

Owatonna Human Rights Commission Minutes

The Owatonna Human Rights Commission (OHRC) met on Tuesday, September 10, 2024, in the Meeting Room of the Charles S. Crandall Center. Chairman Jim Gunderson called the meeting to order at 5:33 p.m. Commissioner Hansen took roll call: Commissioners Jim Gunderson, Jessica Bjore, Edgar Esquivel, Jennifer Hansen, Mustafe Ismael and Julia Seykora; Administrative Coordinator Clawson and Ethan Cords were present.

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, Commissioner Gunderson welcomed everyone to the meeting. Commissioner Hansen made a motion to approve the agenda as presented, Commissioner Seykora seconded the motion, all members voted aye in approval.

After reviewing the Minutes of the August 26th OHRC Meeting, Commissioner Bjore made a motion to approve as presented, Commissioner Mustafe seconded the motion, all members voted aye in approval.

City Administrator Busse stepped into the meeting to comment that she thought both events hosted by the OHRC for the 2024 Welcome Week went very well. She was pleased that there were many more participating this year compared to last year and anticipating the 2025 events will be even better.

ITEMS of DISCUSSION

2024 Human Library was held during the Downtown Thursday event on September 5th.

Commissioner Hansen commented that 32 Bingo cards were taken but only 14 returned for prizes. Thirteen completed standard Bingo (5 across, 5 up/down or 5 diagonally) to receive a prize of a \$5 Chamber Buck; one completed a X or + Bingo to receive a \$10 Chamber Buck prize. Each "Book" also each received a \$5 Chamber Bucks for participating. The remaining Chamber Bucks, \$220, will be held in the city's safe for future OHRC events.

Cost for the 2024 Human Library were:

\$135.30 – printing Bingo cards at Insty Prints Owatonna

75.00 - Chamber Bucks – prizes awarded

120.00 - Chamber Bucks – participant gratuity

\$330.30 – Total Cost

The number of clicks received on a book's QR Code can be viewed. The genre of the books most viewed were: Hispanic Heritage, City Administrator Adoptive Parents, and Transgender. Several people have expressed interest in participating next year. We want to offer similar genres with new book options.

Commissioner Hansen commented that she hoped for more participation. Commissioner Gunderson commented there were a lot of people looking at the book posters and talking with the in-person books. Commissioner Bjore commented the Bingo may have been too much to grasp and she heard comments they did not have their phones with them to scan

the book posters. Commissioner Mustafe commented that the presentation was very impressive and well organized. Commissioner Seykora added the 2024 Human Library was so different than the one offered in 2023 and with a lot more participation, she suggested the 2025 Human Library be less intense for the readers. Commissioner Mustafe commented that the article in the Owatonna Peoples Press was very good to build interest in this event.

Commissioner Hansen thanked everyone for helping prepare for, publicize, set up and tear down for this event. She also acknowledged the previous OHS commission members for bringing this event to Owatonna. Commissioner Gunderson commented that the Human Library should continue during the Downtown Thursday events when many people will attend.

2024 Meeting on the Field held on Saturday, September 7th at Daiken Soccer Complex

Commissioner Mustafe commented there were 27 players present for his team, which was good as there was a big game on TV at the same time. There was a bit of confusion about which field to use which caused a delay in starting the game. The field close to the tent and food truck were used but he would prefer a larger field. Commissioner Seykora commented that the condition of the fields was also taken into consideration and next year the field assignment will be decided and posted so we can recognize those who came to play, why they came to play and not deter anyone away, there were 51 who wanted to play. The feasibility of a food truck will need to be reviewed; most of the purchases used the vouchers given to the players. OHRC payment to Taco El Ray was \$386.55 and there should be more promotion to include what food would be available. Commissioner Gunderson commented the addition of picnic tables would be nice, but bleachers would not be needed.

Commissioner Hansen commented that events should be promoted on the community info screens posted in most restaurants. Commissioner Seykora commented there was a great turnout for the first year this game was played. Next year, we will change the process of ordering T-shirts, consider more teams and games and expand promotion, the ideal start time would be 6:00 pm.

RECOMMENDATION FOR NEW COMMISSION MEMBER

Mayor Kuntz is looking for a new member to fulfill the term vacated by former OHRC Commissioner, Brandy Leon. The application form is currently on the city website. Applicants will be interviewed by a panel consisting of the Mayor, a City Council Member and member of the current commission. Commissioners Gunderson and Bjore commented they would participate in the interview process. Everyone was asked to encourage potential applicants; Mayor Kuntz hopes to have this process completed prior to the October OHRC Meeting.

2025 MLK Jr Day Event Monday, January 20, 2025

There was a brief discussion on plans for the 2025 MLK Jr Day event. The speaker, venue, and cater will be the same as last year. Commissioner Seykora will contact the speaker for the topic of her presentation to use in promoting the event. Commissioner Gunderson and Hansen will follow-up on contributions from organizations to co-host the event.

Commissioner Gunderson requested a motion for the OHRC to develop their own Facebook page; Commissioner Hansen made this motion which Commissioner Bjore seconded. Commissioner Seykora commented she met with the City's Communication Manager, Deanna Sheely about this and her request was denied. Administrative Coordinator Clawson commented City Administration previously reviewed the feasibility of this with city's IT Department and advised it is not an option. Commissioner Gunderson commented previous OHRC Commissioner Cords has developed a Facebook page which should be viewed for consideration. Commissioner Seykora commented that gaps in promotion opportunities available should be identified and remedied for better promotion of events; the motion failed a vote of approval.

Ethan Cords commented he previously monitored the OHRC e-mail account. That task was passed to previous Commission Member Leon. Administrator Clawson will follow-up with the IT Department regarding this e-mail account and report at the next OHRC Meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

At 6:36 p.m., Commissioner Bjore made a motion to adjourn, Commissioner Hansen seconded the motion, and the meeting was adjourned. The next OHRC Meeting is planned for Tuesday, October 8th at 5:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Jeanette Clawson, Administrative Coordinator