

Owatonna Human Rights Commission – Minutes

The Owatonna Human Rights Commission (OHRC) met on Tuesday, September 10, 2019 in the Second Floor Conference of the City Administration Building. Commission Chairman Cords called the meeting to order at 5:04 p.m. Secretary Gillespie took roll call: Commissioners Ethan Cords, Ryan Gillespie, David Emanuelson, Jamie Vanoosbree, John Worden, Jim Gunderson and Susie Effertz were present. Also present were Mayor Kuntz, City Administrator Kris Busse and Administrative Specialist Jeanette Clawson.

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, Commissioner Cords welcomed everyone to the meeting. New Member Susie Effertz was introduced, and Mayor Kuntz administered the Oath of Office. Mayor Kuntz thanked Susie and all OHRC Commissioners for their service and then left the meeting.

Minutes of the August 13th OHRC Meeting were reviewed, Commissioner Worden made motion to approve the minutes as prepared. Commissioner Emanuelson seconded the motion; all members voted aye for approval.

During Commissioner Comments, Commissioner Worden gave a brief update on the OHRC Mural Project, he recently submitted two grant applications and is continuing to pursue funding opportunities. Commissioner Vanoosbree is preparing a grant application for a SMIF Economic Impact Grant towards creation of a Welcome Center. City Administrator Busse said she received information about a virtual welcome center Owatonna Forward plans to roll out this fall and suggested contacting them to discuss partnering opportunities.

During Old Business, detail of the commission's expenditures over the last five years was reviewed and anticipated expenditures discussed. Commissioners Gunderson and Cords are attending the Racial Bias Training offered by ISD#761 this Friday, September 13th. This is the first of six training sessions planned over the next several months. Commissioner Emanuelson made a motion to pay the \$100/person participation fee; Commissioner Gunderson seconded the motion; all members voted aye in approval. Additional 2019 expenses discussed were an additional contribution to We are Better Together or the Mural Project Account Fund; no action was taken but noted for discussion during future OHRC Meetings.

The Commission then discussed potential projects and initiatives for 2020:

- 1) Development of a Welcome Center. Commissioner Vanoosbree will apply for a \$20,000 Economic Development Grant from the Southern Minnesota Investment Foundation. This grant is a one-time start-up grant so an on-going revenue source would need to be identified. Creating a business plan to show the type of services offered, staffing, location and model for succession were discussed. Commissioner Gillespie recommended developing the center's content creation and translation services and suggested contacting Owatonna Forward to discuss partnering opportunity with their new virtual welcome center. Commissioner Gunderson suggested contacting United Way to discuss possibility of a physical space within their office.
- 2) Community Meet and Greet or on-site visits with major employers: Commissioner Emanuelson suggested this as a way to promote awareness of the OHRC and reach out to different cultures. Commissioner Gunderson suggested collaborating with other entities to co-sponsor an event like the May 2019 event at the History Center, "Building a Community of Dignity & Respect". Commissioner Effertz commented Bethel Church held a series of

meetings last year with discussions about varying religions. Commissioner Vanoosbree commented she attended these meetings, the anticipated 6-meeting series was canceled after three sessions for unknown reasons.

- 3) 2020 MLK Event – This will be on MLK Day, January 20, 2020. Andre Koen will again be the featured speaker with a \$1,000 speaker fee.
- 4) Commissioner Training – Blandin Foundation Training will be offered next fall; OHRC could reimburse travel expenses. Commissioner Effertz suggested attending a Bridges Out of Poverty Training; this is a training initiative with the broad goal of increasing awareness about poverty and inspiring compassion and a commitment to poverty reduction. Commissioner Effertz attended a Bridges of Poverty Training at St Olaf College and believes this would be very beneficial to OHRC members.
- 5) Host agency representatives during OHRC Meetings. Commissioner Gillespie's suggested inviting representatives from agencies such as United Way, Transitional Housing, and others to the monthly OHRC Meetings to explore future partnership opportunities.

Discussion of 2020 plans and expenditures will be further discussed during the October OHRC Meeting.

During New Business an Election for OHRC Vice Chair was held to fill the vacancy created with resignation of former Commissioner Fred Ventura. Commissioner Vanoosbree nominated Commissioner Gunderson; Commissioner Gillespie seconded the nomination. With no additional nominations heard a vote of approval was received from all commissioners. This appointment as Vice Chair is valid to the next annual Election of Officers during the May 2020 meeting.

With no additional business, Commissioner Gunderson made a motion to adjourn at 5:52 p.m.; Commissioner Emanuelson seconded the motion. The next OHRC Meeting will be Tuesday, October 8th at 5:30 p.m.