

EQUITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
February 11, 2025

DATE: Tuesday, February 11, 2025

TIME: 4:30 PM

LOCATION: Multicultural Family Center, 1157 Central Avenue, Dubuque, IA 52001

The meeting was called to order at 4:31 pm.

Commissioners Present: Jake Kurczek, Matthew Zanger, Michaela Freiburger, Dave Heiar, Rick Baumhover (virtual), Nikkole Nutter

Commissioners Absent: Luselena Bravo, DeLano Cain Watson

Staff Present: Gisella Aiken Shadle, Chief of Equity and Human Rights; Ann Marie Jannette, Equity and Human Rights Specialist

Swearing in of returning commissioner Michaela Freiburger. Luselena Bravo was not in attendance, and Rick Baumhover was attending virtually so they will be sworn in at the next scheduled commission meeting.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve the minutes from the January 14, meeting by Freiburger, seconded by Baumhover. All in favor.

Public Input

No members of the public were in attendance.

Reports

Caseload Report

- Complaints filed – number of complaints that were signed during the month
 - January amount: 3
- Active investigations – investigations that are currently active but in various stages (active, administrative review, initiated, on hold, etc.)
 - January amount: 18
- Incidents in mediation – complaints currently in mediation
 - January amount: 1
- Incidents in full hearing – complaints in full hearing process
 - January amount: 0
- Inquiries – calls/inquiries that don't result in an official complaint being filed (including outreach events)
 - January amount: 17

- Complaints closed during the month – signed complaints that were closed during the month (doesn't include inquiries or complaints that were never filed)
 - January amount: 0
- Total inquiries and complaints FY25 – signed complaints filed in FY25
 - January amount: 85

Example of EHR complaint received in January 2025:

After submitting a complaint to OSHA that his forklift was unsafe, the complainant was treated differently and was being harassed by coworkers and supervisors. In another incident, the complainant left his break five minutes early to talk to HR and had to wait in HR for about 10-15 minutes. After speaking with HR, he went back down to his work space where his supervisor accused him of taking too long of a break. He was told that because he took a 40-minute break, he was fired. Other white employees with similar work issues were not fired or disciplined or harassed as the complainant was. Complainant feels he was discriminated against because of his race.

Director's Report

There has been an uptick in immigration calls. ICE was spotted in Postville. Per Mike van Milligan, we will follow the law. There are some Venezuelan families moving to the area. The Better Togetherness Committee will be creating Know Your Rights documents translated into Marshallese and they will be ready by the end of the week. If any commissioners know of any persons who have immigration concerns, they are to direct them to Aitken-Shadle.

Chairperson's Report

Chairperson Kurczek had nothing to report. Anything he was going to touch on will be touched on in new business.

Old Business:

The event will be meant to recognize the time we are living in when deciding who to bring to the table. It will build connections through stores. Start with the highest target audience coming in. There is the possibility of training Maitha to be a facilitator to gather stories and do more outreach.

New Business:

The Equity and Human Rights Department received 19 applications for the Dubuque Equitable Community Grant. The recipients of the two grants will be notified next week. There was one entry that came in late, and it was agreed by majority of the grant reviewers to not accept that application. Suggestions for next year's grant were offered. Create an online Q&A for applicants on what type of activity we are looking for. Look into whether the MFC and similar City affiliated organizations should be allowed to apply for the grant.

Regarding the discussion on the difference between city, state and federal guidelines/actions for human rights, the directive from Mike Van Milligan is to keep doing

what we're doing until the law tells us otherwise. Other local governments in Iowa are making changes but we are maintaining status quo until we hear more.

Regarding updates on legislation, Kurczek will forward information on legislation updates that pertain to human rights. Current bills of concern include HSB15, HSB60, HSB37, HF115, and HSB1077. Freiburger suggested hiring a lobbyist; anyone can volunteer to be an advocate/lobbyist they just need to register as such. Heiar suggested checking with the City Attorney for regulations regarding being a lobbyist.

Antonio Mouzon and LaMetra Murdock from the Office of Community Impact and the Multicultural Family Center, and Anderson Sainci from the Office of Shared Prosperity will be in attendance at the next commission meeting to discuss potential partnership.

Reflections and Updates

Heiar has requested we update the commissioner manual. He is meeting with Aitken-Shadle to discuss.

Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn by Freiburger, seconded by Heiar. All in favor. The meeting ended at 6:00 p.m.

The next regularly scheduled meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 11, 2025, at 4:30 p.m., at the Multicultural Family Center.

Minutes approved as submitted: _____

Minutes approved as corrected: _____
Michelle M. Nitter-Shadle