
Minutes Human Relations Commission September 8, 2015

Minutes of the HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION held on Tuesday, September 8, 2015, 6:00 P.M. at City Hall, 3rd Floor Conference Room, 31 East Fifth Street, Tempe, Arizona.

(MEMBERS) Present:

Hannah Auckland
Don Calender
Dino Castelli
Belinda Chiu
Armando Espinoza
Peter Hodgson
Christopher Houk
Isabel Hochhaus
Jay Scherotter

(MEMBERS) Absent:

Ira King Jr.
Jeanne Powers

Diversity Staff Present:

Rosa Inchausti, Diversity Director
Dee Hodson, Diversity Coordinator

Guests Present:

Tom Ryff, Tempe Police Chief
John Rush, Tempe Assistant Police Chief
Charles Cobbs, Tempe Police Community Affairs Specialist
Latif Ahmed, Community Member

Meeting convened at 6:03 P.M.

Commissioner Espinoza called the meeting to order and invited members of the public to address the Commission.

Agenda Item 1 - Public Appearances

No comments.

Agenda Item 2 - Consideration of Minutes: HRC – June 9, 2015 AND August 11, 2015 Minutes (Motion Required)

June 9, 2015 HRC Commission Minutes
Motion made by Commissioner Calender to ACCEPT minutes.
Second by Commissioner Scherotter.
Minutes unanimously APPROVED

August 11, 2015 HRC Commission Minutes
Motion made by Commissioner Scherotter to ACCEPT minutes.
Second by Commissioner Calender.
Minutes unanimously APPROVED

Agenda Item 3 - Tempe Police Presentation, 21st Century Policing - Chief Ryff and Assistant Chief Rush

Commissioner Espinoza welcomed Chief Ryff. Chief Ryff introduced twenty-two year police department veteran Assistant Chief Rush, who currently oversees patrol operations, and Tempe Police Community Affairs Specialist, Charles Cobbs. Assistant Chief Rush will probably continue to present to the HRC after Chief Ryff's impending retirement. Chief Ryff said he is proud to turn over the reins to the capable staff of Assistant Chief Rush and Charles Cobbs, in addition to Assistant Chief Angel Carbajal and Assistant Chief Brenda Buren.

Chief Ryff explained that the Tempe Police Department recognized the need to reinforce community interactions prior to the recent events in Ferguson. Chief Ryff reported the Tempe Police Department continues to receive high approval ratings in the Communication Satisfaction Survey. Chief Ryff attributed the rating to Tempe's highly trained police officers. Country-wide research showed national trends involving legitimacy and procedural justice. Chief Ryff explained that police must have the communities' support to be an effective police force. Tempe's Police Department brought in Michael Nila's Blue Courage to conduct training. Blue Courage training comes from a military background emphasizing re-training officers to be a guardian first and warriors only when needed. The police academy made changes to incorporate the Blue Courage philosophy. Chief Ryff said that the department is working to better support police officers emotionally, physically and spiritually.

Following the Ferguson incident, President Obama introduced a task force on 21st century policing. Chief Ryff handed out a 2 page document which was a quick overview of the very detailed March 2015 report. The report includes six "pillar" areas but leaves implementation up to individual departments. Chief Ryff explained that after reading the entire report, Tempe Police Department brainstormed to determine the next steps in executing the task force's ideas. Some parts of the report are being included in the police department's strategic plan to contain more accountability within the organization.

Chief Ryff reported that additional training has been conducted by ASU's Dr. Neal Lester. That training involved the understanding of bias and privilege, i.e. how to better police interactions with the minority community. Chief Ryff invited commissioners to attend this week's "fair and impartial training" conducted by Dr. Lorie Fridell, for Tempe's command officers. This training will be evaluated to determine if it should be expanded to the entire police force.

Assistant Chief Rush said the topic that has received the most attention is officer's use of force. Assistant Chief Rush explained that past training (i.e. firearm training, mental health training) has been very compartmentalized. The current police training in Tempe has those elements blended together. In this year's Advanced Officer training, scenarios are combining topics so that the total scope is better understood. The result is better overall outcomes. The national conversation has been centered on discovering what else could be done to avoid conflict versus what is allowed under the law. De-escalation strategies to avoid the use of force, will be emphasized in future trainings. The most important de-escalation strategy is community conversations which humanize police officers and increase trust in the police department.

