



DCBC ANNUAL MEETING WITH DELAWARE COUNTY COUNCIL MEMBERS DR. MONICA TAYLOR, KEVIN M MADDEN AND ELAINE PAUL SCHAEFER

Elaine Paul Schaefer started off by talking about their first 8 weeks in office and how when they got into office a lot of senior county officials left without a proper handoff. The county did not have an established hiring practice nor job descriptions for their jobs. As a result, they have had to learn on the job, they hired a HR specialist to help them with recruiting new personnel, creating job descriptions and advertising open positions. They have succeeded in filling a lot of the positions but they still have many more to go.

Dr. Monica Taylor spoke about the county's need for a county health department to help address the needs of the county. She spoke about the availability of state funding for the department and how she is working with health officials in the county to create the health department.

Lastly Kevin Madden addressed the reason only three out of five of them showed up: Brian P. Zidek lost his father and Christine A. Reuther had a pre-planned vacation. He also explained that it would be unlikely that all five of them would ever attend meetings together that weren't council meetings to avoid violating the Sunshine Act. He also talked about his role as Chairman of the Jail Oversight Board and their work toward reforming prisons in the county.

Then the floor opened for questions.

1. People who are sick are being asked to stay home during the virus crisis, that may be possible for people who have jobs with paid sick time, but what can the county do for people that will not be able to feed their families if they don't work i.e. can you ask for state assistance now in preparation? How are we preparing for the coronavirus?

The situation is still developing, we don't have any reported cases yet but we have been in contact with state officials and decisions will be made as the situation progresses.

2. Status of employment for people of color? How are you marketing the county jobs to include diverse candidate slate?

They hired someone to create fair hiring practices and they are now advertising jobs on delcopa.gov and indeed. There's optimism from the remaining staff who want a fair and transparent method of hiring new staff. Department heads are also being given training and with the new practices they can no longer just hire their friends.

3. Does the council have plans to interact with the Delaware County Black Caucus? Has there been any discussions to date?

Yes, this is the first, but our being here shows our commitment to working with DCBC.

4. The proposed ethics policy reform eliminates opportunities for hiring persons who have done any work on Democratic campaigns. Are you supporting these reforms? When and how will you consider the elimination of these reforms that will disenfranchise the Black community and their families from the benefit of stable employment and applying for any Boards in our county?

Right now, it is just a bill, nothing has been passed. There will be town halls to discuss key areas of the bill, however, those sections refer to participation while working for the county and during county hours, it wasn't intended to be an absolute ban.

5. What steps have been taken to reverse the status of private prisons, also has an investigation started on the former Superintendent John Reilly of racism and mismanaging funds for years?

No investigation yet but there might be. They have been working on transitioning the prison back to the county's control. Right now there is only one remaining private prison and there is a lot to consider to ensure the transition is done well.

6. On the topic of education, what is your plan to support, initiate diversity programming in our many school districts that our children are not only educated in, but survive racial & ethnic inequities?

They don't really have control over the school board but they are planning initiatives to help the county produce more teachers. For example, they are planning a program in which students with interest in becoming teachers can do two years at community college and complete their degree at a four-year college. Starting in community college will greatly reduce their cost and they hope to eventually be able to provide financial support to them, both in community college and as they go into the four-year college to finish their degree. They hope that initiatives like this can help fill the teacher shortage and also increase the number of teachers of color in the county.

7. What functions will the health department cover? What are the plans to fund this health department?

Right now, they are working with health officials to identify the needs of the county. This will inform the duties of the health department. Also, there are already organizations all over the county who have been working to provide the services a health department should have been providing. So, the health department will likely be providing them with supporting instead of take over their roles. These organizations have been working hard in their respective communities and will know better than them what the community needs and what forms of interventions will work.

8. Can you explain the process for contacting you and how citizen can bring concerns about policies and legislation?

On the Delco website, all the council members have their numbers and email addresses displayed and so they can always be reached through that. They have all also committed to having office hours where members of the public can come to express their concerns, which is listed on the website. Lastly the website has a list of departments to which they are the liaisons, to help citizens know who to direct their concerns to.