

Owatonna Human Rights Commission - Minutes

The Owatonna Human Rights Commission (OHRC) met on Tuesday, May 12, 2020 in a virtual meeting using Microsoft TEAMS. The meeting was accessed by Call-in Number 507-242-3225 and Conference ID 927 006 597#. Commission Chairman Cords called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. Participating were Commissioners Ethan Cords, David Emanuelson, Susie Effertz, Jamie Vanoosbree, Jim Gunderson, and John Worden; City Administrator Kris Busse and Administrative Specialist Jeanette Clawson.

Commissioner Cords welcomed everyone to the meeting. City Administrator Busse reviewed the Virtual Meeting Declaration with process to hold a virtual meeting. Minutes of the March 10, 2020 OHRC Meeting were reviewed, Commissioner Emanuelson made a motion to approve the minutes as presented and Commissioner Effertz seconded this motion. With a roll call vote, voting aye were Commissioners Effertz, Emanuelson, Gunderson, Vanoosbree, Worden and Cords, the motion carried.

During Commissioner Comments, Commissioner Emanuelson stated the OHRC article published in the Owatonna Peoples Press during March promoting the 2020 Census was intended to be submitted from the OHRC. The paper showed just his name in the by-line, which was not his intent, he would have preferred the article identify the article submitted from the OHRC .

Commissioner Gunderson commented he received a request the LED billboard run the advertisement displayed last December regarding consideration of treatment of persons with disabilities. City Administrator Busse will contact the billboard company regarding this request.

Commissioner Vanoosbree commented she received a message from former OHRC Commissioner Fred Ventura regarding Blandin Foundation Training. The Blandin Foundation plans to host a week-long training session in Owatonna next spring and will begin recruiting participants during July. OHRC members were encouraged to save these training dates on their calendars if they plan to apply for this training.

Commissioner Gillespie joined the call at 5:40 p.m.

Commissioner Emanuelson asked if anyone was aware of discriminative comments regarding COVID-19. Commissioner Vanoosbree replied she has not heard any but aware more people of color are dying from this virus. Commissioners Worden and Gunderson disagreed; saying current data shows the demographic group within Minnesota incurring the highest death rate is white males between the ages of 40-60. Commissioner Vanoosbree explained this is a raw number that does not take into consideration diversity misappropriation within the state as expressed by Governor Walz during his daily updates; COVID-19 is exposing inequities of lower income and different ethnic and economic differences within our state's population. City Administrator Busse commented she and Commissioner Gillespie are on the United Way Board, they sent information to major Owatonna employers providing access to Personal Protective Equipment. Commissioner Vanoosbree commented her son has noticed Somali experience low energy levels during Ramadan caused by restricted diets. Commissioner Effertz commented Ramadan is a time of fasting, prayer, reflection, and community.

During Old Business, Commissioner Cords presented the first edition of the OHRC Newsletter prepared by Commissioner Effertz. After review, Commissioner Emanuelson made a motion to publish and distribute the newsletter; Commissioner Worden seconded the motion. With a roll call vote, voting aye were commissioners Effertz, Emanuelson, Gillespie, Gunderson, Vanoosbree, Worden and Cords. Commissioner Cords will forward to members for distribution, this will be posted on the City's website on

the Board & Commission page and a Newsflash on the Main page will show over the next few months. Commissioner Emanuelson suggested sending a copy to the paper and Steele County. City Administrator Busse will also forward to OPU for use as a City Spot in the OPU Monthly newsletter. Commissioner Effertz asked everyone continue to forward ideas for future articles and distribution of the newsletter.

During New Business, the annual election of officers was held. Administrative Assistant Clawson requested nominations for Commission Chairperson; Commissioner Gunderson nominated Commissioners Cords. Commissioner Cords declined the nomination as he has served as the OHRC Chairperson for two years and not eligible for reappointment per OHRC By-Laws which limits the option to serve to two consecutive years. Commissioner Cords nominated Commissioner Gunderson, Commissioner Emanuelson second this nomination. Commissioner Gunderson accept the nomination. Commissioner Worden made a motion for nominations to cease, Commissioner Effertz seconded this motion. With a roll call vote, Commissioners Effertz, Emanuelson, Gillespie, Gunderson, Vanoosbree, Worden and Cords voted aye, and Commissioner Gunderson was declared the new OHRC Chairman.

Nominations were requested for Commission Vice-Chair. Commissioner Vanoosbree nominate Commissioner Cords, Commissioner Effertz seconded the nomination. Commissioner Gunderson made a motion for nominations to cease, Commissioner Vanoosbree seconded this motion. With a roll call vote, Commissioners Effertz, Emanuelson, Gillespie, Gunderson, Vanoosbree, Worden and Cords voted aye, and Commissioner Cords was declared the new OHRC Vice-Chairman.

Nominations were requested for Commission Secretary. Commissioner Emanuelson nominated Commissioner Vanoosbree, Commissioner Cords seconded this nomination. Commissioner Effertz motion for nominations to cease, Commissioner Gunderson seconded this motion. With a roll call vote, Commissioners Effertz, Emanuelson, Gillespie, Gunderson, Vanoosbree, Worden and Cords voted aye and Commissioner Vanoosbree was declared the new OHRC Secretary.

With no additional business, at 6:02 pm, Commissioner Gunderson made a motion to adjourn, Commissioner Effertz seconded the motion. With a roll call vote, Commissioners Effertz, Emanuelson, Gillespie, Gunderson, Vanoosbree, Worden and Cords voted aye, and the meeting was adjourned at 6:03 p.m.

Next Meeting: June 9, 2020 at 5:30 p.m.