

**NEW JERSEY HUMAN RELATIONS COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING**

May 20, 2015

The regular meeting of the New Jersey Human Relations Council was on held May 20, 2015, at the New Jersey State Police Museum, NJ State Police Headquarters, State Police Drive E, West Trenton, NJ 08628.

HRC Officers and Appointed Public Members in attendance were as follows: Tawfig Barqawi, Kay Delp, Tulsi Maharjan, Lou Manzi, Richard Rivera, and Joe Santagata.

Those serving on the Council and guests in attendance were the following: Sean Dalton, Philip Freeman, Gabrielle Gallagher, Valerie Gurba, Edward Haas, Eli Honig, Tonya Hopson, Christopher Iu, Leila Lawrence, Rowena Madden, Laura Morana, Joanne Reilly (MHANJ guest speaker), Chuck Stein.

Those serving on the Advisory Board and guests in attendance were the following: Jahnbas Almas, Pauline Bey, Mahonrry Hidalgo, Steve Landfield, Yumiko Mishima, Karen Positan, and Reisa Sweet.

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Chairperson Richard Rivera called the meeting to order at 10:10 a.m. All assembled recited the Pledge of Allegiance. Tulsi Marhajan requested a moment of silence for the 8500 earthquake victims in Nepal.

Open Public Meeting Act Statement

Chairperson Richard Rivera referred to the Public Meeting Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et. seq. and the posting of a notice of the meeting in the newspapers.

General Announcements

New members and guests introduced themselves: Jahnbas Almas, Hudson County HRC, and Tulsi Maharjan, Somerset County HRC, who announced that the Somerset County HRC will be hosting an Asian American Festival on June 7th.

Approval of Minutes

March 18, 2015 meeting minutes were approved.

Chairperson's Report

Rich introduced today's guest speaker, Joanne Reilly, Assistant COO of the Mental Health Association of New Jersey. Over the last two months, he has contacted Senator Sweeney's office and Speaker Prieto's office regarding budget funding for the HRC. He attended the US Department of Justice, Community Relations Service, West Ward community meeting. He reported that the HRC will be modeled after the US Dept. of Justice, Community Relations Service, which will assist when with dealing with human relations issues. E-mails will be going out to community based organizations. This council was instrumental in setting up a meeting in Newark regarding the Consent Decree, which has not been finalized. There have been meetings

by the Newark, NJ Mayor's office regarding his Executive Order on a civilian complaint review board, as well as other DOJ meetings within the community. The Community Relations Service is setting up meetings to get community input for the actual letter of the Consent Decrees. The HRC set up the last meeting, which has not happened yet. This meeting was approved by the Unified Vailsburg Services Organization in Newark based out of the West Ward. An E-mail is expected to go out within the next two weeks. It is predominately for community based organizations, other stake holders and clergy leaders in Newark. The HRC is welcome to participate and see what the process has been like. Elie Honig and the AG's office has been meeting with NJ Communities Forward which is running simultaneously and planning to go state wide. Elie, Director for Division of Criminal Justice reported that he has a meeting on 5/21/15 with New Jersey Communities Forward, NOBLE, the NAACP and leaders of various minority communities to discuss where they are at. They will also have another meeting in June.

Rich reported that there has been a great response from different community people regarding shooting response, body cameras and other related issues. They are looking for different funding sources, including a Federal program. The County Prosecutors Offices' are applying for Federal grants: there is a possibility of the AG's office subsidizing those programs. Lou Manzi asked what the cost of body cams are. Elie said they run between \$500 to \$1500 dollars. Tasers are affixed to the body-cam unit. He attended a meeting a few weeks ago with the Camden Police Department and various other police departments who already have body cameras. There are only 8 or 9 departments in the state who have them. Various prosecutors were at the meeting including Prosecutor Sean Dalton, the USAO, the AG, Elie, and the towns of Evesham, Willingboro and Paulsboro. They gave presentations on the problems and successes they have had. The cameras are not cost prohibitive; the expense is in tagging, storing, retention, retrieval etc., which is the infrastructure of maintaining the data once collected. The savings are staggering in using them. There are some negative issues and concerns, such as privacy issues. Each police department must tailor their policies to each community's needs. The AG's office may issue foundational requirements.

