

## **HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION MINUTES**

The Human Rights Commission met on Tuesday, August 17, 2016 at 5:00 p.m. in the Multi-Purpose Room at the Kandiyohi County Historical Society.

Members present were: Kristal Dahlager, Richard Engan, Shelly Huseby, Bashir Abdi, Abdirahman Abdi Hussein, Barbara Little, Marlin Breems, Lynn Travaglio, Jill Benson, Shawn Mueske and Denis Anderson. Also present were Janell Sommers, Recording Secretary. Absent was Abdala Abdulahi Mohamed, who was excused from the meeting.

### Item No. 1      Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Kristal Dahlager at 5:00 p.m. A motion was made by Shawn Mueske to approve the minutes of the July 19, 2016, Marlin Breems seconded the motion, which carried.

### Item No. 2      Public Comment

There were no public comments.

### Item No. 3      New Americans

Shelly Huseby had forwarded on the New Americans handout from the Chamber of Commerce. Chair Dahlager discussed the statistics on the number of immigrants that have come through Minnesota from 2010-2014 and the impact that they have on our society. There were a few members that didn't receive the handout, it was discussed that the talking points would be resent to all members. Over 20% of physicians in Minnesota graduated from a foreign medical school. It was noted that there is a shortage in physicians and what a value that 20% of those physicians have come to work in the United States. It was also noted that the refugees are adding value to our community in the workforce shortage gaps. Denis Anderson read the three bullet points from the handout: Minnesota is home to an estimated 93,000 undocumented immigrants, meaning undocumented immigrants comprise about 2% of our population. In 2014, undocumented immigrants earned approximately \$1.6 billion in income of which almost \$73 million went to State and Local taxes and \$117.3 million went to Federal taxes. Undocumented immigrants in Minnesota also contributed over \$30 million to Medicare and \$116 million to Social Security in 2014. Shelly Huseby stated that the immigration laws that the United States is operating under is the Immigration Law of 1996, and it doesn't fit what is happening now. After much discussion, Chair Kristal Dahlager gave her appreciation on the Minnesota State Chamber of Commerce for composing this handout and getting it to the Committee as it was helpful and important to read.

### Item No 4      Imam – Relationship of the Church and Mosque

Commission Member Bashir Abdi introduced Imam - Aden Hussien. Chair Dahlager, asked Imam Hussein if he could give a little information of the relationship about the church and the mosque. Imam explained the location of the mosque in Willmar and expressed their great relationship with the Willmar Community. On Fridays they worship together and men, women and children are all welcome to come but they cannot sit together if they are not family. The mosque is growing and the mosque is currently large enough to hold worship. The Imam is the leader and the mosque has a board, so in his absence another individual is able to preach. They mosque has youth programs for kids in the area. You cannot become a Muslim unless you believe that Jesus was a prophet of God. He said Christians are welcome to come to the mosque and noted he meets with church representatives on a regular basis.

The Commission asked for some background on Aden Imam Hussien. He grew up in Kenya, and came to Minnesota five years ago. He is married and has five children and speaks numerous languages. He became Imam by meeting the three qualifications: First, you have to have knowledge about the religion. Second, you have to be a well-respected man in the community. Third, you have to have experience and good leadership.

Item No. 5      Blandin Foundation – Leadership in Ethnically Diverse Communities

Chair Kristal Dahlager, briefly discussed the Blandin Foundation. She informed the Committee if they are interested in joining the program they would need to visit the website – [www.leadership.blandinfoundation.org](http://www.leadership.blandinfoundation.org). The session dates will be September 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup>, October 13<sup>th</sup>, November 3<sup>rd</sup>, and December 1<sup>st</sup>. The sessions will take place at Ridgewater College.

Item No. 6      New Business

There were about 80 children that showed up to the water safety program held at the Dorothy Olson Aquatic Center on Monday, August 15<sup>th</sup>. After discussion, the Committee suggested that they offer another session this coming spring.

Possible future agenda items: Homelessness, Sex Trafficking, Accessibility, the new American economy brochure, and English as a second language.

Item No. 7      Miscellaneous

The Commission set the next meeting date for September 20, 2016. All future meetings, will be the third Tuesday of every month.

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn. The motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 6:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Janell Sommers  
Recording Secretary