

Town of Boone
Human Resources Commission
Monthly Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, March 1, 2023
5:30 PM

Members Present: Emily Brewer, Zannah Kukral, Laura Buck, Steven Yow, Dana Bango

Members Absent: Tiffany Christian

Council Liaisons Present: Todd Carter and Virginia Roseman

Staff Present: Laney Pilkington, Allison Meade via videoconference 5:45 PM-7:15 PM

Call to Order:

Ms. Brewer called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM.

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes:

January 4th meeting minutes adopted as presented by unanimous vote of present members.
February 1st meeting minutes approved with changes. Ms. Buck moved to approve, Mx. Kukral seconded, vote to approve unanimous.

Tentative Agenda Adoption:

Ms. Brewer asked for a motion to adopt the agenda as presented. Members voted unanimously to adopt the agenda for today's meeting.

Discussion of Charge:

Mr. Gene Troy, program manager for the NC Human Relations Commission (HRC) and staff liaison to all the NC HRCs, shared a PowerPoint presentation to orient Boone HRC members. The Town of Boone HRC is the newest in the state. PowerPoint to be shared, along with list of other NC HRCs, HRC events list and HRC event calendar from Mr. Troy to Ms. Brewer.

Background:

- Boone HRC has been created from an ordinance-highest form of charge
- Boone HRC is a volunteer commission meaning the organization sponsors own programs and events and receives directives from town staff and town council (Some larger, well-funded commissions have staff, and some enforce fair housing)
- NC Human Relations Commissions grew out of 1963 Good Neighbors Council

Role of HRCs:

- Advisory-to local government and community
- Resource for community
- Insuring implementation of town/county services fairly

- Training regarding issues and sponsoring experts and training

What HRCs do:

- Equal opportunity and diversity appreciation programs
- Study/monitor community human relations issues, hate crimes and bias activity
- Offering training in and practicing crisis intervention
- Annual report to government bodies

To do list:

1. Orientation-tonight
2. Other training as needed (fair housing, crisis management, hate/bias, cultural diversity, Hate Violence Information Network Affiliate designation)
3. Attend statewide meetings-next one in Winston-Salem March 28th
4. Create workplan:
 - have retreat for minimum 3 hours
 - list all local human relations issues, agree upon top 3-4
 - develop plan
 - form subcommittees distributing membership equally-bring in outsiders, chair and vice chair should be on every subcommittee, split rest of members
 - develop short term and long term objectives
 - look at ordinance for duties and charges, should find vision and mission within that charge
5. Build positive interagency relations; ex. buy in from local DA, Police Chief, Sheriff
6. Reach out to all cultures in the community
7. Reach an understanding with all groups about what HRC powers include
8. Collect a history of human relations in Watauga County/create a survey (Old issues like voting rights, constant issues such as profiling, and emerging issues like health disparities)
9. Most recent statewide survey completed 2020 with top 5 issues identified in ascending order of frequency mentioned: **housing** (affordability, fairness, equity, ex-offenders, sexual harassment), **community relations concerns** (police/community, gender/sexual orientation outreach, lack of community relations, cultural tensions, targeting black males), **employment** (discrimination, lack of opportunities, access to opportunities, harassment), **immigration & refugee status** (trends include targeting Asian and Jewish Americans, increasing violence, profiling, fair housing), **education and transportation** tied for fifth (lack of equity, recruiting and retaining teachers, lack of funding, lack of resources-lack of and reliability of public transportation).
10. Help track/report local bias incidents and monitor the state's monthly reports
11. Look at events list and calendars for community action ideas

General discussion included talk of budget (none currently); attending next NC HRC meeting in Winston-Salem (Ms. Brewer and Mx. Kukral plan to attend; website and social media managed by Ms. Pilkington (Twitter, Instagram); grants (Mr. Troy suggested Z Smith Reynolds, Ford Foundation, Duke).

Mr. Troy brought up examples of other HRC programs and events. Examples are hosting a Health Disparity Seminar with a local hospital, Equal Access to Justice Clinic with law enforcement and legal representation, Fair Housing Fair with food vendors, mortgage lenders, realtors, and entertainment.

National Association of Human Relations Workers may be reforming after a hiatus of 7 years and a request from NC HRC.

Discussion of Next Steps:

Ms. Brewer will disseminate Mr. Troy's documents to members.

Mx. Kukral will reach out to AppState departments regarding survey/distribution and report agenda items by March 29 in time for next meeting's agenda.

Mr. Carter talked about recruitment of 4 additional commission members. Put emphasis on finding racial and ethnic diversity among potential members, unanimously supported by current members.

Ms. Brewer and Mx. Kukral will attend March 28th meeting in Winston-Salem.

All members please seek out community opinions and have top 5 list of local human relations issues emailed to Ms. Brewer by March 23rd.

Next meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, April 5th.**

Adjournment:

With no further discussion, Ms. Brewer asked to adjourn the meeting at 7:28 PM. Mr. initiated a motion to adjourn, Ms. Buck seconded, and all members agreed.