

Minutes
April 13th, 2022

Commissioners Present:

Kathryn Cobb-Holmes
Karima (Karen) Archie
Richard Wagner
Zelda Yoder
Stacey Taylor

Commissioners Absent:

Valerie Phelps-Robinson
Lisa Blount

Council Liaison:

Johanny Cepeda-Freytiz

Staff

Kimberly Talbot

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 p.m. by Commissioner Cobb-Holmes. The minutes were reviewed. Commissioner Wagner moved. Commissioner Archie second. Minutes were approved.

Executive Director's Report

The HRC received \$250,000 in ARP money to assist with rental assistance and utility payments. This will directly impact the speed in which landlords will receive their money. Community Development will review after the processing not during the process.

Councilwoman Cepeda-Freytiz wanted to discuss the case process (rental/utility assistance). She expressed concern regarding delays whether internal or external and wanted to know if any tenants had been affected by the current process of approval.

Kenia Pichardo resigned on March 11th to take a full time position elsewhere. She worked part time as a clerk. The E.D. attended a 3 day mediation training via zoom and received a certificate of completion. There were approximately 75 participants.

The E.D. has been working with city finance manager, Jamar Kelly on homeless initiatives. He requested an action plan for the various ideas such as a mobile shower and mobile food truck. I have consulted with homeless advocates in LA and Denver. Commissioner Archie wanted to know who was working on the project with me.

Rental and utility assistance applications continue to increase on a regular basis. The city clerk has requested additional criteria on my biweekly report to the MD.

Leadership training/capstone project is to get all of the HRC applications on the internet. I will have to work with I.T. to accomplish this goal.

We were monitored by Community Development for one of our programs and received a letter of thanks for our work and no concerns were noted.

One of my former interns will be hired to work as a part time clerk.

The Commissioner training is on May 17th & 18th. The training is from 2-5 p.m. on the theories of harassment and disability.

We had one EEOC inquiry, 1 EEOC intake (referral) and no housing intakes.

The E.D.'s report was moved for approval. Commissioner Wagner moved/Commissioner Yoder second. The E.D.'s report was approved.

Old Business:

Commissioner Wagner reported taking his 3rd term oath over the phone.

Commissioner Yoder reminded the E.D. to send potential training topics around to other Commissioners for the training with Mr. Yoder. The list should include everything they don't know but is important.

New Business

Commissioner Cobb-Holmes will accept the Fair Housing proclamation presented by city council on April 25th. The other Commissioners want to be emailed the time & date in case they would like to participate.

The city diversity board is attempting to plan an intern/career day for Reading High students. The goal is to get the students interested in public service jobs. The tentative date is May 20th.

Good & Welfare

Commissioner Yoder: On May 19th from 5-8 p.m. there is a Reading Public Library celebrity bartender event at Saucony (Franklin St. station). Purchase a beverage and all the tips will go to the library.

Commissioner Archie: On April 21st from 6:30 to 8 p.m. Berks Dems will present a program on climate. Go to berksdemwomen@gmail.com for more information and to register.

Commissioner Wagner: Reading Pride is July 17th.

Commissioner Taylor:

-April 15th is the beginning of Lent service every Tuesday at Zion

-April 23rd basket of cheer raffle. One ticket for \$3. Six tickets for \$15. Basket options include liquor, wine, beer, spa and movie baskets

-April 27th the Sisterhood is having a spaghetti dinner from 5-8 p.m. at Spartaco. Tickets are \$15.

-April 28th Breast cancer support services event at Olivet's in Oakbrook from 4-6 p.m.

-April 30th Juneteenth planning meeting @11 at Berks Lodge

-May 14th Juneteenth having a spaghetti dinner at Berks lodge \$10

-June 11th Black lives matter health fair

-June 16th Dr. Ronald Smith awards and recognition banquet

-June 17th-19th celebration of Juneteenth at the Berks Lodge

Councilwoman Cepeda-Freytiz- Earth day April 23rd at city park noon - 6 p.m.

-April 16th Easter egg hunt at Centre Park at noon.

-April 16th Easter egg hunt at Reading Iron playground from 12-2 p.m.

Commissioner Cobb-Holmes-both nurses of BCIU have resigned. The agency is looking for RN's. Looking for early head start supervisor. Must have a background in social services and some education. BCIU need 3 family engagement workers. BCIU had a 3-day training on their enrollment process. Will focus on recruitment.

Training

There will be an EEOC training for Commissioners on May 17th & 18th from 2-5 p.m. The training will be virtual.

The FEPA conference is scheduled for July 19 - 21st. Once the agenda is distributed, I will forward to Commissioners.

The next virtual meeting is scheduled for Wednesday May 11th at 6 p.m.

The meeting adjourned at 6:44 p.m.