

Mayor's African American Advisory Board – MAAAB

Wednesday, June 11, 2025

9:30 a.m.

Location: Ed Ball Building, 214 N. Hogan Street, 32202 – First Floor Hearing Room #1002

Meeting Attendance: Lee Brown, III; Audrieanna Burgin; Dawn Curling; Chair Barbara Darby; Latrina Dowdell; Kelly Frazier; Kiaira Nixon; Ronetta Wards; Errol White and Menelik Vereen.

Excused: None.

Staff and Elected Officials: Lisa Ransom, Neighborhood Services Office Manager; Pat McCollough, Special Assistant to the Mayor on Civic Engagement and Youth; Edwina Henry, Neighborhood Services and MAAAB Coordinator; Schnell Chin, Neighborhoods Department.

Guests: None.

Meeting Summary

1. **Call to Order and Verify Quorum** – Chair Darby called the meeting to order and verified that a quorum was present.
2. **A Moment of Centering** – Chair Darby read a quote from Patti LaBelle: *“God does the work through you; it’s not enough to look up, you must also look within.”*
3. **Approval of Agenda** – The June 11, 2025, meeting agenda was approved with the following correction:
 - *Correction of Ms. McCollough’s title to include “Youth Participation”*
4. **Approval of Previous Meeting Summary** – The May 14, 2025, meeting summary was accepted with the following edits/corrections:
 - *Section 1 – correct “poem” to read as “quote.”*
 - *Page Two, fourth bullet, add “the African American community and...”*
 - *Page Two, fifth bullet, correct to read “Forming, Storming and Norming...”*
 - *Page Three, second and fifth bullet, insert “due to...”*
5. **Presenter** – None.
6. **Mayor’s Staff Updates:**
 - Ms. Patricia McCollough, Special Assistant to the Mayor on Civic Engagement and Youth Participation
 - Mayor Deegan’s Youth At Work Partnership (MYAWP) works with Kids Hope Alliance, to provide eligible students (ages 16 to 21) with paid internships and work-related experiences that prepare them to succeed in employment.

MYAWP has job coaches that work with employers to recruit, train and equip students for success. Goodwill Industries of North Florida is the program contractor. [Mayor’s Youth at Work Partnership \(MYAWP\) - Goodwill of North Florida](#)

This year, 1,400 students applied for 160 positions. MYAWP had \$1.2 million budgeted for summer jobs. Recruitment efforts increased the number of applications. It is not clear what the budget for summer youth employment will be. Ms. McCollough would like to recommend that someone from MAAAB speak with Kids Hope Alliance about partnering with others who can contribute.

She stated that it is up to City Council to set a target for youth employment and the budget. Typically, the expected youth employment salary is \$15/hour and up to 25 hours per week for the summer.

The request is that MAAAB advocate for knowledge, access and to be a voice for partnerships throughout the city.

MAAAB Chair Darby indicated that the MAAAB would appreciate the 2024-2025 funding summary from Kids Hope Alliance on transitional funding, the number of youth funded, etc. The request to advocate is received, however, the Board would be better equipped for such a conversation with the requisite background of the program and funding.

Chair Darby indicated that the MAAAB's Economic and Infrastructure Committee would be the best equipped to handle this request. The committee is charged with meeting with Ms. Grass of Kids Hope Alliance, conducting its due diligence on the matter and bringing back recommendations to the Board.

Chair Darby concluded by stating: "information is knowledge; knowledge is power that leads to action."

7. Public Comments & Announcements (three-minute time limit)

- None.

8. Chair's Report – Chair Darby commented on the following:

- The MAAAB will not meet in July, as the Board voted on a summer break.

