

**Chairperson Jennifer Washington called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m.**

**The Clerk called the Roll and the following members responded: Dominic Wells, Dannie Edmon, Joe Hayberger, Dora Grant, Jennifer Washington and Dan Leavell. Also in attendance: Ted Huston (3:07 p.m.), Charlene Adams (3:16 p.m.) and Bev Hancock-Newell (4 p.m.).**

**STAFF PRESENT:** Naomi Twine - Commission Liaison, Kelly Kresser – Clerk, Justin Harris – Law Director, Trevor Hayberger – Assistant Law Director, Eric Wobser – City Manager and Jerry Garrett - Consultant.

**INTRODUCTION:** Jennifer Washington introduced Justin Harris who is the city's new Law Director.

#### **CURRENT BUSINESS**

**Upon motion of Joe Hayberger and second of Dan Leavell, the members voted to approve the Minutes of the April 28 meeting, with one correction noted, and dispense with the formal reading. The Chairperson declared the motion passed.**

Eric Wobser said the **Human Relations Commission (HRC) 2016 budget** includes \$10,000 for consulting services by Jerry Garrett so he can continue to seek and provide training for the members.

Eric Wobser said the city posted a **job description for the position of Neighborhood Outreach Coordinator** which was an outcome of the nearly year-long strategic planning process. After posting this job and interviewing candidates, Talon Flohr was offered the position and is currently in the process of completing pre-employment screening. Dan Leavell asked if this will change Jerry Garrett's role with the HRC and Eric Wobser said Jerry Garrett can continue performing consultant duties for the HRC. Talon Flohr was hired to perform duties for all of the city's boards and commissions in addition to working with other programs such as Conestoga and Block Watches. Dan Leavell asked why there has been hesitancy to appoint an Executive Director for the HRC as the city is defying its own ordinances and by-laws by not doing so. Eric Wobser said his understanding is there has not been an Executive Director since the establishment of the HRC in the 1960's. There will now be access to two persons for the HRC this year and no decisions have yet been made for beyond 2016. Ted Huston said he is mystified that \$24,000 budget was submitted, \$20,000 was approved for the 2015 budget because the city said it did not have enough money, yet a Neighborhood Outreach Coordinator has been hired. The HRC has been trying to obtain additional money to do specific things and has some good ideas. Eric Wobser said this position was created to perform a number of duties for different neighborhood initiatives as well as to fulfill other obligations and assist the HRC as necessary. The HRC budget far exceeds any other city board or commission and no others have a consultant. Eric Wobser said he understands the questions and hopes the HRC members will

work with the city. Dannie Edmon asked if the HRC's budgeted amount for 2016 will go toward funding this new position and Eric Wobser said the HRC has been allotted \$10,000 this year which includes \$6,000 for consulting services with Jerry Garrett, \$1,800 for training and \$2,000 for miscellaneous expenses. Dannie Edmon said the HRC is supposed to have an Executive Director and Eric Wobser said the Neighborhood Outreach Coordinator will act as a liaison to the HRC and is not meant to usurp the position of Executive Director. Naomi Twine said it is important to remember the HRC is the only city board/commission with a budget and the city is still assessing this and working toward gaining an understanding of the function of the HRC. The city is providing resources for the HRC. Dan Leavell said he has been told for several years there are no funds to hire an Executive Director and suggested he perhaps was misled as there is money to hire a Consultant. Dan Leavell asked if the city will commit to hiring an Executive Director for the HRC in the future and Naomi Twine said she has no control over previous decisions, nor can she make this commitment at this time.

Eric Wobser said a report was distributed regarding the number of minority employees working for the City of Sandusky and said he is disappointed by these numbers and they are unacceptable. The city needs to ensure it is hiring the best person(s) for the job and that our hires are representative of the city's demographics. The city made a concerted effort to increase diversity in its workforce and was successful in recruiting minorities during the most recent Civil Service exam. The Police, Law, Water and Community Development Departments have all increased their minority employees this year. Dominic Wells asked the total number of employees and the total number of minorities. Eric Wobser said when this report was prepared, there were 226 employees and ten percent of them were minorities. According to the last U.S. Census data, the city is made up of 25% minorities so we still have a way to go. Dan Leavell thanked Eric Wobser for coming today and answering some of the questions he has on his mind. Kelly Kresser will follow up with contact information for Talon Flohr once he has started working.

Talon Flohr said he grew up in Sandusky and graduated from Sandusky High School where he was involved in student government. He graduated from The Ohio State University majoring in political science, specializing in American Government. Talon has always wanted to return to Sandusky and also served on the 2015 Charter Review Committee and said he is here to help.

