



Mayor's Multicultural Council of Stamford

Meeting held via Zoom

February 26, 2024

Attendance and quorum check:

Members in attendance: Eva Weller, Corey Paris, Shobhna Bhatnagar, Carmen Hughes, Sandra Barrett, Deborah Goldberg, James Hinton, Hayate Jandar, Francise Jean-Louis, Yelena Klompus, Naomi Osei-Mensah, Sonal Patel, Malinda Polite, and Ana Gallegos. Ajmal Qureshi was not able to attend the meeting.

Eva Weller, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:38 pm.

Welcome:

Eva Weller welcomed everyone and thanked them for making the effort to join us, since the MMC Executive Board election for Secretary and Treasurer is taking place tonight. Eva thanked Corey Paris for serving as the MMC Vice-Chair for many years and for supporting the MMC. He now serves the City at the state level.

Approve Minutes: January 9, 2023

Eva asked everyone to review the minutes from the January 9th meeting. Deborah Goldberg made the motion to approve the minutes as presented. Sandra Barrett seconded. Minutes were approved unanimously.

Projects/Events Updates:

Martin Luther King Jr. Event Report: Malinda shared that the MMC was well represented in the January 15th MLK event. She thanked Carmen Hughes and council members Corey, Shobhna, Sandra, Meera, James, and Ana for participating. Sandra Barrett said that it was her first time participating and it was an honor to meet the president of the 100 Black Men organization and other organization representatives including an elderly couple at the table. Representative Corey Paris made a powerful presentation. The council wore MMC sweatshirts at the March. Eva thanked members for attending and representing the MMC at the event.

Budget Report

Shobhna Bhatnagar, treasurer, reported that the fiscal year budget was \$9,500. The expenses for HBCU Movie night were \$82, Salsa Rhythm and Rumba nights (2) were \$1,600 and the purchase of the MMC bags was \$1,585.63. We still need to confirm if the sales tax of \$94.68 has been refunded and also the cost for shipping. To-date the budget remaining is \$6,232.37.

Projects/Events Updates:

MMC Afternoon of Jazz 2024 Eva Weller informed that the popular annual Jazz concert will be held at the Ferguson Library on March, 24 from 2:00 to 4:30 pm. She said that it's exciting to have a diverse group of musicians participating this year. The Stamford High School Jazz Ensemble directed by Adam Jackson, a remarkable solo saxophonist, Jim Clark, Ayana Doreste accompanied by jazz guitarist, Gabriel Mondesir, and the quartet of Barbara Espinosa Occhino, Carmine Marino (guitar), Luiz Ebert (drums) and Steve Taylor (bass) complete the line-up. Eva presented the proposed budget for the jazz concert:

Musicians/Artists: \$700 (included \$100 for SHS Jazz Ensemble)

DJ: \$400 Food: \$300 Printing: \$200 Flowers: \$50 **Total: \$1,750**

Eva reported that printing was in-kind last year. Shobhna made the motion to accept the 2024 proposed budget for the jazz concert in the amount of \$1,750. Yelena seconded the motion. Motion was accepted unanimously. Eva thanked Yelena and Ana for helping with logistics and for preparing flyers. The press release was prepared by Eva and translated into Spanish by Ana and then sent to the EL Sol and La Voz CT. Eva indicated that with this accepted budget, the remaining budget for the fiscal year is \$4,482.37, which can be used for Stamford Day and other initiatives.

Budget Report & proposal for fiscal year 2024/2025:

Carmen Hughes reported that she met with the City's Budget Director and proposed that the MMC budget be increased for the next fiscal year, but that has not been finalized yet. Carmen will meet with the MMC treasurer to discuss the budget and budget proposals for projects for the remaining and new fiscal year.

New Business:

Executive Board Election - Secretary and Treasurer

Carmen Hughes stated that in accordance with the new bylaws, Eva Weller was appointed by the Mayor as MMC Chair. Carmen congratulated and thanked Eva Weller for the phenomenal way she has led the MMC and

promoted MMC and its initiatives. Carmen said the Vice-Chair is appointed by the Chair. Eva announced that she is delighted to announce Malinda Polite as the new Vice-Chair. She shared that Malinda is a wonderful team member and will be an asset to members in her new role. Carmen also congratulated Malinda.

