



**HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION**  
**MEETING MINUTES**  
**REGULAR MEETING**  
**Thursday May 31, 2012**  
**Board and Commission - Room 1101**  
**First Floor, 301 W. Second Street, Austin, TX 78701**

Chair Tom Davis called the Board Meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Board Members in Attendance:

Tom Davis, Chair  
Paul Rhea, Vice Chair  
Elizabeth Brenner  
Judy Cortez  
DeWayne Lofton

Human Resources Staff Present:

Yamile M. Ortiz, EE/FHO Staff Liaison  
Tony Robertson, EE/FHO Executive Liaison

**1. CITIZENS COMMUNICATIONS**

None

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes from the April 23, 2012, meeting were approved; Commissioner Cortez motion, Commissioner Rhea seconded on a 5-0 vote.

**3. OLD BUSINESS**

- a. Discussion regarding a gift from the Commission to the family of Officer Jaime Padron.  
(Cortez/Davis)

Chair Davis stated that it has been advised that this is not something the Commission can do as a City government organization. Commissioner Cortez proposed to draft and extend a letter of sympathy from the Commission, which will be presented at the next meeting.

**4. NEW BUSINESS**

- a. Discussion on the response of Austin Police Department's (APD) Resistance Policy.  
(Brenner/Reynolds)

The issue was brought to the Commission's attention by a local representative of the ACLU, Debbie Russell, in regard to changing the Response to Resistance Policy to include a Preservation of Life standard.

Ms. Russell spoke advocating that the commission draft a resolution encouraging APD to move from an Objective Reasonable Force Standard policy to a Preservation of Life Standard policy to be implemented in the mission and values for the department. She believes that the level of trust within the Austin community for the Police Department has waned as a result of not having the use of force as an absolute last resort.

The discussion was tabled until June meeting.

- b. Discussion and possible action to set 2012-13 budget and to review the actual budget's categories. (Rhea/Cortez)

All commissioners were presented with a copy of the current budget distribution. The City Manager's Office requested for the Commission to come up with a better budget for fiscal year 2012-13. Chair Davis suggested a reorganization of line items in order to better fund the more costly items of the budget.

Commissioner Rhea asked legal staff for clarification of how to go about distributing the budgeted amounts within the year. Mr. Robertson stated that the amount is allotted to you each year however, whatever is not used does not roll over to the next year. Commissioner Cortez asked the question of who needs to be contacted in the budget office to increase the budget, and how are those requests made. Commissioner Cortez requested a little leeway on the deadline for the budget. Mr. Robertson will get answers for those questions and have those available for the next meeting.

Chair Davis read off a proposed budget for the 2012-13 fiscal year. Commissioner Rhea motions for approval of the new budget, seconded by Commissioner Cortez. Approved by 5-0 vote.

Commissioner Cortez asked that a review of the budget be standing item at all future meetings.

- c. Discuss the City's anti-discrimination policy as it relates to contractors. (Rhea/Davis)

Discussion tabled for July meeting.

## **5. STATUS OF GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

Commissioners discussed:

- Improve the Human Rights Commission website by restoring the content that we agreed to last year. All have been restored.
- Post approved resolutions to website.
- Compile a list of other commissions and reach out to those appropriate ones. Still compiling.
- Create an introduction letter for other groups and community organizations, and other commissions.
- Submit at least one resolution to the national IOHRA conference.

- Improve commission process and discuss meeting structure and improve ways to decide upon where and when the Commission will meet.

## **6. STAFF BRIEFING**

- Two staff members were at the EEOC conference in St. Louis. Items that are being discussed at the conference for training include:

Targeted Equitable Relief – What is the relief that will make the charging party whole? This new strategy will include training and outreach to the employers, to ensure that the alleged violations do not continue in the future.

- Mr. Robertson spoke about the EE/FHO status: Housing has more than 80 closures, contract will end at conclusion of June and we are looking to have over 100 closures completed.

The Employment side has 57 closures on file to date. We should not have a problem meeting our contract. Mediations have comprised 38% of our closures, with a benefit of \$106,000 to the individuals.

- Mr. Robertson introduced intern Wesley Nelson who is here for the summer.
- Yamile Ortiz reported that she had done an EEOC presentation in Spanish.
- Working on HUD work share agreements with Austin Tenant’s Council.
- EEOC is looking at individuals with criminal backgrounds, and looking to move this to a policy issue.
- Due to the fact that the swearing in of Council members will preempt our use of Council Chambers on our regular June meeting day, the Commission voted not to have a June meeting.

## **6. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

- Discuss and sign letter of condolence to the family of Officer Jaime Padron.
- Discussion and possible action regarding the inclusion of a Preservation of Life standard in the Austin Police Department (APD) Response to Resistance policy.
- Discuss the LGBT Anti-Discrimination policy as it relates to contractors for the City.

## **ADJOURN**

Chair Tom Davis adjourned the meeting at 6:47 PM without objection.