

# HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION MINUTES

February 20, 2020 4:00 p.m.  
City Council Chambers

**PRESENT:** COMMISSION CHAIR Derrick Thaxton  
VICE CHAIR Nikki Garry  
COMMISSIONERS Kenneth White, Marty Watkins, Joyce Keller,  
Francie Johnson, Byron Hansbro, Richard Zaker and Tina Gist

**ABSENT:** None

**ALSO, PRESENT:** ACTING HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER Penny Rogers  
ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY Sherry Beasley  
DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES French Wilson

## **I. Call to Order**

Chair Thaxton called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m.

### **A. Roll Call**

Nine out of Nine Commissioners were present at the time of roll call. Chair Thaxton declared a quorum does exist to conduct and approve business.

## **II. Concerns, Comments or Questions from the Audience**

There were none.

## **III. Approval of the January 16, 2020 Meeting Minutes**

Motion was made by Commissioner Johnson to approve the minutes, seconded by Commissioner Watkins. Upon roll call, Commissioners Derrick Thaxton, Nikki Garry, Marty Watkins, Byron Hansbro, Joyce Keller, Francie Johnson, Richard Zaker, Kenneth White and Tina Gist voted aye. Commission Chair Thaxton declared the motion carried.

## **IV. Monthly Activity Report & Summary of Cases**

Acting Human Resources Manager Rogers presented the monthly status report of cases for Human Rights Investigator, Fred Spannaus (Exhibit A) and Human Rights Investigator, Jan Runion (Exhibit B). Discussion followed.

## **V. Unfinished Business**

### **A. Recap on MLK Celebration 2020**

Chair Thaxton reported on the March and the program after the March. He stated due to the cold weather, he called on some local churches to use their vans. Four pastors responded and a couple of them even drove the vans. One of the pastors was Commissioner Hansbro. Chair Thaxton reported there were about 40-50 people who participated in the March. Chair Thaxton also reported that Vice-Chair Garry gave a powerful message during the after-March program and represented the City and the Human Relations Commission very well.

Commissioner Watkins stated that we need to recognize the Honor Guard for being a part of the March. They were well received.

Commissioner Hansbro stated the luncheon was well attended with a diverse group of people. He went on to say some of the parents of the essay winners thought their two complimentary tickets were for two parents and did not realize the tickets were for the winner and one parent. When we send the essay information to the schools in the future, we need to make sure the schools are not giving misinformation to the parents or we can give the parents a number at the City where they can call to get clarification on the tickets. Commissioner Keller asked why the Commission does not provide two complimentary tickets for the parents and one complimentary ticket for the essay winner. Administrative Secretary Beasley stated we used to do this; however, we had to cut back due to funding. Ms. Beasley said we gave over 20 complimentary tickets and seating was limited. Two of the purchased tables were empty; therefore, we were able to accommodate seating all of the parents. Commissioner Keller stated she would be willing to pay for a parent's ticket next year. Director of Human Resources Wilson suggested the Commission look for organizations to sponsor tickets for the parents and the essay winners.

Director Wilson stated she would like to challenge the Commissioners to help get sponsors for the MLK event. Sponsorship has been down because the big corporations are only sponsoring the events that are 501(c)(3). If the Commissioners have any contacts for sponsors, they should give the information to Secretary Beasley because she generates the letters to potential sponsors. Commissioner Keller stated she will ask DPS 61 to be a sponsor. Commissioner Watkins stated that we need to start early asking for sponsorships.

Administrative Secretary Beasley gave the following report:

- Total Deposit - \$10,773.49 (this includes on-line ticket sales \$1,858.49)
- Paid Out - \$5,234.05 (this includes booklets, luncheon, gift cards, musician and singers)
- Profit - \$5,539.44
- Ending Balance in the Account - \$9,361.40

#### B. Update on Pamphlet

Acting Human Resources Manager Rogers handed out the Human Relations Commission Pamphlet which is derived from Chapter 28 of the City Code. She stated that Commissioner Zaker asked in a previous meeting if we should put something in the pamphlet about transgender individuals. Ms. Rogers showed in writing the section in Chapter 28 and the section in the Illinois Human Rights Act (IHRA) that covers this population. The word transgender is not there, but each has language that encompasses transgender. Ms. Rogers asked the Commissioners if they thought this was sufficient. Discussion followed. Commissioner Zaker said he thought it would be helpful to add the word transgender to Chapter 28. Commissioner Hansbro stated transgender individuals are covered and the language is fast changing; therefore, he believes we should stick to the definition already there. Commissioner Hansbro also stated he thinks the language in the IHRA is narrower than Chapter 28. Commissioner Zaker was fine with leaving Chapter 28 alone as long as people understand transgender is included. He suggested putting the pamphlet on the Commission's Facebook page. Commissioner Zaker asked if revisions can be made to Chapter 28 to include sexual harassment in housing. Ms. Rogers stated she would discuss this with City staff. She also stated she would speak to Human Rights Investigator Spannaus about recent changes to the IHRA and ask if he can attend a future HRC meeting to explain these changes.

C. Update on Commission Fair

Commissioner Watkins reported that he and Commissioner Hansbro met with the City Manager on January 24<sup>th</sup> to discuss the possibility of a Commission Fair. The City Manager wanted to get more clarification on the Human Relations Commission. He was going to talk with Penny and French. Penny will follow-up.

**VI. New Business**

A. Protecting Places of Worship – Part II

Commission Chair Thaxton stated he did not have a chance to speak with Mr. Bergeron. He would like to table this until the next meeting.

Commissioner Zaker commented that his place of worship scheduled a walk through with the Decatur Police Department. It was very constructive, and he would recommend this for all churches.

**VII. Other Business**

A. There was none.

**VIII. Adjournment**

There being no further business, Commissioner Garry made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Johnson.

Upon roll call, the meeting was adjourned at 5:18 p.m.