

MINUTES

CHICAGO COMMISSION ON HUMAN RELATIONS (CCHR) BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING May 12, 2022

Attendance

Commissioners Present:

Nancy Andrade, Chair	Mirna Holton	Kim Waller
Karina Ayala-Bermejo	Margaret Kulujian	
Marta Cerda	Terrell Odom	
Thomas Choi	Michael Takada	
Daniel Hernandez	Butch Trusty	

Staff Present:

Kenneth Gunn	Connie Simonelli	Norman White
JoAnn Newsome	Gloria Vu	
Cheryl Reid	Karen Wallace	

Call to Order

Chair and Commissioner Nancy Andrade called the meeting to order at 3:34 p.m. and Gloria Vu recorded the minutes. A quorum of board of commissioners was present, and the meeting, having been duly convened, was ready to proceed with business.

Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Andrade presented the minutes of the April 14, 2022, Board meeting to the Board for approval, where upon motion was duly made by Michael Takada to adopt as written, seconded by Mirna Holton and unanimously adopted. The minutes were approved as presented.

Commissioner's Report

Commissioner Andrade announced that the CCHR has been in the process of hiring for the HR Business Partner position and has offered the position to Gloria Vu, who is now interim until there is an official start date. The CCHR has also been in the process of hiring for the Director of Inter-Group Relations position and has also been working on finalizing the Director of Compliance, Fair Housing position with the Department of Human Resources. Commissioner Andrade also mentioned that the CCHR is anticipating on having two potential summer interns who will start around mid-June. One intern will be a recent college graduate from Colorado and one intern will be an international fellow from Brazil provided through World Business Chicago.

Sexual Harassment Ordinance

Commissioner Andrade also stated that on April 27th, the City Council approved the changes to the Sexual Harassment Ordinance and the CCHR is now working on creating awareness to businesses and the public of the recent approved changes to the Ordinance. She also stated that she will reach out to the Chambers of Commerce and our community partners to raise awareness of the changes. The CCHR will also provide a free model training that will be available for download on CCHR's website. Updates are to follow. Deputy Commissioner JoAnn Newsome briefly summarized the major changes made in the ordinance and stated that the ordinance also allows a complainant to make a motion to delay serving the respondent with a Sexual Harassment complaint, from what used to be 10 days, to now allow 30 days to serve the respondent. This will allow time for the employer to separate the two employees and to also make sure that the complainant is not being retaliated against. JoAnn also stated that even though the ordinance was passed on April 27th, changes will not be in effect until July 1st.

Inter-Group Relations (IGR) and Hate Crimes

Cheryl Reid, Human Relations Specialist, and Norman White, Hate Crime Victim Advocate, briefly explained the roles of Inter-Group Relations and its Hate Crimes Unit. Inter-Group Relations responds to incidents of violence and provides educational workshops to reduce discrimination and hate while promoting understanding. The IGR unit works to identify key stakeholders and leaders in communities to discuss concerns and to develop community-based solutions. IGR is often called in times of crisis to mediate community or neighbor conflict where violence may have occurred or has the potential for occurring. Norman stated that the Hate Crime Unit at the Commission works with the Civil Rights Unit of the Chicago Police Department when hate crimes occur. Norman, as CCHR's Hate Crimes Advocate then provides victim advocacy and support to the victim. The Hate Crime unit also offers workshops and presentations to prevent and alleviate hate crimes within communities.

Adjudication Division

Connie Simonelli, Human Relations Investigator, briefly summarized the Adjudication Division's processes and role at the Commission. She stated that a complaint is filed if it meets three of the basic filing requirements: 1) the alleged discriminatory act occurred in Chicago, 2) the alleged discriminatory act is based on a protected class covered under the Chicago Fair Housing Ordinance or the Chicago Human Rights Ordinance, and 3) the alleged discrimination occurred in the last 300 days. On July 1, 2022, the statute of limitations will increase from 300 to 365 days. Throughout the investigation, the question being asked is, "was the ordinance violated?"

Advisory Council Reports

Commissioners Karina Ayala-Bermejo, (Office of New Americans), Terrell Odom (Veteran's Affairs), and Butch Trusty (LGBTQ+) provided brief updates of the status and activities of their respective advisory councils.

Old Business

Karen Wallace, Director of Compliance, Employment mentioned and reviewed the Board Panel's Review process with new CCHR board members.

Next Meeting

June 9, 2022, at 3:30 p.m. at 740 N. Sedgwick, Suite 400.

There being no further business to come before the board, a motion to adjourn was duly made by Karina Ayala-Bermejo, was seconded by Daniel Hernandez, and was unanimously adopted at 4:27 p.m.