

**City of Reading Human Relations Commission  
February 18, 2009 Minutes**

Commissioners Present:

William Giddens, Chair  
Sally Rodriguez, Secretary  
Barbara Coffin, Treasurer  
Hazel Black

Absent:

Kathy Amaker - excused  
Alicia Snead - excused  
Lisa Blount - excused

Staff:

Kimberly Talbot

Guests:

Ryan Hottenstein  
Tonya Butler

The meeting was called to order by Chair, William Giddens at 5:38PM in the Penn Room of City Hall.

There was no public comment.

The minutes from the November 18, 2008 meeting were approved by a motion by Barbara Coffin and seconded by Hazel Black.

**Treasurer's Report**

The Treasurer's Report will be tabled until the March meeting. Sally Rodriguez asked Ryan Hottenstein to have one of the accountants sit with Kim to explain how to read the reports that are generated out of the city's accounting software. There were some questions on where the revenues show on the reports. The reports that were produced a few months ago did not show revenues received and Kim has records of receiving revenues that were posted for the Human Relations Commission. Once the reports can be interpreted, an up-to-date treasurer's report will be issued. Sally and Kim have developed a spreadsheet to show the revenues and expenses so it is easier for the Commissioners to read and understand.

**Intake Specialist Report**

Antonio Perez submitted her activity report for December through January. 7 HUD and 1 EEOC case was received. A motion by Barbara Coffin and seconded by Sally Rodriguez to accept the report.

**Employment and Fair Housing Investigation**

Larry Moore reported that 73 calls and 12 walk-ins were received for the month. 4 HUD, 8 Landlord/Tenant, and 7 Employment cases were closed.

Albert Dunn reported that 169 calls and 41 walk-ins were received for the month. 2 HUD and 16 Landlord/tenant, and 5 Employment cases were closed.

A motion by Barbara Coffin and seconded by Sally Rodriguez to accept the reports.

### **Administrator's Report**

A public hearing was held for Jacqueline Rodriguez on February 20, 2009. Commissioner Blount attended. A decision will be forthcoming to the board. There was a question on why Attorney Balmer needed briefs from this hearing. Barbara Coffin mentioned that she did not remember having briefs submitted before for cases. There was also a comment made on the extra costs for the briefs. The Commission feels that Attorney Balmer is charging too much and will explore the possibility of setting up a pool of attorneys to choose from instead of using Balmer. Tonya will help Kim prepare the needed RFPs if a pool is feasible. If it is not feasible an RFP will be prepared to hire a new attorney.

Fair Housing month is April, 2009. There was some discussion on having a guest speaker for a luncheon event from 11AM-1PM. A few suggestions for speakers were given to Kim by the Commission.

A grant was received for education and outreach for \$23,800. This will be used for salary, benefits and materials.

Fair Housing 101 was presented by the staff on BCTV. After the program aired, there was an increase in phone calls and emails to the office.

Kim mentioned that there is a push to add sexual orientation/gender identity to our ordinance. Reading is the only Commission without that piece in their ordinance. Attorney Butler will work on drafting the changes that will be submitted to HUD for approval. Once HUD approved them, they will go to City Council. We are not in a rush for this to be completed at this time. The federal government does not cover sexual orientation and EEOC may cover starting in the Fall so financially the office can not handle the added cost of these cases at this time.

A motion was made by Barbara Coffin and seconded by Sally Rodriguez to accept the report.

### **Old Business**

None

### **New Business**

None

### **Conferences and Training**

None

The meeting was adjourned at 6:50PM. The next meeting is scheduled for March 25, 2009 at 5:30PM in the Penn Room.

Respectively submitted,

Sally L. Rodriguez, Secretary