Rich met with the Mayor of Vineland regarding use of force issues. There was a case in Vineland, the Philip White/death in custody case, which was captured on video. At that meeting, Rich was representing a shareholder group. This group had collected and compiled data and then presented this data to the Mayor. This meeting was relative to what the NJHRC is trying to accomplish within its statutes. Rich contemplated what role he, Rich Rivera, can play in these types of meetings with different Government leaders, as he is affiliated with various stakeholder groups.

Secretary's Report

Kay Delp, Secretary, reminded everyone of the sign-in sheet. The Education Committee has appointed co-chairs, Laura Morana and Mahonrry Hidalgo. The Community Outreach Committee has no one appointed yet. Pauline Bey has sent out an e-mail, but has not had any responses yet. The Policy and Reports Committee reported that Philip Freeman is their chair and Edward Haas is the co-chair. Kay reminded all that future event notices for website posting on the NJHRC Community Bulletin Board need to go directly to her as a PDF or a link. Kay listed the Policy and

Report Committee members. The committees and members names will be posted on the website. Rich Rivera had made contact with Rosa Farias, legislative assistant from Senator Sweeney's office, regarding funding, and at Rich's request, Kay had forwarded to Rosa a synopsis of past NJHRC spending and its approved budgets from 2000 through 2008. Kay read aloud her e-mail to Rosa, and told the Council of Rosa's response phone call to her. Rosa stated that Senator Sweeney's office would forward a request for funding to the Governor, but that it was "all up to the Governor" after that. There is a pressing need for an Administrative Assistant who is available in an increased capacity, and Kay asked Elie if he would respond to this request at a future meeting.

Floor Opened

Elie Honig stated the NJHRC should collect data and gather facts, and not to inject ourselves in on-going criminal investigations. Systemic studies can be relevant. He advised that members should vet information thru the Committee. Rich Rivera asked if the individuals from the HRC can engage with officials and not get approval from the full body. Tawfiq Barqui stated since the HRC elected Rich as a Chairperson, and as an official for the NJHRC, he should be able to speak with those groups. Elie said it is best if you let everyone in the HRC know what is going on via e-mail.

Laura Morana suggested that through committee structure, particularly Law Enforcement and Community Relations, this should be an area of focus. Tawfiq said their mission is to talk about prevention by talking about the whole issue and education.

Rich spoke of Leah Devieu and the death of her uncle, John DeValle, in Elizabeth, Union County, who was shot and killed in June, 2014. Family members had issues with the Prosecutor's Office for failing to notify them about the process and a lack of communication between the Prosecutor's Office and victims' families. Sean Dalton stated that each county has a Prosecutor's Office unit that handles this. Elie said that he and Prosecutor Dalton can send a notification to each Prosecutor's office reminding them how to handle complaints.

Rowena Madden stated the Secretary of State's office utilizes summer interns in her office. She will reach out to the Governor's office regarding the HRC using an intern to help with some of the Council's administrative work.

Tulsi Marhajan asked if someone could send all Prosecutors' offices a request for information about contact information for each HRC in their County; Sean said he will send out an e-mail to all Prosecutors and request their local HRC info.

Rich brought up the by-laws discussion and the April 23, 2015 memo from Philip Freeman and Edward Haas regarding quorum revision recommendations. Philip Freeman stated the memo outlines reducing the number of people needed for a quorum to vote. It would include public members, ex-officios and reducing the # of members from 15-9. Additionally, the Executive Committee should function with officers and public members and include 1 advisory board member to reduce the Executive Committee from 10-7. That would ensure fair representation. The reduction in ex-officio members would ensure they have sufficient numbers to conduct

business and have a quorum. Ed Haas stated that reducing the quorum requirements would allow voting to be carried out on pertinent issues.

Lou Manzi asked if 9 members are too many for a quorum. Phil Freeman said 9 votes would work for a quorum. Elie is in agreement with lowering the number of the quorum. He asked if the number of the quorum could be 12. 9 people would be $\frac{1}{4}$ of the membership. A quorum is usually one half of the body plus 1. He is agreeable with lowering the quorum, but he is more comfortable with $\frac{1}{2}$ the membership plus 1. Rowena Madden asked if $\frac{1}{4}$ of the slots would be filled with the current compliment of people. Lou Manzi asked for a vote on the number of slots and to track the next 3 to 4 meetings to see if this is a good number or should be adjusted. Motion was approved by all.

