



**HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION
AGENDA
May 26, 2016 at 3 p.m.
City Hall, 222 Meigs Street**

CALL TO ORDER

ROLL CALL

Jennifer Washington - Chairperson, Dora Grant – Vice Chairperson,
Charlene Adams, Dannie Edmon, Joe Hayberger, Ted Huston,
Dan Leavell, Beverly Newell-Hancock, Dominic Wells

INTRODUCTION

Justin Harris, Law Director

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

April 28, 2016

CURRENT BUSINESS

**Eric Wobser, City Manager
EEOC Report & Neighborhood Outreach Coordinator Position**

OLD BUSINESS

2016 Budget

Stars & Stripes Celebration (Sign-up Sheet)

NEW BUSINESS

ADJOURNMENT

NEXT MEETING

June 23, 2016 at 3 p.m.

Chairperson Jennifer Washington called the meeting to order at 4:33 p.m.

The Clerk called the Roll and the following members responded: Jennifer Washington, Charlene Adams, Dannie Edmon, Joe Hayberger, Ted Huston, Dan Leavell, Beverly Newell-Hancock and Dominic Wells

MEMBERS ABSENT: Dora Grant

STAFF PRESENT: Naomi Twine - Commission Liaison, Kelly Kresser – Clerk and John Orzech – Police Chief

GUEST PRESENT: Sheriff Paul Sigsworth

CURRENT BUSINESS

Chairperson Jennifer Washington **welcomed Charlene Adams** and she (Charlene) provided a brief introduction and said she is happy to have been appointed to the HRC and hopes to be able to assist in relationships between city staff members and persons in the community.

Upon motion of Joe Hayberger and second of Dan Leavell, the members voted to approve the Minutes of the March 24 meeting, with one correction noted, and dispense with the formal reading. The Chairperson declared the motion passed.

Chief John Orzech said when he learned the **mental illness aspect** concerning those persons who our law enforcement officers come into contact was brought up by the HRC, he asked Sheriff Paul Sigsworth to attend this meeting with him as incarcerating persons who should really be taken to a mental hospital has also been a concern of his.

Sheriff Paul Sigsworth said it has been increasingly difficult during the past three to four years to get those needing mental health treatment into a mental health facility due to more stringent requirements. The facility in Toledo, Ohio, is closest to Erie County and covers 22 Counties in Northwest Ohio; there are 120 beds available at this facility with 40 beds set aside for individuals considered “in crisis”. This facility always has a waiting list and deputies have been turned away at the door by staff. There is a perception if persons with mental health issues are in the Erie County Jail rather than in the emergency room, these persons will be “contained”, but Sheriff Sigsworth said he feels they need to be in a mental health facility as this causes much difficulty for him and his staff. Currently, mental health response training is offered, but he believes this 40-hour crisis intervention training should be made mandatory at the Police Officer Training Academy. Locally, Judge Ty Tone contacted the State of Ohio about the fact the Toledo facility has turned persons away who have been sent there because of court ordered admissions. Ted Huston asked if these persons are committing criminal acts and Sheriff Sigsworth said some are charged, but they are not convicted. In the past, there were facilities in Tiffin and Lima, but these are no longer operational and had well documented cases of

abuse. Persons with mental issues pose a risk to themselves, to law enforcement professionals and to the public. Ted Huston asked if the state legislature stopped providing dollars to assist persons in crisis and Sheriff Sigsworth said he met with Senator Gardner about approved increases made in the state budget, but learned this money had been earmarked for mental health services in our state prisons, not locally. Dan Leavell asked if mandating the 40-hour training and adding additional periodic training would be beneficial. Sheriff Sigsworth said de-escalation training techniques help to avoid getting to the point where these persons are beyond being controlled and then must be placed in a special chair and strapped down. The hope is when this means is used, the person will fall asleep within a couple of hours (the maximum time permitted in a chair at one time), and then they are less agitated. Dominic Wells asked if a person has to agree to treatment when a person is taken into custody and Sheriff Sigsworth said this is a two-part answer. They usually try to get the person to go voluntarily for treatment, but they also have the power to take them into custody, make an arrest and then transport them to a medical facility for treatment.

Chief Orzech said cadets are provided basic training titled Mental Health Responses, a 40-hour crisis intervention/training, regarding care for mentally challenged persons. In addition, ten SPD officers attended this training in 2015. In 2016, this training requirement will be 40 hours with two hours of mandatory de-escalation training. Joe Hayberger asked about the continuing education requirement and Sheriff Sigsworth said the requirement is 11 hours this year for de-escalation, but only two hours of mental health training. Charlene Adams said the long-term goal is to increase the number of beds available, but asked what could be done in the short-term. As the Director of the Center for Cultural Awareness, Charlene said they have started a program to assist persons when released from jail to provide peer support in getting to appointments, taking medications and other things. Sheriff Sigsworth said unfortunately, this conduct is being criminalized because of the current conditions and advocacy is a very important piece which will help. Ted Huston asked if there are statistics we can use to show the need for additional beds with our State Representatives and State Senators. Sheriff Sigsworth said the Director of the Department of Rehabilitation & Corrections released statistics showing approximately fifty percent of those incarcerated in state prisons have mental health issues. He estimates approximately 80% of those in the Erie County Jail may have mental health or co-existing mental health conditions. Jennifer Washington asked Ted Huston if he would help to gather information and statistics for the HRC to consider this issue at a later date and Ted Huston indicated he could do this.