Commissioner Houk asked what prompted Chief Ryff to focus on police health and safety before the Ferguson events occurred. Chief Ryff explained an article had intrigued him that discussed the negative effects a zero tolerance directive had on Pittsburgh neighborhoods. The predominantly African American communities became fractured and the citizens ultimately rebelled. When the Department of Justice (DOJ) suggested officers become part of the community by having conversations with the citizens, a positive change began to occur. Chief Ryff explained that he often uses the statement of "over policed and under protected" but that those needs to be appropriately balanced.

Commissioner Hodgson asked about the amount of DOJ funding that might be available and how the costs might affect Tempe. Chief Ryff explained the funding amount has yet to be determined. Assistant Chief Rush explained the implementation costs for different sized departments will vary immensely. For example, Assistant Chief Rush is aware that some Missouri police departments do not have the funds to send officers to any academy training.

Chief Ryff commended the work done by Charles Cobbs who is continuing to create and nurture community relationships. Chief Ryff added that it has been an honor to serve Tempe and that he is proud to leave the department with highly developed and professional staff.

Rosa concluded by saying that although 21st Century Policing may seem like a new initiative, the values and principles it embodies has been a part of the Tempe command force from the beginning. Thank you to Chief Ryff for your service.

Agenda Item 4 - Baitul-Aman Muslims for Life Blood Drive – Latif Ahmed

Latif Ahmed introduced the nationwide campaign, “Muslims for Life Blood Drive” in remembrance of September 11, 2001. Each year the blood drive collects approximately 10,000 pints of blood nationally. Latif reported that Arizona has two locations, one in Tucson and the other in Tempe. The Tempe event will be held Saturday, September 12, 2015, from 8:30am – 1pm at the LDS Chandler Church Gym at 1950 W. Galveston.

Latif said that with time people tend to forget. Next year in 2016, it will be the 15th anniversary of 9/11. Latif hopes that by working with additional faith and community groups, the 2016 blood drive will have a larger citywide involvement. Latif said holding a blood drive is a very relevant way to honor 9/11 because it is a life for a life.

Latif emphasized the need for additional interaction between different community events. Latif asked the HRC for suggestions in bringing different communities together. Latif said it is the communities’ responsibility to de-escalate interactions as well as the police officers duty, to increase positive interactions.

Rosa pointed out the positive relationship demonstrated by the blood drive being held at the LDS Church.

Agenda Item 5 - Challenge Day Update – Jay Scherotter

Commissioner Scherotter passed out documents updating the current list of dates, committed schools and volunteers. The first Tempe middle school to host a Challenge Day has been confirmed. Gilliland Middle School will participate on Wednesday, January 27, 2016. Commissioner Scherotter reported that Scottsdale Independent School District Superintendent Dr. David Peterson, will be sending a representative to volunteer at a Tempe Challenge Day. Dr. Peterson is interested in evaluating the program to possibly bring Challenge Day to Scottsdale high schools. Commissioner Scherotter encouraged each commissioner to participate by registering tonight or as soon as possible. Commissioner Scherotter reported Challenge Day Executive Director Dane Callihan, has committed to participate in one of the 2016 Tempe programs.

A. Lunch donation suggestions

Commissioner Scherotter reported that one lunch donation has been secured but seven additional lunches need to be acquired. Commissioner Scherotter asked commissioners for their ideas and assistance by possibly committing to research a lunch donation for a specific school. Commissioner Hochhaus suggested looking into the restaurants that currently support Tempe High School sport programs. Ideally lunch donations should be from a locally owned restaurant in close proximity to the high school. Donations would hopefully include utensils but HRC will purchase those if necessary. Drinks will be provided by water bottle donations which will be discussed at another time. Commissioner Scherotter will provide a video and information to use when soliciting donations.

The following commissioners volunteered to research lunch donations for these schools:

- McClintock HS – Commissioner Chiu & Commissioner Espinoza
- Corona or Marcos HS – Commissioner Castelli
- Compadre or Marcos HS – Commissioner Auckland
- Gilliland MS – Commissioner Houk
- Open school – Commissioner Hochhaus
- Mtn Pointe & Desert Vista – Commissioner Scherotter

Commissioner Chiu reported she had recently participated in an adult Challenge Day program in California. Challenge Day is continuing to expand their reach with regular programs now being held in Holland. Commissioner Chiu has suggested Challenge Day leaders as a possible speaker for the MLK Dinner.