Ed Haas stated that this lets ex-officios vote with public members. By-laws have not been corrected yet to reflect the number of votes for a quorum. Phil Freeman said that the Council should still consider allowing advisory board members serve as proxies. A show of hands from the 15 voting members was requested to adopt the proposal to change the quorum from 15 to 9. Consequently, Lou Manzi proposed the quorum should be changed from 15 people to 9. Tawfiq seconded the motion. The motion carried by 12 yes, 3 no. Elie stated that he was ok with dropping the quorum from 15 to 12, but still didn't agree with dropping it to 9.

Advisory Board Report

Steve Landfield , Chair – his board members will help to contact various HRC's and take a pro-active approach to reaching out to identify and reactivate them and to get them involved. Sean Dalton will reach out to all of the County HRCs. They have also decided to plan and arrange the HRC leadership conference for next year. A suggestion was made to add the Twitter account to the home page to encourage public attendance to the meetings. All information should go to Kay to be posted to the HRC web site.

Committee Reports

Education Committee – Laura Morano, Chair – they have 12 members and they will outline their focus after today's meeting. One of the members will be meeting today with the Commissioner of Education, David Hespe, regarding helping the HRC with Education.

Community Outreach Committee - Karen Positan, spokesperson – they are in the process of coordinating and appointing a chairperson(s).

Policy Committee – Philip Freeman, Chair – his report was given earlier regarding the quorum.

General Discussion

Lou Manzi revisited the suggestion by Rowena Madden for utilizing interns for next year and posting to the HRC web site the applications for interns. Philip Freeman said his office uses interns. He will write a job description for the intern positions. Tulsi Marhajan suggested a description for high-school students to intern with us.

Joanne Reilly – (guest speaker) stated that if there is a specific Master’s program in a school, and you provide the information to the Chair of that Department they will post the job and make opportunities available in advance of the program for their students. Some of them could give the student credit for the participation.

Jahnbas Almas suggested a service project curriculum meeting which would give students credit for interning and also linking this project to the students local HRC.

Mahonrry Hidalgo asked where would the students report.

Laura Morano will send application packets to colleges throughout the State.

Old Business – no old business.

New Business and County Reports

Reisa Sweet, Ocean County HRC - spoke of a program being offered in Ocean County “ A Different Normal – Transgender 101” she also distributed handouts regarding this program.

Karen Positan, Union County HRC - spoke about a “Train the Trainer” program scheduled for September 22, 2015. She explained that it helped kids realize that cops are not bad. She also attended a foreclosure forum in April. There will be more in the future. 17 people were honored with awards. Police and Teens Together Program.

Pauline Bey, Camden County HRC - June 2nd the Mayor of Camden and members of the community will get together from the community and the Jewish community and the event will be in Voorhees at the Jewish Community Center. On October 13, 2015 there will be a conference and the information will be posted on the HRC web site.

Tulsi Marhajan, Somerset County HRC – 2 weeks ago they held an International Peace day with 20 groups and Craig Sashihara, Director, Division on Civil Rights. He distributed handouts for an Asian American Festival to be held on June 7, 2015, and an Earthquake Relief Program for the people of Nepal.

Presentation

Joanne Reilly, Assistant COO, Mental Health Association of New Jersey discussed mental health and available programs that are available to communities in the State of New Jersey by her non-profit organization. The presentation centered on “Recovering and Moving Forward”- Annual Report for 2013, and included a comprehensive folder with all pertinent and contact information. Another statewide call-in program that was just started in January, 2015, is called “Connect for Recovery”; it has fielded over 1000 calls to date. The premise is based on peer-assistance.

Adjournment

A motion was made and approved to adjourn the meeting at 12:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kay Delp

Kay Delp, Secretary, HRC

In conjunction with Valerie Gurba, AGO liaison administrative support.

Next Meeting August 19th, 2015