

## **HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION MINUTES**

Approved: August 15, 2017

The Human Rights Commission met on Tuesday, June 20, 2017 at 5:00 p.m. in the Multi-Purpose Room at the Kandiyohi County Historical Society.

Members present were: Shelly Huseby, Barbara Little, Jill Benson, Marlin Breems, Kristal Dahlager, Ben Larson, Maria Larson, Lynn Travaglio, Shawn Mueske, Fernando Alvarado, and Janell Sommers, Administrative Assistant.

### Item No. 1      Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Shelly Huseby at 5:00 p.m.

### Item No. 2      Approve Minutes of Meeting

Commission Member Breems moved to approve the Human Rights Commission minutes of May 15, 2017. Commission Member Ben Larson seconded the motion, which carried.

### Item No. 3      Public Comment

There were no comments from the public.

### Item No 4      Follow-up Discussion to Session with Law Enforcement Officials:

Chair Huseby read an email she received from Jonathan Wong of the St. Cloud Human Rights Office offering assistance on a collaborative event by assistance in marketing and facilitating an event. Their department is seeking to outreach to communities and coordinate with them.

Chair Huseby informed the Commission that following the last meeting she approached Catalina Morales and gave her a business card with telephone numbers if she had more questions she wanted answered and she has not heard from her.

Chair Huseby participated in a Police Ride Along with Sgt. Chad Nelson prior to the session with the law enforcement officials and they talked about the vision of the Willmar Police Department which is to provide a safe community through a partnership with the citizens. This seemed evident in the interactions with people that day.

In discussion the Commission overviewed the questions and answers of the law enforcement officials. Commission members felt it went well and the officials understood the roles and responsibilities of their office and are conscious not to overstep their authority as well as they don't appear to work in concert with ICE. It was reassuring to hear from both Chief Felt and Sheriff Hartog.

Discussion after the meeting brought up comments that Chief Felt used the term "undocumented" and Sheriff Hartog used the term "illegal." The question was posed as to if they have to inquire into citizenship status on the booking questionnaire. Does that question have to be on there? Do they have to answer? Just because they are not a US Citizen does not mean they are here illegally. There is a big difference between the documentation of a refugee versus an immigrant.

Chair Huseby asked the group if they feel like there are more questions to be answered and if a public education forum on this topic would be helpful. It was felt the Hispanic community would not come to a public forum, it should be done in multiple modes possibly be recorded or aired on WRAC 8. Where the forum is held would be a factor on attendance. The question was raised as to what the best outlet is to get this type of information out to the public. What type of audience will be targeted? Suggestions of locations

were discussed as well as the importance that every citizen of Willmar should receive the dialog. Commission Member Mueske suggested the use of WRAC 8 and to invite the Police Chief and Sheriff back to answer questions and have it filmed, translated and aired on WRAC 8 in multiple languages.

The commission members discussed the form that is used during the booking process and requested Chair Huseby and one other member meet with Sheriff Hartog with some follow-up questions in regard to the booking form such as is it required or optional to answer the question of citizenship, can be rephrased or can they be instructed they do not have to answer, and where does the form come from. Discussion was held as to the need to communicate to the community that it is safe to call law enforcement if you are a victim of a crime and your citizenship will not be questioned.

In preparation for the possible WRAC 8 presentation, it was the consensus of the Commission to compile the questions that were presented to the law enforcement officials from the last meeting and if the members have any additional ideas they should present them as well.

Chair Huseby informed the Commission that another outreach that has been presented to her is from the Vision 2040 Group – the Green Card Voices and possibly partnering with them to do some educational things. Kandiyohi County Historical Society and the local newspaper were discussed as other possibilities of outreach to the community.

Item No. 5      Other Business:

Commissioner Little stated the League of Women Voters would like to work with the Human Rights Commission to host and promote a Citizenship Ceremony this fall where people with green cards move into citizenship. September 17<sup>th</sup> is Citizenship Day and it would include a public event where people are sworn in. More information will be forthcoming to create this public event. Commissioner Little made a motion the Human Rights Commission provide support to the League of Women Voters for a day to recognize the citizenship ceremony. Commissioner Travaglio seconded the motion, which carried.

Commission members in contact with the ISALAH Group were asked to contact them to request any further questions for the law enforcement officials' forum being planned.

The showing of the movie "Warehoused" was announced which will be shown in the WEAC auditorium at 7:30 p.m. this evening.

The next meeting date of the Commission will be Tuesday, August 15, 2017 at 5:00 p.m. A motion was made by Commission Member Breems and seconded by Commission Member Little to adjourn. The motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Janell Sommers  
Administrative Assistant