



City of York Human Relations Commission

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COMMISSION MEETING – FEBRUARY 19TH, 2024.

Meeting Minutes for JANUARY 22ND, 2024

The meeting was called to order by Chair Commissioner Mark Rhodes 6:04pm., in-person at City Council Chambers.

Meetings playlist, just go to: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLtJDPWA3BHAIhNetQNc6xrWLEftgB1M60>

Roll Call of Commissioners:

Commissioners Present:

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| - Mark Rhodes – CHAIR | - Mina Edmondson | - Jason Querry |
| - Jada Richardson – VICE CHAIR | - Madeline Torres | - Anu Banks |
| | - Kevin E. Watkins | |

Commissioners Absent:

- | | |
|----------------|--------------|
| - Karen Crosby | -John Eyster |
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Public Comment:

- No Report

Approval/Consideration of Board Minutes for December 18th, 2023, meeting.

- **Motion:** Commissioner J. Querry
- **Second:** Commissioner A. Banks
- **Vote:** Unanimous

Report of Chair: *Commissioner M. Rhodes*

- Been making stronger relationships with the CRC and other outside organizations. New things are being created with the youth program VOICES among other things.
- Everyone has received the news article about the new added protected class “Height and Weight” in New York. We can try to make that happen for us here as well.
- We need to appoint someone as the Secretary/Treasurer I was hoping someone would volunteer.

Report of Secretary/Treasurer: *(TEMPORARY) SAYMARA TABALES*

- **Budget and Finance:**
 - Two (2) new expenditures in funds 10: One coming out of *Association/Dues/Conferences* for YWCA Fundraiser. The other one comes out of *Other Supplies/Materials*.
 - Funds 26 has an amount of \$5,000.00 coming out for the downpayment of the Keynote of this year’s diversity event.
 - ✓ **Director Twomey:** There are FHAP funds sitting since probably the 2020’s. We want to be able to use these funds when people come in with legitimate reasons as to why they might not have a place to stay or are threatened to be evicted, of course it must pertain to what we here in HRC. As an example: theirs is a Complainant that due to being wrongfully fired from her job she is at risk of losing her home. Therefore, we can use some of that money towards assisting folx that are in such risks.

- ✓ For there to be better clarification on how, where and when the FHAP funds can be used there has to be a thorough conversation between Chair Mark Rhodes and Business Administrator Kim Robertson.

Report of Standing Committees:

- **Personnel Committee: Commissioner M. Edmondson**
 - At this moment we are fully staffed, and we are very pleased with the current staff.
- **Planning and Community Relations Committee: Commissioners M. Rhodes & J. Query**
 - Staying involved with different groups as much as we can.
 - Developing the programs, we can together.
 - We (HRC) are being looked at more as a legal arm, so we have to look for ways to be of assistance to these other groups.
 - CRC is moving forward working on vision boards that we are a part of.
- **Nominating and Leadership Development Committee: Commissioner M. Edmondson**
 - Currently there is only one open seat on the Commission Board.
 - There is one prospect who wants to remain anonymous until they make a decision.
 - As per the Leadership Development, there has been connections made with PHRC about getting training. If there are preferences on days as well as times, please notify me. The more Commissioners we can get together at a place and time at once the more convenient it will be.
 - Chair Mark Rhodes: Let's do this, Saymara, why don't you send out a doodle poll to everyone and that way everybody can just answer to that, you have everyone's email?
- **Social Media & Branding Committee: Commissioner R. Khan**
 - Saymara has been doing a great job posting on our FB page, but today's link to the live stream was not posted.
 - Is there any way I can have the link so that if she is busy I can post?
 - **Saymara:** Yes, the link is on the top of the minutes and the agenda that gets emailed prior to the mtgs. They can be copied and pasted just about anywhere.
 - I like the fact that we share different holidays and I want to be able to share some things as well.
 - I want to start promoting the Diversity Event as soon as possible.

Correspondence:

Report of Staff:

- **Executive Director**
 - We are very fortunate that we were able to upgrade Saymara and the work she does, so that she is now an investigator *with* administrative duties. Please, don't give her extra work to do. If it is within your will-house to do a doodle poll, then, please, do the doodle poll. Because what she is doing now is literally two jobs. If you need help doing something for your committee, I know Saymara will help you, but if you can do it, please do it, I already give her enough to do.
 - We have 3 current high-profile cases.
 - 1 has been moved to EEOC but we've placed it on hold. We will be taking no further steps, but it is on standby on our end. It is a very complicated case, and we are glad the EEOC is on it.
 - One of the other 2 cases we have is soon approaching mediation, hopefully we can come to some sort of agreement before we even enter the investigative stage. So that is not time-consuming for either party.
 - The third involves another big agency in the city and this one is regarding reasonable accommodation because of disability in employment whereas the prior 2 were race related. They will also be offered mediation; however, the case has also been accepted by EEOC. If mediation fails, then we will transfer the case over to the EEOC.

