

Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations
Minutes of Meeting
March 5, 2018

Attendance: **Winford Craig, Chair** **Wasiullah Mohamed**
 Helen Gerhardt (by phone) **Richard Morris (by phone)**
 Sharyn Henry **Allyce Pinchback**
 Eric Holmes (by phone) **Lori Roth**
 Eric Horwith **Jessica Ruffin (by phone)**

Absent: Gabriel McMorland
 Mariana Padias
 Gwendolyn Young

Staff: Carlos Torres, Director
 Sheron Clark, Interim Deputy Director
 Mark Hamilton, Solicitor
 Emily Costello, Commission Rep.
 Richard Rogow, Commission Rep.
 Rachel Salem, Secretary to Director

I. CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Craig called the meeting to order at 3:31pm.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment.

III. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Commissioner Craig made a motion to adopt the minutes as written, seconded by Commissioner Lien. The motion carried.

IV. EXECUTIVE SESSION: SEE ATTACHMENT

V: DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- The PghCHR received 34 applications for the Deputy Director position. Commissioner Holmes and the Director conducted 15 phone interviews, narrowing that pool down to four applicants for final in-person interviews. The final selection has been referred to Human Resources for final steps in the process.
- We have a keynote speaker for April 11th, Francis A. Pearman is an assistant professor of urban education at the University of Pittsburgh's Center for Urban Education. Pearman's research and policy interests concern the interplay of poverty, race, and geography in the context of urban schooling. His current research examines connections to and consequences of gentrification. Over 25,000 flyers will be printed to be distributed in the City Paper. Others that will be present at the event include the Mayor, a representative from Senator Casey's office, the Commission's Contract Monitor at HUD, the former Director of the Commission, Director of the Urban League, Esther Bush, and George Moses will be panelists. Emails with registration links will be sent.
- The Director requests that Commissioners send them photos for the annual report. At this point, the Director used photos found online as defaults if the Commissioners do not send photos.

VI. FINANCE REPORT

Commissioner Young was not present to provide a report.

VII. COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Commissioner Lien reported that the committee had a conference call at which it was decided that the listening sessions would be dispensed with for now because the PghCHR has received data from the Human Rights Assessment, to which over 1,700 individuals responded. Those results will be sent to community stakeholders for feedback on whether results align with their own experience and knowledge of their communities. Commissioner Lien also discovered the Civil Rights Coalition that the Director had started would be a more targeted group to share this information with and gather feedback from. The Director encouraged Commissioners to suggest other organizations that might join that coalition. Commissioner Pinchback suggested that we needed to be doing outreach to younger community members who are working on related issues on the front lines of marches, rallies, etc, but who are entirely unaware of what the PghCHR is doing. Commissioner Roth suggested reaching out to the organizers of the various women's marches. Commissioner Ruffin also raised concerns about making sure that marginalized groups and individuals are included. Commissioner Mohamed stated that it is very important the public understand that our role is not political activism.

VIII. HOUSING COMMITTEE REPORT

Commissioner Morris thanked the Director Torres and Rachel Salem for all the work that they have done on the April 11th event. The PghCHR will spend \$1,500 for a stenographer for the event, will pay for ads in the Pittsburgh Courier and other papers, as well as radio and TV ads.

Rachel Salem reported that looking at the referral sources for all of our complaints, the best referrals came from service providers, including HACP, EEOC, lawyers, etc. Google ads are the second most successful referral source. In the past, Port Authority bus ads were very successful, but not so much in 2017. Commissioner Morris asked for other suggestions for advertising possibilities.

Commissioner Pinchback asked about the use of social media. Director Torres stated that the PghCHR has been using both Facebook and Twitter, but that because they were cost-free they were not listed on the budget. Commissioners Pinchback and Ruffin suggested partnering with the various universities and colleges to recruit interns to help activate our social media platforms. Rachel clarified that the PghCHR uses Hootsuite to send out regular messages regarding PghCHR services, resident rights, events, meetings, etc., so we do have a regular presence on Facebook and Twitter.

The Director reported that the PghCHR would be paying for the April 11 events through our CDGB funds (\$100,000 in that account.)

IX: PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Commissioner Holmes stated that the Director had reported the substance of the Committee's recent work regarding the job search process for Deputy Director. He also reported that the Committee will be working on further developing the evaluation process for the Director for 2019.

X. PUBLIC HEARING SECTION

Commissioner Gerhardt stated that there was nothing to report at this time.

XI. AD HOC COMMITTEE FOR YOUTH HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

Commission Pinchback reported that the Youth Human Relations Ad Hoc Committee had met and that Commissioner Ruffin had suggestions regarding training for organizations that intended to work with youth. Capacity is a concern. The following questions had been raised:

- Will staff or Commissioners be taking on the bulk of the work - the time commitment will be considerable

- Will the PghCHR provide transportation, food, stipends for students, etc.? What are the funding sources that the PghCHR would use for this effort?
- How long will this youth commission last? Ongoing? A few years?
- Would it be possible to seek funding from foundations for such needs?
- Who would we be serving: how will we choose which youth we invite?
- What student organizations, programs, unions, and other partners that work with children could we partner with?

Commissioner Mohamed suggested that we work with the City's Youth Commission and that we clarify the different functions, powers, purpose of the PghCHR Youth Commission and how they can be complementary.

XII. NEW BUSINESS

The Director presented Sheron Clark with a certificate of appreciation (and a cake!) for her 25 years of service with the Commission.