

Owatonna Human Rights Commission - Minutes

The Owatonna Human Rights Commission (OHRC) met on Tuesday, February 11, 2020 in the Second Floor Conference of the City Administration Building. Commission Chairman Cords called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m. and Commissioner Gillespie took roll call. Present were Commissioners Ethan Cords, David Emanuelson, Ryan Gillespie, Susie Effertz and Jim Gunderson; City Administrator Kris Busse and Administrative Specialist Jeanette Clawson. Commissioners John Worden and Jamie Vanoosbree were absent.

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, Commissioner Cords welcomed everyone to the meeting. Minutes of the January 14, 2020 OHRC Meeting were reviewed and corrected a spelling error. Commissioner Emanuelson made a motion to approve the minutes with this change, Commissioner Gillespie seconded the motion; all members voted aye in approval

During Commissioner Comments, Commissioner Cords said Commissioner Vanoosbree requested he send a thank you letter to Andre Koen for speaking at the 2020 MLK Breakfast. Commissioner Cords contacted the individual who left a message with City Administration concerned that their employer may have violated their Human Rights; during their conversation, they thanked Commissioner Cords for returning their call but advised the matter was resolved with their Human Resource Department.

During Old Business, comments were made about the 2020 MLK Breakfast: attendance was a bit higher than last year; 74 people attended this year and the group attending was not a very diverse group. Commissioner Cords commented ISD #761 Superintendent Elstad suggested a joint event for the 2021 MLK Breakfast so plan to contact the school when 2021 MLK Day plans are being made. The Owatonna Census Complete County Committee is preparing for the 2020 Census, Commissioner Cords is a member of this committee, Library Director Mark Blando is the Chairman; they will be busy over the next few months. Commissioner Emanuelson offered to draft an article encouraging minority participation in the census for publication in the Peoples Press. Commissioners Cords and Gunderson and City Administrator Busse are attending Courageous Community Leader Training at the school; their next meeting is March 20th. During their last session, they discussed microaggressions and implicit bias.

Commissioner Worden joined the meeting at 5:55 p.m.

During New Business, Commissioners Effertz, Emanuelson and Cords reported they met to discuss creating a quarterly HRC Newsletter. Each edition will include a personal interview, Mayor Kuntz will be featured in the first edition. Topic suggestion for future interviews was “Challenges faced when arriving in America”. City Administrator Busse commented Mark Blando and Jeff Elstad have made connection with the Somali community and have visited the local mosque; Commissioners Emanuelson and Effertz hope to be included on their next visit.

With no additional business, Commissioner Worden made a motion to adjourn at 6:05 p.m., Commissioner Emanuelson seconded the motion. The next OHRC Meeting will be Tuesday, March 10, 2020 at 5:30 p.m.