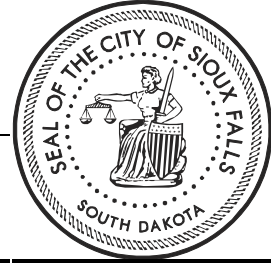


MINUTES

Thursday, March 13, 2008



**Sioux Falls
Human Relations
Commission**

12 Noon—1 p.m.
1st Floor, City Hall
224 West Ninth Street

Commissioners: Present: Abbott, Carlson, Hariri, Harris, Hearn, Lodu, Rist, Sieverding and Williams. DAC liaison, Mary Hurd. Absent: Luecke.

Staff: Jeff Munce, Human Resources Manager and Carol Garry, Human Relations Assistant.

Guests: Gail Eiesland, Chief Assistant City Attorney, Valorie Ahrendt, Catherine Riffle, and Betty Ann Gross

1. Call to Order/Welcome Guests

- Abbott called the meeting to order at 12:07 p.m.
- Gail Eiesland was introduced. She is the Commission's contact person in the City Attorney's Office. The Commission was recently moved from the Human Resources department to the Attorneys.
- Catherine Wiffle, Whispering Winds Center and Betty Ann Gross, Dakota Civil Rights Office introduced themselves to the Commission.

2. Approval of Minutes

- Carlson moved to approve the January 10, 2008, minutes; Rist seconded; passed unanimously.

3. Status of Cases/Staff Report

- Munce provided an update on the status of cases. The number of open cases is the lowest it has been for a while. Five cases will be going to the March panel. Currently the oldest case is assigned to the contract investigator.
- The Commission recognized the effort of staff to lower the number of open cases, especially those past 180 days.

4. Appointment March Case Panel

- Carlson, Harris, Lodu, Luecke, Rist (Ahrendt will receive cases that go out after her appointment becomes official)

Commission Chair: Karla Abbott

Commission Vice Chair: Terry Rist

Commission 3rd Officer: Dr. Valerie Hearn

HUMANITARIAN AWARD COMMITTEE
Chair—Terry Rist
Karla Abbott
Rod Carlson
Vaney Hariri
Wanda Harris

DIVERSITY CONF. COMMITTEE
Chair— Karla Abbott
Vaney Hariri
Wanda Harris
Terry Rist
Dwayne Williams

PSA Committee
Vaney Hariri
Karla Abbott
Valorie Ahrendt
James Lodu
Valerie Hearn

5. Continuing Business

a. Humanitarian Award Committee

- Staff will organize a meeting to get the plans started for the 2008 event.
- Abbott, Carlson, Hariri, Harris, and Rist volunteered to be on the Humanitarian Award subcommittee.
- We will be using the same award design this year. Our sculptor had an accident involving broken bones.

b. PSA Committee

- The Commission needs a new PSA; one with a new format/fresher look. Channel 16 will produce it so we don't need to budget for the cost. We need to determine who our target audience will be – complainants, employers? We would like to have it completed by July. We could have a 30 second one for the cable channels and up to a three minute one to air on Channel 16.
- Abbott, Ahrendt, Hariri, Hearn, and Lodu volunteered to be on the PSA subcommittee. Everyone should be thinking of ideas for when we meet – soon.

c. Commissioner JR Castillo

- As reported last month, Commissioner Castillo resigned. He moved to Houston and is back working in the accounting field. He has relatives in the area.

6. New Business

a. Commissioner Valorie Ahrendt

- Val Ahrendt was appointed to the Human Relations Commission at the March 10, 2008, City Council meeting. Her appointment is official 20 days after the March 10th meeting.
- Ahrendt is an advocate with SD Advocacy Services. She is married with two sons; one has a disability and is the reason why she is so passionate about advocating for children with disabilities.

7. Disability Awareness Commission Report

- The Accessible America Award was not awarded to the City of Sioux Falls. Houston, TX won this year's award.
- The DAC will begin its 2008 application as soon as the announcement is made in July. In the meantime the DAC will be reviewing the judges' comments and the other city's applications to see where improvement can be made.

8. Public Comment

- Commissioner Lodu informed the Commission about Lutheran Social Services' fundraising event; Taste of Cultures Benefit Dinner. There will also be Treasures of the World silent auction. The event takes place on Saturday, April 12, 2008, @ Faith Lutheran Church, 601 North Cliff Avenue. The auction begins at 5:30 and the dinner starts at 6:30. Tickets are \$20 each and \$150 for a table of eight. Contact Lodu – 731-2036- for tickets (ticket selling is a competition for LSS staff.)
- Betty Ann Gross is a member of the Sisseton-Wahpeton tribe. She is a member of AIM, Rainbow Push and is a civil rights activist. She has worked to set up three civil rights offices; one in Sisseton, one in Watertown, and Sioux Falls. The Sioux Falls office is the Dakota Civil Rights Office and primarily serves Native Americans. Their board of directors has seven members; they use the 1999 Civil Rights Commission guidance and hope to have 1000 members by the end of the year. They will direct the complaints they get to the Commission on Civil Rights.
- Catherine Riffle is with Whispering Winds Center. Their focus is also on Native Americans with a goal to provide social and economic empowerment. The center was created because Riffle felt the agencies in town were not providing sufficient assistance. They have been successful in finding housing for their clients.

- 9. Adjournment:** Having no further business; Sieverding moved to adjourn; Pastor Williams seconded, the meeting adjourned at 1:05pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Carol Garry.