Jennifer Washington said Chief Orzech recently introduced **six new Police Officers** in his department and noted none of them were from the City of Sandusky. John Orzech said his Officers fall under the city's Civil Service Rules and a standard test is given in accordance with these rules. Last year, the city reached out to use the National Testing Network to try and get a larger pool of candidates. There was not a large turnout from Sandusky and recruitment was done to try and get more minority candidates to take the test. Dan Leavell said despite efforts made to recruit minorities, he understands only one minority (a female) was hired and no

African Americans. Further, he believes we may be headed toward having all/only white candidates apply. John Orzech and Sheriff Sigsworth both noted this is not just a Sandusky problem and Police Departments across the country are experiencing the same issue. Dannie Edmon asked if it would be possible to change from hiring via Civil Service; Ted Huston said the Civil Service process historically has been fair and we may end up with something worse if we try to change it. Dannie Edmon said he also has concern with residency not being required for Police Officers as people who do not live in a particular community may not care as much about it. Chief Orzech said approximately ten years ago, the State of Ohio ruled residency as unconstitutional and is why it is no longer a requirement. Ted Huston said it would be good to get into the school system with a training and recruitment program for law enforcement. Dan Leavell thanked Chief Orzech for his efforts in creating new Community Impact Officers and believes this is a very progressive idea for the community. John Orzech said this program is official after May 1 and measures are in place to ensure it is working for the community, and he has already had great feedback.

OLD BUSINESS

Jennifer Washington said a memorandum was distributed by Naomi Twine and wanted to address once more the **status of Jerry Garrett as Executive Director versus Consultant**. The memo stated after consulting with Dennis Murray and Eric Wobser, the title will not be changed and further, if an Executive Director was sought, this position would have to go through appropriate hiring channels. In the end, this may mean Jerry Garrett would not be retained as all qualified candidates would have to be considered. Dominic Wells said Jerry Garrett is still providing consulting services and the title is a technicality; we should set this aside and focus on other things. Dannie Edmon said the city's Code of Ordinances should be followed naming Jerry Garrett as the Executive Director. Joe Hayberger said the HRC members made their position clear and the city has expressed its desire to keep Jerry's title as Consultant and he (Jerry) will do the job regardless. Ted Huston said the City Commission has spoken but questioned the ramifications of not following the Code of Ordinances. Dan Leavell said regardless of the title, Jerry Garrett will be performing the same duties, but the HRC should not proceed with business as usual while the ordinance states his title should be Executive Director and there is no reason **not** to change this. Charlene Adams said she will abstain from the discussion as she was not part of it previously. Beverly Hancock-Newell said it is clear what the city's Code says and the Commissioners should follow the law. Dan Leavell said the City Commission recently offered the position of Law Director to a person who refused the position, and the city then asked one of the Search Committee members to take the job and this precedence has already been set (to not seek other candidates). Jennifer Washington then said the discussion will be closed since a decision seems to have been made and noted Jerry Garrett has, and will continue, to do an outstanding job. Dan Leavell said the HRC members should poll the City Commissioners and ask them why Jerry Garrett cannot be their Executive Director and Jennifer Washington said this has been decided.

Jennifer Washington said a **budget of \$10,000** was set for the HRC and asked how the members

would like to utilize this money. Joe Hayberger suggested it has been proposed \$1,800 of this be utilized for Balin & Associates (for training), and \$6,000 could be used again as the amount for Jerry Garrett's services, leaving \$2,200 for other items. Ted Huston said the Budget Committee can look at this and bring back a recommendation for the members to consider.

NEW BUSINESS

Jennifer Washington asked **Charlene Adams to replace Harvey Heys on the Community Organization Planning Committee** as a new member.

Jennifer Washington said **Eric Wobser will be at the May 26 HRC meeting** to speak about the Neighborhood Consultant position, Neighborhood Initiatives and the equal employment statistics for the City of Sandusky.

Jennifer Washington said a **new roster** was distributed with contact information for all of the members, including new member Charlene Adams.

Ted Huston asked the members to consider **changing the time of the meetings back to 3 p.m.** on the same dates already established. The members concurred, and the Chairperson announced the meeting times are adjusted, beginning with the May 26 meeting, to 3 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion of Ted Huston and second of Joe Hayberger, the members voted to adjourn at 5:50 p.m. The Chairperson declared the motion passed.

Attest: Kelly L. Kresser, CMC
Date: ____/____/____

Jennifer Washington, Chairperson
Date: ____/____/____