

First Reading: November 1, 2022
Second Reading: November 8, 2022

ORDINANCE NO. 13909

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHATTANOOGA CITY CODE, PART II, CHAPTER 2, BY REPEALING ORDINANCE NO. 11767, SECTIONS 2-711 THROUGH 2-716, AND SUBSTITUTING A NEW ARTICLE XII IN LIEU THEREOF CREATING THE DEPARTMENT OF EQUITY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT.

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CHATTANOOGA, TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. That Chattanooga City Code, Part II, Chapter 2, be amended by repealing Ordinance No. 11767, Sections 2-711 through 2-716, and substituting a new Article XII in lieu thereof creating the Department of Equity and Community Engagement as follows:

Sec. 2-711. Created.

There be and is hereby created and established the Department of Equity and Community Engagement (“ECE”).

Sec. 2-712. Purpose; functions.

The Department of Equity and Community Engagement assists Chattanooga residents who experience discriminatory practices by working to remove City wide barriers that inhibit personal and communal financial stability and growth, hinder professional/career opportunities and advancement, and impede social inclusion and well-being. ECE will aim to connect Chattanooga residents to economic, educational, and civic resources, influence local policy, and promote advocacy. At its core, ECE will serve as a bridge that connects people to resources, support, information, and community. The three functions and focus areas of ECE are as follows:

- a. Community Engagement will lead community engagement efforts for the City of Chattanooga that are equitable and effective. Community Engagement will collaborate with diverse groups of local neighborhood leaders, non-profit organizations, faith leaders, advocates, organizers, and Chattanooga residents to elevate the voices and participation of our entire community. Such collaborations

will assist Community Engagement in building trust through strong relationships and partnerships with community members and influencers, nonprofit partners, faith leaders, and industry partners, and facilitate authentic community engagement to uplift underrepresented voices to meaningfully involve them in decisions that affect their lives and communities.

- b. Supplier Diversity will work to assist diverse business owners who encounter economic and professional barriers by creating strategic partnerships and cultivating networking opportunities with local business leaders by building a community of support and resources.
- c. The Office of New Americans (“ONA”) is charged with connecting local immigrant and refugee communities to resources and opportunities to foster a greater sense of belonging in Chattanooga. ONA will create strategies, programs, and projects that seek to facilitate the elimination of barriers that prevent immigrant and refugee residents from engaging as thriving members of the Chattanooga community. ONA’s goal is to welcome and embrace the diverse cultures and backgrounds of immigrant and refugee residents by creating and offering equitable access to opportunities and city programs and services and connecting people to communities. ONA will also endeavor to work with and support the existing immigrant and refugee ecosystem, helping it to better serve Chattanooga’s immigrant and refugee community and their accessible opportunities.

Sec. 2-713. Equity Board—Created; function; composition.

- a. As part of the Department of Equity and Community Engagement, there is hereby created the Equity Board (the “Board”). This Board shall advise, promote, and advocate for the various initiatives, projects, and goals of ECE.
- b. The Board shall be composed of no more than fifteen (15) members. The Mayor of the City of Chattanooga (also referred to herein as the “Mayor”) shall appoint at least four (4) members to the Board and each member of the City Council shall appoint one (1) member to the Board. Prospective members who are appointed by City Council shall live in the district of the Council member who appointed them. The prospective Board members appointed by the Mayor and by each City Council member shall be subject to confirmation by a majority of the City Council.
- c. Board members shall reflect the diversity of Chattanooga and shall have experience being actively engaged in the Chattanooga community and/or a strong interest in advocating on behalf of all demographics of Chattanooga residents. Members shall be committed to assisting ECE fulfill its goals of working towards building an equitable, tolerant, and prosperous community for all Chattanooga residents.

Sec. 2-714. Same—Terms; vacancies.

The terms of the members of the Board shall be for three (3) years. Initially, the members of the Board shall be appointed so that they hold office for staggered terms. The members appointed from City Council districts 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9, and at least two (2) of the Mayor appointments shall be initially appointed for one (1) year terms. The members appointed from City Council districts 2, 4, 6, and 8, and at least two (2) of the Mayor appointments shall be initially appointed for two (2) year terms. Upon the expiration of the term of any appointed member, a successor shall serve a term of three (3) years. The failure of any member to attend two (2) consecutive meetings or three (3) meetings within any calendar year shall be the basis for removal by the Mayor and reappointment of another member by the Mayor, subject to the confirmation of a majority of the City Council. Should any vacancy occur on the Board by death, resignation, or removal of a member, the member's unexpired term shall be filled by appointment of a member residing in the same district as the member vacating the Board, if possible. No member may serve more than two (2) consecutive terms on the Board.

Sec. 2-715. Same— Limited scope of Board function.

The advisory responsibilities of the Board shall be limited to the City of Chattanooga Department of Equity and Community Engagement programs and initiatives only. The Board shall not have any governance, administrative, nor operational authority over the Department of Equity and Community Engagement, including its four divisions, its administrator, directors, managers, or staff. All administrative and operational authority over the Department of Equity and Community Engagement shall be vested in the Mayor and in the administrator of the department, as set forth in Sec. _____ below, and her or his executive leadership team.

Sec. 2-716. Same—Bylaws; officers; executive committee.

The Equity Board shall adopt and may amend bylaws for the regulation of its meetings and proceedings. It shall also elect as officers, a Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, and Secretary, who will serve as the executive committee for the Board.

Sec. 2-717. Administrator.

There shall be an administrator of the Department of Equity and Community Engagement who shall be appointed by the Mayor of the City of Chattanooga subject to confirmation by a majority of the City Council. If the administrator position becomes vacant, the vacancy shall be filled by the Mayor of the City of Chattanooga and be subject to confirmation by a majority of the City Council.

Sec. 2-718. Administrative control of department; powers of mayor, administrator.

The City Mayor and the administrator of the Department of Equity and Community Engagement shall have respective levels of administrative authority over the Department of Equity and Community Engagement. The City Mayor shall be empowered to employ, discharge, or suspend the administrator of the department. The administrator shall be empowered to employ, discharge, or suspend all other employees of the department.

Sec. 2-719. Financial affairs; receipts and disbursements.

All fiscal and financial affairs of the Department of Equity and Community Engagement shall be conducted by the city finance officer. All receipts and disbursements shall be handled in accordance with the applicable provisions of the charter and ordinances of the city.

SECTION 2. BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, That this Ordinance shall take effect two (2) weeks from and after its passage.

Passed on second and final reading: November 8, 2022


CHAIRPERSON

APPROVED: DISAPPROVED:


MAYOR

HGB/mem/v5