

EQUITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
November 12, 2024

DATE: Tuesday, November 12, 2024

TIME: 4:30 PM

LOCATION: Multicultural Family Center, 1157 Central Avenue, Dubuque, IA 52001

The meeting was called to order at 4:33 pm.

Commissioners Present: Jake Kurczek, Matthew Zanger, Michaela Freiburger, Theresa Sampson-Brown, Maita Joliet, Nikkole Nutter (virtual)

Commissioners Absent: Dave Heiar, Rick Baumhover

Staff Present: Gisella Aiken Shadle, Chief of Equity and Human Rights; Ann Marie Jannette, Equity and Human Rights Specialist

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Freiburger motioned, Zanger seconded, to approve the minutes from the October 8, 2024. All in favor.

Public Input

No members of the public were present to provide input.

Reports

Caseload Report

- Complaints filed – number of complaints that were signed during the month
 - October amount: 1
- Active investigations – investigations that are currently active but in various stages (active, administrative review, initiated, on hold, etc.)
 - October amount: 18
- Incidents in mediation – complaints currently in mediation
 - October amount: 1
- Incidents in full hearing – complaints in full hearing process
 - October amount: 0
- Inquiries – calls/inquiries that don't result in an official complaint being filed (including outreach events)
 - October amount: 12
- Complaints closed during the month – signed complaints that were closed during the month (doesn't include inquiries or complaints that were never filed)
 - October amount: 0
- Total inquiries and complaints FY25 – signed complaints filed in FY25
 - October amount: 21

Jannette provided an example of a complaint received in October. The complainant reported a possible injury to her Lead and her Trainer who then made a sexual reference to her injury. When she informed her supervisor, he said that he would report it to HR and told

her not to tell anyone else about the incident. After a few weeks, she was suspended without pay, and when pressed for an answer, the supervisor told her it was because she had lied. The complainant feels she was harassed and retaliated against because she reported sexual harassment. Neither of the two male coworkers involved in the incident were suspended.

Director's Report

Aitken-Shadle reported that Enoch Sanchez had submitted his resignation from the commission. It was forwarded to the City Clerk and City Council will appoint a new member within the next month.

The department is working on an updated Language Access Plan which they are hoping to roll out within the next 2-3 months. Consistent language will also now be used on all City of Dubuque department's landing pages and public meeting notices: *TTY/TRS users may dial 711 or 800-735-2942 (RELAY Iowa)*. All reference to TDD will be removed from the website.

Jannette will be attending the Government Alliance on Race and Equity Conference (GARE) in St. Louis next week. Also, internal ICC training has now been completed for the Fall session. Waterloo, IA will be hosting a one-day conference to celebrate International Human Rights Day. Commissioners are asked to notify Jannette if they would like to attend the conference.

Aitken-Shadle reported that the first meeting of the DEIB committee will be meeting this week to discuss what DEIB looks like internally with a focus on retention and recruitment. The committee will include several department heads.

Jannette provided a brief introduction of the Fines and Fees Reform program where low-income individuals, who owe fines or fees for municipal services, can volunteer their time in return for a reduction in the amount they owe. They will earn approximately \$27 an hour which will be applied directly to their owed amount.

Chairperson's Report

Chairperson Kurczek has not received a response yet from the other cities in Iowa he had reached out to regarding their commissions. He will follow up with them again soon.

Old Business:

Requests to change the quorum requirement to be the majority of members who are currently serving, rather than an automatic quorum of five members, was declined by Crenna Brumwell. It was discussed whether to add this provision to the updated ordinance despite not being approved by Brumwell, however it was agreed upon unanimously to not include it.

A vote was held to submit to City Council the updated ordinance as approved by Brumwell. Freiburger motioned, and Zanger seconded the motion. All in favor. Aitken-Shadle will forward to the City Manager for approval and have it added to the City Council agenda.

Freiburger reported that the committee to plan a future DEIB event has not met yet. The committee consists of Freiburger, Heiar, and Baumhover. They plan to hold a meeting soon.

New Business:

Kurczek to send out reminders to the commissioners whose terms are expiring at the end of 2024 and providing them with contact information for the City Clerk so that they can reapply if they so wish. Terms are expiring for Rick Baumhover, Maitha Joliet, and Michaela Freiburger.

Aitken-Shadle requested that the commission meeting for December be moved due to prior commitments. The date of December 17, at 4:30 PM, was proposed. Freiburger motioned, Sampson-Brown seconded the motion. All in favor.

The FY25 Dubuque Equitable Community Grant will be accepting applications between December 1, 2024, and January 31, 2025. Freiburger, Zanger, and Kurczek volunteered to be grant reviewers.

Kurczek provided an update on the state election results and a timetable for the Iowa legislative session. He will invite the elected representatives Lindsay James, Tom Townsend, and Jennifer Smith to attend the December meeting.

Aitken-Shadle reported that the department has not seen any effect so far regarding the election results, however she anticipates receiving more calls after the inauguration in January. Other cities in Iowa were already in the process of restructuring in response to anti-DEIB related State laws.

Kurczek reported on the major concerns of Project 2025. A discussion followed about the possible effects this might have if adopted by President Trump.

Reflections and Updates

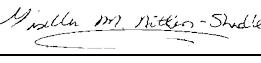
Joliet discussed that the Marshallese community are experiencing discrimination, however they are not reporting it. Reasons vary, but it is partly because they are often distrustful of outside organizations. Aitken-Shadle offered to meet them at their job, at Crescent Community Health Center, or at any other location to discuss possible discrimination. Joliet will pass along this information to others in the Marshallese community.

This was Sampson-Brown's last meeting as a commissioner. We are very grateful for her service and advice over the tenure of her term.

Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn by Sampson-Brown, seconded by Joliet. All in favor. The meeting ended at 5:46 p.m.

The next regularly scheduled meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, December 17, at 4:30 p.m., at the Multicultural Family Center.

Minutes approved as submitted: 

Minutes approved as corrected: _____