Carmen thanked Ana and Shobhna for their excellent work in their roles as Secretary and Treasurer and for reporting budget updates and detailed minutes. Carmen asked for nominations for secretary and treasurer. She added that MMC officers shall be elected by the majority vote of MMC members present and in good standing. Carmen read the current MMC Bylaws related to Section 4: Duties of the Executive Board and Section 5: Responsibilities of Officers of the Executive Board. (C) Melinda motioned to nominate Ana Gallegos as secretary. She said that Ana does a good job keeping the minutes and recording information for events. Debby seconded the nomination. Many members agreed with this nomination. Carmen read the role of the treasurer in the MMC Bylaws (D). Yelena nominated Shobhna Bhatnagar, James seconded the nomination. Carmen asked for other nominations. Since there were no other nominations, Carmen asked for a vote by raised hand if in favor and a second vote if someone was opposed. There was no opposition to either motion. The motions carried and Ana Gallegos and Shobhna Bhatnagar were elected as secretary and treasurer respectively. Shobhna and Ana expressed their gratitude to the council for their trust and confidence and promised to continue working for the MMC and the city. A question was asked why there were only two nominations. Carmen replied that following the reading of the bylaws and with a quorum present she asked for nominations for each office and only two members were nominated. Then the members voted and there was no opposition. Carmen also said that according to the current bylaws the term will be for two years. Carmen stated that she is the MMC Ex-officio member and represents the Mayor. Eva Weller said that she is delighted with the new leadership team and added that she is most grateful for the opportunity to work with and have the support and guidance of Carmen, which has made an important difference. Hayate suggested that youth also be considered as part of the MMC or as a separate youth multicultural group as a way for them to be involved and learn. Carmen said it was an interesting idea but she would prefer to flesh it out offline or in committee due to possible additional requirements by working with youth and overlap with other youth organizations. She suggested when we have new ideas of this magnitude it is best to discuss details for how it will work offline / in a committee and then bring to MMC. All ideas should be presented but then out of respect for the agenda the details of discussion happen at the committee meeting. Then if the idea develops it is put on the agenda at a future meeting. Carmen mentioned the Mayor's Youth Leadership group as an existing opportunity for youth. Pilar suggested shadowing new officers to learn about their roles. Shobhna commented that this could be considered. Carmen reiterated her point about the great ideas being presented and encouraged the thought leadership and reminded all of the protocol to now develop the ideas further offline and if developed get it on the agenda for a future meeting.

Projects/Events Updates:

- St. Patrick's Day Parade: Eva asked members to let her know who will attend the St. Patrick's Day Parade on March 2nd. She submitted the Liability, Indemnification, and Publicity Waiver for the MMC. Pilar said that she will attend. Ana said that she will confirm attendance by Friday.
- Community Wide Seder, Debby announced that on April 11th, the Interfaith Council and UJF have planned this event. She invited the MMC to be a co-sponsor at no cost to MMC. There will be a small charge for the public to attend, which will cover the cost of food. Debby will send the flyer and asked members to share with their network and on the social media. Ana offered to translate the flyer into Spanish. Debby thanked her and said she will ask.
- Stamford Day 2024- Eva W. sent the Stamford Day program to members and requested they send suggestions and contact information of organizations or groups to be included for participation this year. She thanked Yelena for sending recommendations. Eva reported that she asked Shobhna and Ana to Co-Chair Stamford Day again this year. The event was very successful under their leadership and with the help of MMC. Eva invited all members to attend the committee planning meeting on Wednesday, March 6th.

Announcements:

Malinda Polite shared the sad news of the passing of Senator Patricia Miller's husband, a great community leader. Everyone expressed sympathy for Senator Miller and her family. Ana thanked Eva and MMC members for asking for an update about Ecuador. She said that she is part of the Ecuadorian Coalition, requesting Temporary Permit Status from the U.S. Government due to current ongoing armed conflict there.

Next Meeting: March 25, 2024

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 7:53 pm

Submitted by: Ana Gallegos, MMC Secretary

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