

Human Rights Board
Pinellas County
September 13, 2022 Meeting Minutes

The Human Rights Board (HRB) met in regular session at 10:00 AM on this date in the Clerk's Fourth Floor Conference Room at the Pinellas County Courthouse, 315 Court Street, Clearwater, Florida.

Present

Charles W. Thomas, Chair, Tax Collector
Mike Twitty, Vice-Chair, Property Appraiser
Lisa Arispe, Employees' Advisory Council Representative
Kimberly Crum, Human Resources Director
Jeff Rohrs, Chief Information Officer, Business Technology Services
Karen Williams Seel, County Commissioner (late arrival)

Members with Designee Present

Ken Burke, Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller – Bill Seiter
Barry Burton, County Administrator – Rodney Marion
Julie Marcus, Supervisor of Elections – Tim Closterman
Joan Vecchioli, Unified Personnel Board Representative – Ricardo Davis

Others Present

Jeffery Lorick, Office of Human Rights (OHR) Director
Keiah Townsend, Assistant County Attorney
Betina Baron, Human Rights Compliance Manager
Sarah Rathke, Board Reporter, Deputy Clerk
Other interested individuals

All documents provided to the Clerk's Office have been made a part of the record.

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Thomas called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM; whereupon, staff conducted a roll call of the members.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – JUNE 14, 2022 MEETING

Ms. Arispe made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 14 meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Twitty and carried unanimously.

Mr. Lorick related that on page three, a reference to Homeless Information Management System needs to be corrected to HUD Enforcement Management System database (HEMS).

Mr. Twitty made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. The motion was seconded by Ms. Arispe and carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT (HUD)/ EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION (EEOC) WORKSHARE AGREEMENT

Mr. Lorick indicated that the Department's investigative processing period ended September 30; and that the HUD/EEOC workshare agreements have been signed for the upcoming year; whereupon, he provided details regarding the HUD Fiscal Year 2022 funding, noting that the OHR met its contractual obligations and is projected to receive a little over \$309,000.00 from HUD.

LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY (LEP) PLAN

Mr. Lorick related that the County is required to have a Limited English Proficiency (LEP) plan in place by the Department of Justice (DOJ) under Title 6 and provided an overview of the LEP compliance requirements. He requested the Board to approve the proposed LEP plan, indicating that if it is not approved in a timely manner, certain County departments may get their federal grants rejected; and that the approved plan will be posted on the OHR website.

Discussion ensued regarding the plan requirements and implications, applicability to the Appointing Authorities, implementation resources and timeline, and related matters. Mr. Lorick responded to queries and concerns by the members, highlighting the following:

- While OHR provides civil rights insurance for the entire County through the proposed plan, the Appointing Authorities and their internal departments, with assistance by an attorney, need to determine their specific obligations under the plan.
- 90% of translation requests to the County are for Spanish interpretation.
- The OHR would review and approve the internal plans developed by the Appointing Authorities.

- The DOJ requires that the most requested documents be available in any language of an LEP community that reaches over 5% of the population, and to have a plan in place for responding to other requests.
- Translation services under the plan should be free.

Mr. Davis noted that the proposed plan is the first and necessary step in meeting the County's LEP compliance; whereupon, he moved to approved it. The motion was seconded by Ms. Crum and passed unanimously.

INTERNAL COMPLAINTS DISCUSSION

Mr. Lorick indicated that upon reviewing a recent complaint and pertinent personnel rules, it was realized that it may be beneficial to add another layer in the internal complaints process in order to provide an opportunity for the County departments to mediate matters of cause findings resulting from OHR complaint investigations with the employees before they possibly proceed to sue the County through relevant federal agencies; whereupon, some members expressed their support for the idea.

Following discussion, Mr. Lorick indicated that he will bring the item back to the Board for consideration at the next meeting, after discussing it further with the internal stakeholders and the County Attorney's Office.

IAOHRA CONFERENCE

Ms. Baron shared details regarding the Department's trip to Los Angeles for the International Association of Official Human Rights Agencies conference. Mr. Lorick added that the trip was paid for by HUD training funds.

LANGUAGE LINE

Mr. Lorick related that many County departments use the Language Line program; that the Department's budget is being adjusted to accommodate changing costs; and that the program helps the Department collect metrics that illustrate the need for language services.

During discussion, Ms. Baron noted that some municipalities have a shared list of internal designated employees able to assist with foreign language translations, in addition to the language line, and Ms. Crum suggested that HR could maintain a list, possibly in Oracle,

of the County employees who can assist in communicating with non-English-speaking customers.

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH ACTIVITY

Mr. Lorick stated that the Department is continuing to reach out to underserved and underrepresented communities regarding the services it provides.

DISCUSSION

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Arispe made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Ms. Crum and passed unanimously; whereupon, the meeting was adjourned at 11:07 AM.