Agenda Item 6 - Unity Grant Direction – Rosa Inchausti

Rosa reported HRC has Unity Grant funding available and needs to determine how to use those funds. Rosa asked for ideas from commissioners. The remaining funds are available for programming at Tempe high schools with the RFPs historically sent out in October. The current amount of available funding will be confirmed via Tempe Community Council and reported at the next HRC meeting. Past minutes confirmed that Commissioner Chiu, Hodgson and Powers had expressed interest in attending an RFP meeting. This is an opportunity to suggest new funding opportunities.

Commissioner Houk suggested funding school assembly speaker Brian Stevenson, who is a dynamic speaker on racial justice issues. Commissioner Scherotter suggested including suggestions from stakeholder groups like the Teen Diversity Dialogue group, The Mayor's Youth Advisory Committee, Tempe Youth Leadership and Challenge Day High School Leaders.

Agenda Item 7 - Tempe Community Action Agency Discussion – Chris Houk

Commissioner Houk presented information on Tempe Community Action Agency (TCAA), Tempe's oldest social service agency, serving the elderly and low income populations. Commissioner Houk recently met with TCAA's Executive Director Bill Epps. TCAA has thirty paid employees and approximately five hundred volunteers. TCAA's Budget Report showed the many programs they support. Commissioner Houk shared the sobering facts regarding poverty in Tempe via a TCAA information card. Commissioner Houk proposed supporting TCAA by sending a representative to participate in their annual fundraising walk scheduled for April 2016.

Commissioner Houk mentioned for HRC to support sending a representative to participate in TCAA's "I Help Homeless Walk" and to promote the walk regionally.

Motion made by Commissioner Calender to ACCEPT the motion.

Second by Commissioner Chiu.

Motion unanimously APPROVED

Commissioner Houk volunteered to represent the HRC by participating in the "I Help Homeless Walk". Commissioner Chiu volunteered to partner with Commissioner Houk.

Rosa added that the event, First Crush supporting TCAA will be held at Four Peaks Tasting Room on October 23, 2015 at 6pm. The invitation email will be sent to commissioners.

Commissioner Scherotter asked if Tempe has one of the highest poverty rates in Arizona. Rosa confirmed that Tempe has the highest poverty rate in Arizona based on 2010 census numbers.

Agenda Item 8 - Diversity Department Update – Rosa Inchausti

A. Equal Pay Equal Work

Rosa invited commissioners to the stakeholders meeting on Tuesday, September 22, 2015 at the Tempe Museum from 9 -10am. The meeting is to acquire business and community feedback regarding creating an Equal Pay for Equal Work Ordinance. The Council workgroup is looking at lowering currently existing pay inequities by mirroring an Albuquerque Ordinance.

B. Diversity Dialogue – Mondays, 5:30-7:45pm on September 14, 21, 28, October 12, 19, 26 and November 2, 2015

Commissioner Chiu reported the current Diversity Dialogue program has begun with a record number of new adults participating.

C. Tardeada, Sunday, October 4, Noon - 8 p.m. at Tempe History Museum

Rosa said the awards are historically presented by the Mayor and Council from 3-5pm.

D. MLK Dinner Update – Saturday, January 16, 2016

Commissioner Espinoza reported the dinner will be held at the Buttes and a variety of keynote speakers are currently being researched. The Dinner cost will be increased to \$15.00 per person. A new sponsorship idea will be included in the invitation for those unable to attend due to the cost.

Rosa said that City Manager Andrew Ching has asked to attend the next HRC meeting for commissioner input regarding the characteristics commissioners would like to see in the next Tempe Police Chief. Internal and external applicants are currently being entertained.

Motion made by Commissioner Calender to adjourn the meeting.

Second by Commissioner Auckland

Meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Next HRC Meeting – October 13, 2015

Prepared by: Dee Hodson

Reviewed by: Rosa Inchausti

Rosa Inchausti, Diversity Director