

Meeting of New Jersey Human Relations Council

July 17, 2019

The meeting of the New Jersey Human Relations Council was held on July 17, 2019 at the Richard J. Hughes Justice Complex, 25 Market Street, Fourth Floor, West Wing, Trenton, New Jersey, 08628.

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance: The meeting was called to order by Ashton Burrell at 10:15.
Reading of Public Meeting Act.

Each person present introduced themselves.

HRC Officers in Attendance: Ashton Burrell, Chairman, Yumiko Mishima, Vice Chairwoman, Karen Positan, Treasurer.

Those serving on the Council and guests in attendance were as follows: Bryn Whittle, David Leonardis, Donald Beetham, Francis Koch, Jennie Lamon, Joseph Santagata, Kimberly Holmes, Paula Rodriguez Rust, Stephen Hobson, and Theresa Cannon.

Chairpersons report: Ashton intends the HRC become much stronger. There is the potential to do great things. Hoping we start on time in September; continue to pursue all being in one accord.

The presentation was moved to the end to give David Leonardis more time to arrive.

Advisory Board Report was tabled until the next meeting.

Old Business: The vacant secretary position was brought up. It was reported that Phil Freeman, who knows the rules, has retired from his position but will still come to the meetings. No one on the Council has yet volunteered for the secretary position. Non-member Donald Beetham has taken the minutes the past few meetings. There was a question whether Mr. Beetham might be made a full member of the Council in order to fill the position. It was suggested that the unfilled posts on the Council be filled.

New Business - Conference Planning: The 2019 conference will be held in the STEM Building on the Kean University Campus on Wednesday, November 20. If the Council is able to provide lunch, the conference will run from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm; if no lunch then the meeting will be 9:00 am to 1:00 pm. The facility is being provided for free but Kean requires the use of their own vendors for breakfast and lunch. Breakfast for 125 people would be \$1000 and a box lunch \$1500. If there are volunteers to set up, etc., the cost can be \$300. It was noted that Kean has a Human Relations Institute and there was a suggestion to ask for volunteers

from students there. The attendees are expected to come from law enforcement, Human relations, educators and community activists. Online registration will be through the State. The topic is BIAS; criminal reform will be the topic of the next conference.

The Bergen County Human Relations conference will also be on Implicit BIAS. It will be held at the Bergen Community College from 8:30-12:30 on October 22 with light breakfast. Rachel Godsil co-founder of the Perception Institute at Rutgers University Law School will be the main speaker. There is no charge for this conference.

The minutes were reviewed and approved with three name changes.

There was a discussion of potential speakers for the conference. Among the suggestions was David D'Amico from the Monmouth County Prosecutor's Office and Middlesex County Department of Corrections to introduce the topic- What is BIAS? Recommended for overviews included Dave Leonardis (overview of Legal Procedures), Lara Fong (Chief Diversity Officer, Attorney General's Office), Paulette Brown (ADA President), Robin Parker (Beyond Diversity Resource Center), Hester Agudiosi (Chief Diversity Officer for NJ), Elizabeth Riley-Williams (American Council on Diversity), and Veronica Allende (Attorney general's Office). Workshops were suggested but the space is not conducive to more than two or three at a time. It is important that there be a woman speaker. There should be time for a question and answer period. Please send any further suggestions to Val.

David Leonardis: is the Community Outreach Liaison; he meets with all the county prosecutors. An outreach liaison's duties include trying to make sure that all county efforts are coordinated and that everyone knows what everyone else is doing. Every prosecutor's office has its own community liaison.

To aid Human Relations and law enforcement work on the local or the county level, the Attorney General updated the BIAS investigation standards.

The Attorney General initiated the first update for the Investigation of BIAS Incidents since 2000. The focus was on three R's for police officers: The guidelines were released on April 5 and police training began April 8. BIAS crime incidents are up.

Recognizing a BIAS incident

Responding to a BIAS incident

Reporting a BIAS incident

Some are incidents rather than a crime; incidents includes name calling.

Incidents, as well as crimes, should be reported to the police. Members of the community should be encouraged to report. When notified, the police are required to fill out a BIAS incident report. There are no names but all particulars

are recorded. This provides the capability to connect dots. The full report goes to four places:

1. State Police Crime Reporting Unit
2. Respective County Prosecutor
3. NJ Homeland Security - make sure no connection to anything bigger
4. Division of Criminal Justice BIAS Crimes Unit

BIAS incidents are up since the reporting system took effect in the Spring. Some of this is due to the current climate but most of this likely is due to the new reporting requirements.

Every county prosecutor meets with the community.

BIAS incidents may seem insignificant. People do not realize they should report racial slurs. Law enforcement wants to know about it. In NJ a BIAS crime is called BIAS intimidation. Reporting allows officers to look for patterns. A pattern of BIAS incidents raises the incidents to a level of BIAS intimidation which is a BIAS crime. Some incidents raise to the level of intimidation which is a crime.

Not all incidents are crimes but all crimes are incidents.

These new rules put everyone on a an even playing field so that problems can be fixed. There was some discussion about getting the word out. There is a one page flyer on the Attorney general's website (<https://www.nj.gov/oag/bias/>). NJ now has the most comprehensive reporting program in the country.

For certain crimes a Police officer must notify the Office of Criminal justice immediately. if a BIAS incident involves a murder, arson, aggravated assault, or sexual assault, or if the perpetrator is a police officer, an organized hate group or if there is a risk of wide scale unrest, the Office must be notified immediately.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:37 pm.