- We have spoken about the plan to circumvent the county and work with PHRC as a proxy. But what they are suggesting is sending a PHRC paid employee to work in our office. Someone who will take on county cases from here 2 times a week. That person will be hired locally. That has not yet been finalized, it's still in the drafting stages.
- The YWCA gala the other night I did go, it was nice. It was held in honor of a dear friend who passed away suddenly and far too soon before her time.
- There was a case that was already opened when I got here, it was against White Rose. One of the owners, Jeremiah, has been a stellar respondent, resolving almost all of the issues. The only thing still on hold is the audit of his employee handbook. And since then, has told me that he is redoing the entire employee handbook and even came up with an idea to do a "city-wide" training for public accommodation owners and employees, so we can all be on the same page in terms of discrimination. We are looking towards the month of May.
- The Health Bureau- it has become our best friend. They have given us \$10,000 towards our Diversity Event and (not definite yet), I was asked to write 2 proposals, one was for the "city-wide" training event and the second is for the Youth Coalition in collaboration with organizations such as the CRC, NAACP, YWCA, and the Equity Group. Those proposals can make us eligible for grants up to \$140,000.
- Went to a Board Mtg at Susquehannock- over 4 hrs. and it was hideous. As a matter of fact, the meeting I have at 7pm tonight is with representatives of native American folk in the area and Representative Chris – to talk about how do meet with the justice department and make this a statewide initiative. To make it illegal to have native emblems and mascots in the schools. 2 years ago, kids got rid of the stereotypical racist icon and they are reverting it back. PHRC was not successful with the Neshaminy case where they also had a Redskin, that was their mascot. Chad Lassiter even said in our mtg that they "did not handle it well".
- There's a mtg coming up with a few folx from CASA and Edquina Washington. They are pursuing the Trust Act- it's an ordinance as well as an extension to the resolution that Kim Bracey as Mayor had put forward that would protect the rights of non-documented people within the city of York. This would make it illegal for us to participate with ICE and HomeLand Security unless there is criminal activity that has been proved. We are getting "push-back" from Mayor Helfrich, as he wants to keep it only as a resolution.
- In March I will be doing a presentation with Tenfold and one with PHRC. And this week I was asked by the State's Attorney for central PA and Captain Lentz YCPD, to participate in an anti-hate presentation in central high school this week.
 - **Vice Chair Richardson:** As you already know from prior mtgs., we are working alongside the Health Bureau on a resolution to declare Racism as a Public Health Crisis in the city. The resolution is pretty much finalized, only minor edits are left to do. It will be completed hopefully by February. What we ask of the Commission board is your support when we start our press opportunity, please make space for it in your schedules as they come. Share the message and the importance of it to our community. Once we have the Resolution completed, we will make sure you all get it and read it.
- **Administrative Intake Support Specialist**
 - 10 cases, thus far.
 - The case report is very straightforward.
 - You have all been added to PHRC's mailing list. An email was sent this morning to let you know to add the 2 email addresses where the mail will be coming from, to prevent them from ending in the spam folder.
 - There has been talk between myself and director Twomey about making IDs for the Commissioners. Laminated with all the information needed to promote yourself as well as HRC. I need from all of you a headshot picture preferably in a light-colored background or wall.
 - The HRC survey has been translated into Creole.
- **Housing Evictions Counselor:**
 - One case had to be referred to the YCPD.
 - Outreach events have been a team effort between Dir. Twomey, Commissioner Richardson and me.
 - We've had 2 consecutive invitations from the Health Bureau to different trainings. And they have offered to cover all costs.
 - Tomorrow, I start a mediation training that will be 3 days long.

- Director, Saymara and I have been working on a project to get in touch with the schools, we've encountered that many of them don't have a DEI dept.
- I have also made it possible to check out the different magistrates and will be able to assist to some of the eviction hearings they have. It will help me to learn more about the process.

Unfinished Business: *Commissioner Rhodes*

- No Report

New business:

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Adjournment of CYHRC meeting: 7:06 pm

- **Motion:** Commissioner A. Banks
- **Second:** Commissioner M. Edmondson
- **Vote:** Unanimous

The next CYHRC meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 18th, 2024, at 6:00 pm