#### **2016 BUDGET**

Dannie Edmon said the Budget Committee met and is proposing the 2016 budget for the HRC as follows:

Consulting Fees	\$7,000.00
Travel & Training	500.00
Supplies & Materials	1,000.00
Public Programs	<u>1,500.00</u>
TOTAL	\$10,000.00

The HRC requested \$20,000 last year for consulting fees and Jerry Garrett only worked 92 hours which totaled \$6,000. An additional 150 hours of time could be billed if this line item was raised to \$7,000. The public programs will include hiring Balin & Associates to provide training specifically to members of the HRC for *Anatomy of Diversity*, and offering training for citizens for *Anatomy of Prejudice*. Jerry Garrett will contact Balin & Associates to see if they will use Sandusky as a test program and assist in reintroducing the Human Relations Commission to the community. Ted Huston said the HRC will now be forced to obtain grant money to help with what the city will not provide. Dan Leavell said they should approach the city first for additional funding before requesting outside/grant funds. Jerry Garrett said the chances of obtaining grant money for the HRC and their mission are very good. Charlene Adams said they can also partner with other entities such as Firelands Regional Medical Center or Cedar Point to provide in-kind services such as meeting room(s), food, etc.

**Upon motion of Joe Hayberger and second of Ted Huston, the members voted to accept the budget as presented by the Budget Committee. Roll call on the motion: Yeas: Dominic Wells, Dannie Edmon, Joe Hayberger, Ted Huston, Dora Grant, Jennifer Washington, Dan Leavell and Charlene Adams. Abstain: Bev Hancock-Newell.**

#### **OLD BUSINESS**

Ted Huston indicated he is still putting information together regarding **mentally ill persons who are in police custody** and has nothing to report tonight.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

Jerry Garrett said there recently was an **incident on West Adams Street** and a home was spray painted with profanity and a male organ. Jerry Garrett questioned whether this issue should be addressed by the HRC and to consider discussing it. There is more going on with this than what was published in the newspaper and a public records report alleges the victim has used racial slurs herself in the past. This is a detriment to the community and part of the HRC's duties and responsibilities include "to do and accomplish all things feasible and practical which will eliminate and eradicate all practices of discrimination against individuals because of differences including but not limited to race, color, creed, national origin, ancestry, gender, sexual orientation, economic status, age or disabilities." It is the responsibility of the HRC to investigate, through their own initiative, or based upon complaints received. The Police Department's investigation is at an impasse as the guilty party cannot be identified and asked if the HRC members should simply let this go. Dan Leavell said if the individual or individuals who are victimized file a complaint, the HRC should investigate and make a determination whether to pursue it. If determined valid, mediation can be scheduled with both parties toward resolution. Jennifer Washington said she does not feel the HRC should be drumming up business, but the victim in this case could be made aware the HRC is here for him or her. Dominic Wells said members can reach out and let people know the HRC is here for them, but should not get involved simply to be part of an issue if it is unnecessary. Dannie Edmon said the HRC has no subpoena power or authority to do anything with this. Joe Hayberger said he is

hopeful Balin & Associates might be successful for the HRC and direction can be provided for the members about their role and can prove its worth. Ted Huston said this issue involves destruction of property and should be handled by the Police Department. Dora Grant said this is a criminal act and is not for the HRC's consideration as they have no authority. Charlene Adams said the HRC has nothing to offer in this particular instance and is a criminal activity. Bev Hancock-Newell said the HRC does not know its purpose, but the criminal offense is not the only aspect of the issue. Dannie Edmon said the HRC needs to be careful how they approach things. Justin Harris said he has been tasked with looking at the ordinances for city boards and commissions and helping to define their roles and relationships. There is no harm in the HRC reaching out to individuals who have experienced discrimination and trying to eradicate discrimination and bridge relationships with citizens in the city. Joe Hayberger said the HRC's mission statement contains its purpose. Dan Leavell said the HRC needs procedures concerning investigating issues rather than the duties being dictated as they go along. Ted Huston said the Police Department has investigated this issue and do not know who painted this house and therefore, the HRC cannot help with this and there is no reason to look into it. Jennifer Washington said after Balin & Associates make their presentation, the HRC can discuss this, and its role in the future, more in-depth.

Jennifer Washington said a **signup sheet was distributed for the Stars & Stripes celebration** and asked everyone to help as they are able. Jennifer Washington asked Joe Hayberger and Dominic Wells to make corrections and update the HRC brochures so they can be distributed at this and other events.

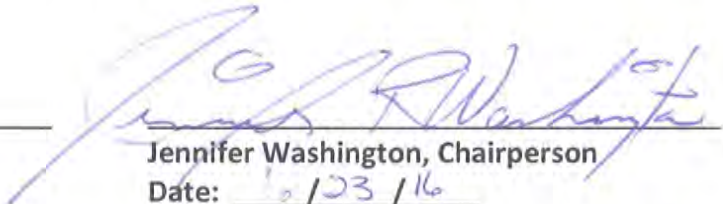
#### ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion of Joe Hayberger and second of Ted Huston, the members voted to adjourn at 4:41 p.m. The Chairperson declared the motion passed.



Attest: Kelly L. Kresser, CMC

Date: 6/23/16



Jennifer Washington, Chairperson

Date: 6/23/16