

**MARION CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday December 4th, 2019, 6:30 pm**

Marion City Hall
1225 6th Avenue, Marion, IA 52302

Commissioners Present:

Chris Stoner
Okpara Rice
Frederick Brown
Jenifer Tibbets
Kent Jackson
Danielle Brazant
Renaë Forsyth-Christy
Selita Jansen

Commissioners Absent:

Dave Baumler
Kim Eiler
Bret Nilles

Staff/Other Present:

Amal Eltahir, City of Marion
Janet Abejo-Parker, CRCRC Interim Director

I. Call to Order

Noting there was a quorum, Commissioner Jackson, Vice Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:30pm.

II. Roll Call/Introductions

Commissioners and staff introduced themselves.

III. Willis Dady Homeless Services, Aaron

Aaron presented information regarding their homelessness programs and statistics on the use of the Marion housing grant award stating that with the funds WillisDady was able to assist 13 households in Marion who were at the verge of homelessness. Of those households, two were elderly women facing eviction, seven households with 2-3 children, and two with five or six children. The organization is coordinating with and have gotten referrals from both Marion Independent and Linn Mar school districts and has a presence at the Marion Public Library on Wednesdays. The organization's services extend to case management for mental illness cases.

Commissioners Tibbets asked about permanent support housing services such as the Crestwood Ridge project in Cedar Rapids and the prospect of housing a similar project in Marion, shedding some light on chronically homelessness and those with a high barrier to housing.

Abejo-Parker and commissioner Brazant spoke highly of the organization and expressed gratitude for the organization's exceptional customer service.

IV. Public Response

The was no public response.

V. Director's Report

Abejo-Parker gave an update on the CRCRC Executive Director search. Position will remain open till filled. She talked about upcoming events and plans for impactful outreach strategies such as workshops to fill current gaps in the areas of housing and financial stability.

VI. Approval of Minutes from November Meeting

Commissioner Stoner moved to approve the November minutes as presented. Seconded by Commissioner Tibbets, motion passed.

VII. Report from Chair

None

VIII. Committee Reports

a. Executive Committee- Commissioner Jackson

Commissioners met to plan the agenda. Regular meeting date was set to be a week earlier to leave enough time for following up on items. Committee discussed term limits on Chair and Vice Chair appointments. Policy limits appointment to no more than three consecutive years.

b. Cedar Rapids Civil Rights Commission Liaison - Renae Forsyth-Christy

Abejo-Parker stated that in the meeting the commission closed out FY19 budget with the Finance Director and voted to approve FY21 budget and talked about staff professional training and certifications.

*c. Grants & Strategic Planning Committee -*Commissioner Brown

Grant press release went out on Marion Messenger. Application is now open and will close on January 10th.

IX. Unfinished Business

a. Partnership with the Marion Library

Commissioner Stoner exchanged e-mails with Madeline Jarvis, Director of scheduling for adult programming and is planning to meet to discuss partnership and events details. Commission is looking to cosponsor events at the library.

X. New Business

- a. MCRC Election of Officers- Commissioners voted to approve Commissioner Brown for Vice Chair, nominated by Commissioner Brazant and Commissioner Jackson for Chair Commissioner, nominated by Commissioner Tibbets.
- b. Upcoming Events
 - i. MLK Movie Night – CR Public Library, January 16- 5:30 to 7:30
 - ii. MLK Public Sector Job Fair- Event will be held at the Cedar Rapids Public Library 3 to 4:30 on Friday January 17th. Event is to encourage diversity in public sector employment.

XI. Good of the Order

Commissioner Rice invited the Commission to two special free screenings, a documentary on childhood anxiety with a facilitated discussion afterwards. Events will take place at the Cedar Rapids Public Library on Monday, Dec. 9, and Tuesday, Dec. 10.

Amal mentioned that the city is prepping for 2020 census and looking for volunteers to reach out to populations that historically have low participation rate and emphasize the importance of being counted. Especially, homeless, immigrants and those with language barriers, given recent federal policy who might be less inclined to participate in the survey.

XII. Adjournment

Commissioner Rice moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Brazant, the meeting adjourned at 7:20 pm.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 8th, 2020 at 6:30 pm at Marion City Hall, 1225 6th Avenue, Marion, Iowa.

Respectfully submitted by Amal Eltabir, City of Marion