

Human Rights Board
Pinellas County
June 11, 2024 Meeting Minutes

The Human Rights Board (HRB) met in regular session at 10:00 AM on this date in the Fifth Floor Conference Room at the Office of Human Rights (OHR), 400 South Fort Harrison Avenue, Clearwater, Florida.

Present

Mike Twitty, Chair, Property Appraiser
Lisa Arispe, Employees' Advisory Council Representative
Wade Childress, Chief Human Resources Officer
Thomas Dunne, representing Ken Burke, Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller
Rodney Marion, representing Barry A. Burton, County Administrator
Lynda Morrill, representing Jeff Rohrs, Chief Information Officer, Business Technology Services (BTS)
Ralph Reid, Unified Personnel Board Representative
Charles W. Thomas, Tax Collector

Not Present

René Flowers, Vice-Chair, County Commissioner
Ken Burke, Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller
Barry A. Burton, County Administrator
Julie Marcus, Supervisor of Elections
Jeff Rohrs, Chief Information Officer, BTS

Others Present

Jeffery Lorick, Director, OHR
Betina Baron, Compliance Manager, OHR
Keiah Townsend, Assistant County Attorney
Shirley Westfall, 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/ATTENDANCE

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

Responding to a query by Chair Twitty, Mr. Lorick confirmed that those representing Board members executed a proxy form and have the ability to vote at today's meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – MARCH 12, 2024 MEETING

Chair Twitty indicated that the minutes reflect a percentage of the OHR's budget as being provided by County funds, but that the percentage is actually the portion that is federally funded; whereupon, Mr. Lorick acknowledged the needed correction.

Upon the Chair's call for a motion, to include the aforementioned correction, Mr. Thomas made a motion to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Mr. Reid and carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Twitty indicated that there are no members of the public present.

HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT (HUD) / EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION (EEOC) UPDATE

Mr. Lorick indicated that June 30 is the end of the complaint process period; that all housing and employment cases need to be filed with the appropriate agency in order to receive full funding and meet contractual obligations with EEOC and HUD; and that the OHR is on track to meet those obligations.

FAIR HOUSING ACTIVITIES/FAIR HOUSING MONTH

Mr. Lorick informed the members that April is Fair Housing Month; that it is a part of the OHR's charge to be involved in activities which promote fair housing; and that an element of this process is to help coordinate an annual event with a consortium of agencies in the Tampa Bay area; whereupon, he requested that Ms. Baron provide additional information regarding the event.

Ms. Baron related that the Tampa Bay Fair Housing Symposium was held on April 17, 2024; that Chair Twitty conducted a presentation regarding the topic of appraisals; and that state and local partners also participated in the event.

PINELLAS COUNTY COUNCIL FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (PWD COUNCIL) UPDATE

Following the introduction of the item by Mr. Lorick, Ms. Baron provided information regarding a recent PWD Council meeting; whereupon, she indicated that the County's Parks and Conservation Resources Department attended the meeting, responded to the

members' concerns and questions, and presented a video showing the accessibility at a recently developed park. She related that staff will continue working with the Parks Department to review concerns, noting that additional Mobi-Mats will be installed for use by residents and tourists.

In response to a query by Chair Twitty, Ms. Baron, with input from Mr. Lorick, indicated that information related to beach access points for Mobi-Mats can be found on the County website; and that OHR facilitates requests regarding beach accessibility and beach wheelchairs to the Parks Department for additional information. Mr. Lorick clarified that County parks are accessible and compliant.

DIVERSITY DASHBOARD UPDATE

Mr. Lorick indicated that BTS is working to develop the diversity dashboard; that staff is working with them to include hire data for gender, race, and ethnicity by department, as requested by Mr. Burke; and that BTS has acquired new technology which will ensure that real-time data is available on the dashboard.

Responding to a query by Ms. Baron, the members confirmed that they would like to access the data through a SharePoint site.

OHR BUDGET

Introducing the item, Mr. Lorick indicated that departments were tasked by the County Administrator to determine where efficiencies could be found in their Fiscal Year 2025 budgets; that although OHR maintains a lean budget, he was able to reduce the budget by approximately \$6,000; and that part of this cost reduction is due to additional staff being certified to provide mediations in-house; whereupon, a discussion ensued.

Confirming no further questions regarding the budget, Chair Twitty requested a motion for approval; whereupon, Mr. Marion made the motion. The motion was seconded by Ms. Arispe and carried unanimously.

ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY

Mr. Lorick provided brief information related to language updates in the anti-harassment policy, noting that OHR's standard operating procedures are being reviewed by the County Attorney's Office; whereupon, Attorney Townsend related that new enforcement guidance has been issued by the EEOC; and that her office is also now updating the

policy based on the new guidance. She provided information regarding the policy approval process and responded to queries by the members.

Discussion ensued regarding consistent policy enforcement, input from the Appointing Authorities, investigative, disciplinary, and conflict of interest components in the policy, and other related topics.

DISCUSSION

Mr. Lorick informed the members that the federal Underutilization and EE04 reports are due in December; that there is a new grant compliance requirement regarding specific civil rights assurances related to grant sub-recipients; and that discussions are being held with County staff to establish a team who will address the new compliance requirement for the upcoming Underutilization report; whereupon, Mr. Lorick related that he will provide an update when more information is available.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 10:30 AM.