9. Committee Reports

- **Arts & Culture Committee:** Did not meet due to Juneteenth collaboration with the Program Committee.
- **Economy & Infrastructure Committee:** Proposed meeting quarterly and not monthly and will consider an alternate meeting location and time.
- **Health & Public Safety Committee:** Proposed changing to bi-monthly meetings. Will need to set new dates.
 - Pat McCollough noted that the Mayor's Transition Report is being reviewed by Mayor's Staff. The review is scheduled to be completed by the end of August 2025. She will forward a copy to Ms. Henry for distribution to the board, once it is available.
- **Military and Veterans Affairs Committee:** Will meet in August at the Main Public Library. Date to be determined.
 - The Military and Veterans Affairs Committee submitted three recommendations for review. Chair Darby noted that she liked the

format and stated that it was instructional for the other committees to use. Mr. White discussed each of the three recommendations:

- **Establish a city-funded Veterans Mental Health Outreach Program, in partnership with the Jacksonville Urban League's Community and Veterans Empowerment Center (CVEC).** The partnership would also include the city's Military and Veterans Affairs Department.
- **Launch a "Vet-First Housing" Initiative with Transitional Units.** Currently the City of Jacksonville does not have a concerted effort to reach out into the community, as the city's program requires veterans to come into the Military and Veterans Affairs Department offices. While the city does a great job of providing services, it could do a better job of outreach.

Dr. Darby suggested that Mr. White specifically use the term "outreach" in the recommendation to clarify intent.

Ms. McCollough recommended setting up a meeting with the key city personnel and present the recommendation for feedback.

- **Create a Jacksonville Veterans Resource Network & Digital Portal.** Mr. White noted that currently there is no centralized location for a breakdown of services or to add data tracking.

Dr. Darby suggested that Mr. White try to set an August meeting to address his proposals/recommendations.

- **Program Committee:** The Juneteenth 2025 Celebration is scheduled for June 17, 2025, at the Main Public Library, Hicks Auditorium, at 6 pm.
 - The next Program Committee meeting is scheduled for October 2025.

Dr. Darby thanked each of the committees for their hard work and reminded them that the focus needs to be on what the African American community needs. She stated that she is looking forward to the committees bringing forth meaningful recommendations. Dr. Darby even suggested that perhaps the committees could engage in some collaborations, working with community organizations involved with other events, such as Kwanzaa.

10. New Business:

- **Dawn Curling** stated that the City of Jacksonville's ethics Office said that MAAAB can participate in Melanin Market events. Dr. Darby requested authorization in writing. Ms. Curling will forward the written authorization to Ms. Henry.

11. Unfinished Business:

- **November MAAAB Evening Meeting Logistics.** Dr. Darby would like the evening meeting to be scheduled for November 12, 2025, at 6 pm, at the Main Public Library, in the Multipurpose Room.
- **The Ed Ball Building Parking Garage Renovations.** The Parking garage will be under renovation through November 2025. As per the email that was shared with the MAAAB, alternative parking suggestions include metered parking or the Library Parking Garage. The Neighborhoods Department is unable to validate parking and the fee is estimated to be \$4. Click on the link to [Jacksonville.gov - ParkMobile](https://jacksonville.gov/ParkMobile) for information on how to download the parking app if you would like to use metered parking.

12. Next Steps/Board's Open Forum:

- Congratulations to **Dr. Audrieanna Burgin** on her appointment to 904Ward as its new CEO!
- **Lisa Ransom** stated that June 17, 2025, is James Weldon Johnson's birthday and there will be city-wide celebrations.
- **Errol White** thanked the Program Committee on laying out a very promising Juneteenth Celebration.
- **Kiara Nixon** announced that the Friends of Brentwood Library will host a James Weldon Johnson Young Writer's Festival on June 11, 2025, from 8:30 to 3:30 pm.
- June 21, 2025, **Jacksonville University** will host a Chamber Concert at 7:30 pm, the concert is free and open to the public.
- **Dr. Darby** noted that she appreciates the opportunity to work with the board and she wanted them to know that their efforts are appreciated.

13. Meeting Adjourned at 11:13 am.

The next Mayor's African American Advisory Board Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, August 13, 2025, at 9:30 am, in the Ed Ball Building First Floor Hearing Room.