

City of Reading Human Relations Commission
May 20, 2020
MINUTES

Commissioners Present:

Karima (Karen) Archie
Lisa Blount
Kathryn Cobb-Holmes, Chair
Barbara Coffin
Valerie Phelps-Robinson
Stacey Taylor
Richard Wagner
Zelda Yoder

Absent

N/A

Staff

Kimberly Talbot

Guest

The meeting was called to order at 6:20 p.m. due to technical difficulties. The minutes were reviewed. Commissioner Coffin moved. Commissioner Yoder seconded. Motion carried. The minutes were approved.

Executive Director's Report

The E.D. reports that Nilda is teleworking and I am in the office 4 days a week. We maintain our current programs. Within the next two weeks the staffing in the office will change.

We have been notified that our office will be receiving money under the Cares Act. We have entered into discussions with the I.T. department about putting the application online and creating a new mailbox for those applications.

I have also been in discussions with Careerlink about getting better trained candidates such as college students to help out with processing applications for assistance once we open up our ESG program. Due to COVID we expect to receive 25% more applications for assistance with a utility bill or with an eviction.

I have been attending a lot of zoom meetings regarding the census on behalf of the city. I am part of the census team.

I was on a zoom training about landlord tenant mediation. There have been some discussions about a pilot program with this as the central theme.

Old Business:

Commissioner Wagner reports that the Pride event will be held virtually.

Commissioner Taylor reports that the NAACP is putting together virtual webinar's on home buying/refinancing and credit repair. Commissioner Coffin is willing to help through SCORE.

Commissioner Yoder discussed the importance of voting.

Commissioner Cobbs-Holmes reports that the BCIU has Covid related resource materials.

New Business

Commissioner Yoder discussed the recent post from the local Republican Party on Dr. Rachel Levine.

Commissioner Wagner reports that Reading Pride issued a statement condemning the post.

Commissioner Yoder reports that the "Berks Dems" issued a statement. Commissioners expressed a desire to issue a statement. Commissioner Taylor moved and Commissioner Wagner seconded.

Commissioner Blount was concerned about retaliation/hate speech.

Commissioner Cobb-Holmes reports that the BCIU will not have summer school and they are working with CYS to have parents participate in the census. Enrollment will be announced on Facebook.

Training and Conferences:

Commissioner Cobb-Holmes has agreed to forward any training opportunities to the E.D. to share with other Commissioners as she gets them.

Next meeting scheduled for June 10, 2020

Meeting adjourned at 7 p.m.