided that it is incumbent upon the commissioner who is leaving their appointed role to alert the Commission and Am250 | CT Project Manager, Cyndi T., of their departure. At that point, Cyndi T. and the Am250 | CT Governance Subcommittee will connect with the chief executive of the organization to confirm their preference in relation to filling the role on the Commission (whether they would like to serve on the Commission or assign a designee). Am250 | CT materials will then be updated as needed.

There is nothing listed in the EO that requires the Commission to alert the governor's office of the departure of a Commissioner; however, if it is a Member of the Public who leaves, the Commission must alert Tom Scanlon, Director of Appointments at the Governor's Office, as it is Tom S. who works to make sure those three positions remain filled. Cyndi T. will reach out to Tom S. to clarify the appointment procedure and whether official letters need to be issued to Commissioners and Members of the Public or only the latter.

The succession process does not need to be written into the bylaws but will be shared with the Commission at the next full commission meeting in April.

Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access (IDEA): Discuss Goals Set for Governance Committee

Each Subcommittee was asked to review and assess IDEA goals set for them by the IDEA Subcommittee.

Goals

1. Assess the diversity and representation of the commission members and its subcommittees, ensuring a broad range of perspectives
2. Evaluate the inclusion of marginalized communities in decision-making processes
3. Consider accessibility in governance practices, such as providing robust accommodations for commission meetings and materials to ensure full participation

Discussion *(The following discussion talking points correspond to the matching number above.)*

1. Because Commissioners are appointed by the Governor via the EO, the Governance Subcommittee doesn't have much say as to who sits on the Commission; however, they can encourage Commissioners to be mindful of diversity and representation when choosing designees. The Governance Subcommittee can be more effective at the subcommittee level and work with subcommittee chairs to ensure that they, too, are being mindful when bringing in new subcommittee members. The Governance Subcommittee will reach out to IDEA Co-chairs, Merle McGee and Jon Slifka, for guidance on creating a metrics tool to monitor subcommittee progress on a quarterly basis. Because the Commission is subject to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), meaning information relating to the Commission is open to the public and can be requested at any time, it will be important to think carefully about how to collect information from interested parties while still being sensitive to their information and privacy. Cyndi T. will follow up with the FOIA office to clarify.
2. It is important to focus efforts on those who traditionally feel excluded from this type of commemoration. The Governance Subcommittee can work to create a list of questions they ask themselves when any big decisions are being made. From that, the Governance Subcommittee can create a standard template of questions for all subcommittees to use in their decision-making processes moving forward. A shared document will be created for the Governance Subcommittee members to collaborate. When creating questionnaires and other metric tools, it is important to remember it is more than just a list of questions or a check list of items. Accountability for going beyond the questions

to work on relationship-building with communities needs to be built into the framework. In efforts to bring more communities into the fold, the Governance Subcommittee discussed possibly changing the location of the full commission meetings. Could the Commission bring a future meeting to one of the reservations, or elsewhere? Let's bring the meeting to the people instead of having the people come to the Commission – there needs to be more going out to people. Holding the meeting in Hartford can also feel somewhat government-centric.

Developing relationships with municipal leaders, as well as community leaders, was discussed. Governance Committee to think about what this process would like and what messaging would go along with this effort.

Merle M. and Jon S. requested each subcommittee to identify one or two members to act as a liaison between their committee and the IDEA Subcommittee. Jason M. was designated as the IDEA Representative for the Governance Subcommittee.

Next Meeting

An availability poll will be sent to the committee to find a date within the next two weeks to continue the IDEA conversation.

Zoom Chat Resources

- [2023 Gender and Racial Composition of CT State Boards, Commissions, Committees and Councils](#)

The meeting ended at 4:10 p.m.