

Human Rights Council
Friday, June 13, 2008
9th Street Office Building, 11th Floor
Conference Room
11:00 a.m.

Council Members Present: Jon D. Strother, Chairman; Dyana Mason, Parliamentarian; Members Charles Baugham; Donald O. Campen, Jr.; Carolina Espinal; Jagdish Singh; and Mary Studevart.

Staff Present: Sandra D. Norman, Director; Cora M. Billings, Deputy Director; and Timothy Wilson, Administration/Operations Manager.

Council's Attorney Present: Teri Miles, Senior Assistant Attorney General.

Guest: Dr. Amarjit Singh.

Call to Order and Adoption of Agenda and Minutes:

The Chairman called the meeting to order. Member Mason moved to adopt the draft agenda, seconded by Member Campen and the motion carried. Member Campen moved to adopt the draft minutes as presented from the February 8, 2008 meeting, seconded by Member Studevart and the motion carried.

Director's Report

Civil Rights Memorial Committee

- Ms. Norman is chairing the Sub-Committee on External Relations and Outreach and was recently given an additional task to organize the exhibit of memorabilia from the Civil Rights Movement that will be on display during the reception following the unveiling ceremony. Mr. Julian Bond and Dr. Nikki Giovanni will serve as honorary national chairs for this event. A symposium will be held the afternoon before.
- Ms. Norman serves as a trustee of the Friends Association for Children which services children ages 4 – 18. One of the various programs offered is the Youth Executive Exchange Program which orientates the teenagers about employment opportunities and office etiquette. An intern from this program will start at the Human Rights Council (HRC) the first of July.

Lawyers Weekly Article

- A case that was closed within the agency and proceeded to court, Robert Hale v. Anton Paar, was cited in an article of the Virginia Lawyers Weekly.

Relocation

- The agency will move to the corner of 8th and Main streets. The Department of Employment Dispute Resolution (EDR) will also relocate to the same building. EDR is another agency under the Secretary of Administration.
- Phones may be an issue upon transitioning to the new office site.
- Any IT issues including phone services will be addressed to the Virginia Information Technologies Agency (VITA) and should be resolved upon relocating.
- Office equipment will not be shared between the two (2) agencies.
- This location should work in the HRC's favor.

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)

- The office has already met the goal to close 25 cases.
- There will be a total of sixty (60) cases completed.

Quarterly Report of the Comptroller

- Ms. Norman reported that the agency was not referenced in the Report on Statewide Financial Management and Compliance for the Quarter ended March 31, 2008.
- The agency has currently maintained a 100% usage of credit card purchases versus the expensive practice of using paper vouchers and the printing of checks.
- Ms. Norman recognized Mr. Timothy Wilson, the Administration/Operations Manager, for maintaining the adherence of these compliance measures.

Brown Bag Series

- Guy Horsley, Senior Assistant Attorney General and agency counsel, will provide legal updates and training for Council staff once a month. Topics will concentrate on the bases the Council investigates such as race, religion, etc. This training is free to staff members and council members may attend.
- The next training date has not been scheduled and the next topic will be the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Annual Report

- Ms. Norman reported that the printing of the annual report will be delayed and then considered after the beginning of the upcoming fiscal year.

Chairman's Report

Appeal Process

- A discussion was held on step #2 of the Draft Amended Appeal Process Flow Chart.
- Among items discussed, council members requested that the Assistant Attorney General be available to them for questions regarding appeals.
- Also, panel assignments should include the panel chairperson's name and other panel members assigned.

Legislation Proposals

- The administration has not yet asked for legislative proposals for 2009; although when it does, Ms. Norman will ask for an amendment to the Virginia Human Rights Act to cover the basis of age for employers with 15 – 20 employees.

Virginia Association for Human Rights

- The Virginia Association for Human Rights (VAHR) will hold its annual conference June 20-21, 2008 in Virginia Beach. Council members and agency staff members are encouraged to attend.

Staunton Public Forum

- Copies of the forum's minutes will be sent to council members.
- Approximately 30 persons attended the forum.
- Overall, the forum was a great success.

Next Public Forum

- Member Espinal gave an overview of the venue for the next forum that is tentatively scheduled to be held in Northern Virginia.
- Issues that may be brought forth by citizens may include immigration and housing concerns.

New Business

Immigration

A brief discussion was held on the current affairs of immigration within the different areas of the state.

Acknowledgement of Guest

The Chairman recognized Dr. Amarjit Singh as a guest. Dr. Singh is a resident of Chesapeake.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 12:37 p.m.

Submitted by,

Jon Strother
Chairman

Timothy Wilson
Recorder