

**CEDAR RAPIDS CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION (CRCRC)**  
**MEETING MINUTES**  
**May 20, 2015 5:30 p.m.**  
Civil Rights Commission  
50 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue Bridge  
Cedar Rapids, IA 52401

**Commissioners Present:** Mr. Keith Rippy, Chair  
Ms. Salma Igram, Vice Chair  
Mr. Leland Freie  
Ms. Paulette Hall  
Ms. Laura O’Leary  
Mr. Robin Tucker  
Dr. Ruth White  
Mr. Keith Wiggins

**Commissioners Absent:** Dr. Emily Bowman  
Ms. Ashley Reynolds

**Staff Present:** Ms. LaSheila Yates, Executive Director  
Ms. Janet Abejo, Investigator  
Ms. Judy Goldberg, Investigator  
Mr. Johnny Alcivar Zuniga, Outreach Coordinator  
Ms. Alicia Abernathey, Administrative Assistant

**Guests:** Al Rowe, Bret Nilles, Ciuin Ferrin

**I. Call to Order**

Commissioner Rippy, Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:36 p.m.

**II. Roll Call/Introductions**

Commissioners, staff and guests introduced themselves.

**III. Public Response**

Ciuin Ferrin, O Porrajmos Education Society, stated she is waiting for a response as to whether or not commissioners are attending the Saint Sarah’s Day celebration at her house on May 26<sup>th</sup>.

Commissioner Rippy asked Judy Goldberg, Investigator, and Al Rowe, Kirkwood Community College, to introduce themselves.

**IV. Approval of Minutes from April Meeting**

Commissioner O’Leary moved to approve the minutes. Commissioner Igram seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

**V. Report from Chair**

*State of Equity Report*

Commissioner Rippy stated Al Rowe is present to facilitate the State of Equity work session. The Commission will create goals and devise a work plan.

### *Regional Performance Assessments*

Commissioner Rippy asked if there was anything Commissioners would like to add or adjust for the Commission as it relates to other commissions. Commissioner Rippy stated the public hearing and first reading of the commission size reduction was held May 12<sup>th</sup>.

## VI. **Committee Reports**

### *Outreach and Education*

Johnny Alcivar Zuniga, Outreach Coordinator, stated the committee met on May 11<sup>th</sup> and reviewed the monthly outreach report. Mr. Alcivar Zuniga stated the committee was going to create the FY16 Outreach Plan but it was tabled until their next meeting in order to coordinate the plan with the outcomes of the State of Equity work session.

Commissioner Freie arrived at 5:40 PM.

Commissioner White arrived at 5:42 PM.

### *Marion Civil Rights Commission Liaison*

Bret Nilles, Marion Liaison, stated the commission discussed upcoming trainings and Johnny will be providing Train-the-Trainer trainings to the commission. The commission is looking into holding an all-day retreat for the trainings and to work on setting goals for next year.

Commissioner Tucker stated the Marion Commission discussed how they will handle education once Johnny's position ends. They are looking into a breakout meeting for strategy planning.

Mr. Nilles stated the Marion Commission was made aware the Cedar Rapids Commission is downsizing from 11 members to 9 members.

## VII. **Director's Report**

LaSheila Yates, Executive Director, stated she would like to welcome the Commission's new Investigator, Judy Goldberg. Another new Investigator, Bernard Walther, will be joining the team on June 1<sup>st</sup>. Janet Abejo has been serving as the lead to provide the new investigators with adequate training. Ms. Yates stated the Commission will also have a summer intern and Janet is serving as the lead for the internship program.

Janet Abejo, Investigator, stated the intern went through the screening process and qualifies as he met the minimum GPA requirement. The intern is interested in law. Ms. Abejo stated the schedule for the intern is still currently being worked out but he will start sometime after June 8<sup>th</sup> and will be with the commission until the end of July.

Ms. Yates stated she had an interview with AmeriCorp Public Allies and passed round one of the process. Ms. Yates stated she is waiting on a contract but the position will start in October.

Ms. Yates stated several cases were transferred to the Iowa Civil Rights Commission for completion of investigation due to several organizational changes. All parties were notified of the transfers. Ms. Yates stated a table was included in the agenda packet outlining how many cases were transferred and the number that were Cedar Rapids cases versus Marion cases.

## VIII. **State of Equity Work Session**

Al Rowe, Kirkwood Community College, stated this is an informal discussion. Mr. Rowe asked the commissioners several questions in regards to the State of Equity of Report.

What have you heard about the report?

- Minorities are not equal in the schools.
- There needs to be more minorities in administration.

What were your thoughts about the report?

- It put things in writing that people were already thinking.
- Shock how much it existed.

What are your hopes from doing this report?

- Consistent approaches.
- Follow through with goals and objectives.
- Education is available more and is more equal.

What did you like about the report and summit?

- A broad group of people participated.
- People walked away having learned something.

What do you feel the Commission needs to do?

- Educate
- Recruit
- Improve
- Utilize programs
- Create new programs
- Define the role of the Commission – the role should not be in conflict with the mission
- Build partnerships
- Assist organizations with goals

Mr. Rowe stated the information should not be used as a hammer but should be used more as a flashlight. Using it as a flashlight will shine light on certain areas that need improvement.

Ms. Yates stated the Commission is currently working with the Cedar Rapids School District. Chair Rippy and Commissioner White have been involved in those meetings. Commissioner White stated they are heading toward a partnership with the school district and are making small measures of progress.

Mr. Rowe asked Commissioners to break into groups of two or three people and come up with goals they would like the Commission to have.

Commissioner White left the meeting at 6:58 PM.

Mr. Rowe, Ms. Yates and Commissioners discussed the State of Equity Report and goals the Commission would like to set as an outcome of the report. (See attached for work session notes).

Commissioner Rippy left the meeting at 7:05 PM.

## IX. **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted by Alicia Abernathy*