



# MINUTES

## Civil Rights Commission

6:00 PM - Wednesday, September 1, 2021

City Hall, 1225 6th Avenue

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*\*Minutes are in draft format until approved at the next meeting\**

The Civil Rights Commission of the City of Marion, Linn County, Iowa met virtually on Wednesday, September 1, 2021, at 6:00 PM, with the following members present:

PRESENT: Frederick Brown, Okpara Rice, Angelica Vannatta, Kent Jackson, Chris Stoner, Jennifer Tibbetts, Bret Nilles, Dave Baumler, Renae Forsyth-Christy, and Ann DiGiacomo

ABSENT: Selita Jansen

STAFF PRESENT: Amal Eltahir and Alicia Abernathey

OTHERS PRESENT: Stefanie Munsterman-Scriven, Steve Moshier, Jo Smith B

### CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

### ROLL CALL

Commissioners, staff, and guests introduced themselves.

Jackson stated there are two new commissioners joining the Commission including Ann DiGiacomo and Steve Moshier. DiGiacomo introduced herself and shared her background. Abernathey clarified Moshier is not a member until September 2, 2021.

### PUBLIC FORUM

This section was inadvertently missed.

### PRESENTATIONS/GUEST SPEAKERS - None

### REGULAR AGENDA

Motion to approve the August 4, 2021 minutes

Moved by Rice, seconded by Nilles, to approve the August 4, 2021 minutes.

Approved unanimously

### Election of Commissioner to Serve on Community Equity Task Force

Jackson stated this in an action item because Brown is stepping down and there needs to be a replacement on the task force. Eltahir stated Moshier is already on the task force so it is recommended the Commission have him fill the Commission vacancy.

Nilles asked if Steve Moshier was already serving on the task force. Eltahir confirmed that is correct. Nilles asked if Moshier could continue serving as a resident and someone else from the Commission take Brown's place. Eltahir stated that would result in three Commissioners serving on the task force and could not happen. Vannatta asked if electing Moshier to serve as a Commissioner would result in the task force needing a new resident member. Eltahir confirmed that is correct.

Moved by Rice, seconded by Brown, to elect Steve Moshier to serve on the Community Equity Task Force on behalf of the Commission.

Approved unanimously

### **Strategic Plan Discussion**

Vannatta provided an overview of the discussion that took place at the special meeting, including determining the Commissions purpose, vision, and goals for the strategic plan.

Dave Baumler joined the meeting at 6:13 p.m.

Jackson stated he is in agreement with disbanding the subcommittees in the updated plan. Brown encouraged the Commission to engage with City leaders to bring more diverse celebrations to the community.

Vannatta stated a second special meeting will be held on September 13. Tibbetts asked if the meeting will be virtual. Eltahir confirmed it will be virtual. Brown suggested breakout groups be utilized for the meeting with each group focusing on a different goal.

Commissioners provided positive feedback on the draft strategic plan. Rice asked if goal #2 should include investigations. Vannatta stated the Commission does not investigate cases, but may need to hear a case in the future. Stefanie Munsterman-Scriven, Cedar Rapids Civil Rights Commission (CRCRC) Executive Director, shared which cases would be investigated by the CRCRC versus other agencies. Vannatta requested the spreadsheet of cases be shared with Commissioners.

### **Executive Committee Report**

Jackson stated the Committee met to discuss the agenda.

### **Cedar Rapids Executive Director's Report**

Munsterman-Scriven shared upcoming outreach events and provided an update on the recent inquiries for cases in Marion.

Tibbetts asked if Commissioners can attend the social media training at the upcoming CRCRC meeting. Munsterman-Scriven confirmed Commissioners can attend. Tibbetts stated Catherine McAuley is hosting events for Welcome Week and she will share that information.

## **Community Equity Task Force Report**

Tibbetts stated the last meeting focused on policing and a presentation was given by the consultant regarding his recommendations. Tibbetts stated the Commission's goal of community dialogue is needed and fits with discussions the task force is having.

Brown stated there were discussions about a citizen review board and a lot of information was shared about the Marion Police Department, including that complaints can be made to the police chief through the City's website. Brown stated each member shared what they wanted out of the task force. Brown stated the meeting footage is viewable online.

Munsterman-Scriven asked what the opposition is to a citizen review board. Brown stated the name itself is polarizing and research of other communities showed review boards are ineffective. Tibbetts stated statutes were quoted showing some information is protected and could not be shared with a review board due to privacy concerns.

Eltahir stated information was also shared regarding civil service laws with regards to public safety employees. Eltahir stated the City is obligated to protect the rights of all parties and therefore it makes the concept of a review board challenging. Eltahir stated the City is investing in new systems that will assist the police department in transparency and accountability.

Tibbetts stated the City is currently reviewing all policies, procedures, and practices to ensure they are all equitable through a gender and racial lens. Vannatta suggested the Commission come up with a statement to share with the City regarding a recommendation for a review board. Vannatta asked if community dialogues are held, how much support would there be from the City. Eltahir stated the City's strategic plan includes community engagement regarding equity and inclusion.

### **Hispanic Heritage Month: September 9, 2021**

Abernathy stated she is working with the Mayor and Festival Latino to create a proclamation and it may include a name change. Abernathy asked if anyone was interested in receiving the proclamation at the September 9 Council meeting on behalf of the Commission. Nilles volunteered.

### **COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

Tibbetts stated the Marion and Linn-Mar school districts have requested a meeting to discuss equity, inclusion, and safety that will be held next week. Tibbetts stated she will attend on behalf of the Commission. Tibbetts stated the conversation with the schools stemmed from the discussion at the last meeting regarding what happened at the Linn-Mar middle school with regards to the LGBTQ community. Tibbetts stated the mayor will also be present at the meeting.

Rice asked if the City will change their position on masks in City buildings. Eltahir stated the City is working on a policy to make masks mandatory in City buildings.

Commissioners thanked Fred Brown for his service to the commission and wished him well in his future endeavors.

Vannatta stated the Commission is partnering with the CRCRC and Waypoint to conduct a presentation on domestic violence and sexual abuse victims in October. Vannatta stated September is National Voter Registration Month and September 28 is National Voter Registration Day.

Brown shared his thoughts on serving on the commission.

**ADJOURN**

Moved by Bret Nilles, seconded by Okpara Rice to adjourn the meeting at 7:12 p.m.

Approved unanimously

Respectfully submitted by:

Alicia Abernathey, Administrative Assistant