

MINUTES	Thursday, October 08, 2020 at 12:00 PM	
Human Relations Commission Meeting	Commission Room 1st Floor—City Hall 224 West Ninth Street Sioux Falls, South Dakota	

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Alex Ramirez, Anny Libengood, Megan Myers, Bill Wood, Megan Grode Wolters, Justine Schoolmeester (by phone), Kassidi Smith

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Karen Gourley

STAFF PRESENT: Beth Jost

CALL TO ORDER

A quorum being present, the meeting was called to order at 12:05 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made Wood by and seconded by Grode Wolters to approve the minutes from the August 2020 meeting.

BUSINESS OR PENDING ISSUES BROUGHT BEFORE THE BOARD

Guest Speaker from Disability Rights of SD: Delores Lipp, who is an advocate at Disability Rights of South Dakota spoke to the Commission. She discussed the different programs at their organization. They have three offices located in Sioux Falls, Pierre, and Rapid City with about 24 people on staff. Delores shared that there are three components to what her organization does: legal advocacy, protection, and public awareness. Delores also shared that Disability Rights is taking applications for their Partners in Policymaking program. It is a six-month program starting on November 1, 2020, and it is open to people with disabilities, friends and family members of people with disabilities, and professionals.

Continued Discussion on Future Guest Speakers and Community Outreach Ideas: Ramirez asked if anyone has any other ideas for future guests, and shared that he has noticed that there are a lot boards trying to figure out what to do about Black Lives Matter. Ramirez wondered if Vaney Hariri would still be able to come to a future meeting. Myers said she will reach out and see if Vaney is available for next month’s meeting. Ramirez suggested that we could also see if the Police Chief or Lt. Thum would be interested in speaking at a future meeting, and he offered to reach out to them. Ramirez also has a contact at the African American Museum who may be able offer ideas on what the commission could do. Libengood asked the marketing committee

to give us an update from their meeting with Haggar. Ramirez is hoping Haggar can be at the next meeting to give that update. Jost will talk to Haggar and see if he can send the update by email before the next meeting. Myers said she would like to get our speakers out in front of a bigger audience. Ramirez said he would volunteer to bring a camera and stream the video for future speakers.

Action Items: Action items were not discussed.

HUMAN RELATIONS DIVISION STATISTICS

There are currently 45 active discrimination cases, and the top three bases are race, disability, and retaliation. In September the Human Relations Office had 81 walk-ins or phone calls regarding housing, and 24 regarding employment.

CIVIL RIGHTS UPDATE

Gates Chili Central School District in Rochester, New York reached an agreement regarding a lawsuit that alleged disability discrimination. It was alleged that a student with disabilities was denied equal access to school because of the use of a service dog. The School District agreed to revise the Service Animal Policy and will pay the student's mother \$42,000 for out-of-pocket expenses, damages, and emotional distress.

A landlord in Cincinnati, Ohio will pay \$177,500 to resolve a Fair Housing Act lawsuit. It was alleged that the landlord sexually harassed female tenants since 2013. The landlord is also barred from participating in the rental or management of residential properties in the future.

Air Systems Inc. in California will pay \$1.25 million to eight African American employees to settle a racial harassment suit. The racial harassment included graffiti of swastikas drawn on walls of portable toilets, a noose, and a threat of lynching at the work site.

PUBLIC INPUT

No public was present for public input.

NEXT MEETING

November 12, 2020

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Wood and seconded by Myers to adjourn the meeting. Meeting adjourned at 12:59 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Jost
Human Relations Specialist