

HUMAN RELATIONS DIVERSITY
BOARD

1 N. Bluford Avenue
Ocoee, Florida

April 4, 2024

MINUTES

6:15 PM

- **CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by **Chair Moyer** at 6:15 p.m. in the Commission Chambers of City Hall located at 1 N. Bluford Avenue, Ocoee.

Chair Moyer led the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by a moment of personal reflection. **Recording Clerk Torres** proceeded with the roll call, and confirmed the presence of a quorum.

Present: Chair Moyer, Vice-Chair Maxwell, Members Cummings, Mellen, Cease and Beck

Absent: Member Singh

Also Present: Mayor Johnson, Support Services Director Gaines, and Recording Clerk Torres

Guest(s): Dr. Ahmad Jalloul and John Payne-Rios

First line of Mission Statement was read by **Member Mellen** "The general mission of the Human Relations Diversity Board ("HRDB") is to promote understanding, respect, goodwill, and equality among all citizens and businesses of the City of Ocoee."

- **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

1. Approval of Minutes for the HRDB meeting held March 7, 2024:

Motion: Move to approve the March 7, 2024, Minutes; Moved by Member Mellen, seconded by Member Cummings. Motion carried unanimously.

Dr. Ahmad Jalloul, president of the Arab American Community Center, emphasized the significance of Arab American Heritage Month. He shared he is a Lebanese native who migrated to the USA in 1995 for medical studies, and now calls central Florida home, running his own practice. He highlighted the contributions of Arab Americans and the importance of celebrating their culture during this dedicated month.

John Payne-Rios, a dedicated member of The Arts and Cultural Affairs Diversity Equity and Inclusion Committee, as well as a board member of the Orlando Fringe Festival and the Technical Theatre Director at Howard Middle School of the Arts, addressed the importance of celebrating diversity. During his presentation, Payne-Rios shared valuable insights on how smaller organizations can access grants from the county, empowering them to make lasting, positive impacts within their communities. His advocacy for inclusivity and support for cultural expression emphasized the vital role of the arts in fostering unity and understanding among diverse populations.

- **OLD BUSINESS**

2024 Calendar Observances

Chair Moyer informed everyone that he recently attended the last Commission meeting, where he highlighted the significance of April being Arab American Heritage Month. He also stated May has many observations. **Member Beck** then informed the board that the Commission passed the DEI speaker request and for May and June the DEI speaker has been contacted to come and deliver a 30-45 minute speech. **Support Services Director Gaines** announced plans for a press release and Facebook promotion to endorse the speakers for both months. **Member Beck** outlined the topics: "Fostering a Sense of Belonging" for May and "Inclusive Communication" for June. **Chair Moyer** proposed inviting local cultural groups to attend. **Mayor Johnson** advised to invite the other boards as well. **Member Cease** inquired about recording or live streaming the meeting, to which **Support Services Director Gaines** confirmed recording capabilities. **Member Mellen** suggested board members sit in the audience for the next two meetings to prioritize the speaker. **Chair Moyer** concurred with the suggestion.

Member Beck proposed a plan to utilize board allocated funds to install a lending library, with a projected cost of \$500, as a means of community outreach. She emphasized its potential as a valuable asset to give back to the community. After deliberation, the board reached a consensus to table further discussion on this proposal until the August meeting. **Chair Moyer** then requested additional suggestions for the allocation of funds. **Mayor Johnson** recommended attending upcoming events and setting up a promotional table to distribute brochures to the public as an alternative method for community engagement.

Recording Clerk Torres brought to the board's attention the requirement for an election in August as stipulated by the Bylaws. **Vice-Chair Maxwell** raised a question regarding the selection of the new liaison to the board. **Mayor Johnson** expressed his interest in assuming the role. **Member Beck** then inquired about updating the liaison's name on the brochure. **Mayor Johnson** recommended maintaining the brochure as originally approved.

Mayor Johnson expressed his desire for the board to extend its outreach by speaking at local schools once they have gained more understanding of DEI. **Member Beck** raised concerns about the possibility of such engagements given current governmental restrictions on certain topics. **Mayor Johnson** acknowledged the issue and suggested exploring the feasibility of this initiative, emphasizing its potential to educate youth on DEI.

Member Cease inquired about the possibility of printing brochures for distribution at upcoming events. **Member Beck** informed the board that she had obtained a quote from Minuteman Press, and indicated that the cost would be \$130 for 200 copies.

Motion: Move for the board to proceed with purchasing the brochures from Minuteman Press; Moved by Member Cease, seconded by Vice-Chair Maxwell. Motion carried unanimously.

Vice-Chair Maxwell inquired about the possibility of enhancing lighting for the Historic Marker detailing the Ocoee Massacre near the lake, to ensure optimal visibility for residents and visitors. **Support Services Director Gaines** explained the challenges in installing lighting due to its location but assured the board that the matter would be forwarded to the City's electrician for further consideration.

- **NEW BUSINESS** - None
- **DEPARTMENT UPDATES**

Ocoee Music Fest – April 12th & 13th

5k Race – April 13th

Asian American Heritage Month Event at Bill Breeze Park – April 18th

Police Department Community Picnic at Vignetti Park – April 18th

Fire Department Open House – April 27th

Memorial Day Ceremony – May 23rd

- **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

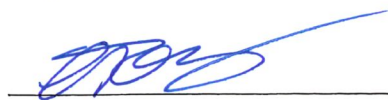
Mayor Johnson addressed the board, and expressed his profound pride and gratitude for their voluntary commitment to improving Ocoee. He voiced his vision of fostering positive change and dismissing falsehoods about the city, and emphasized the importance of spreading truth. Reflecting on his initial involvement with the city's boards, he commended the board's progress and reaffirmed his confidence in their efforts, applauding them for their outstanding work.

- **SET NEXT AGENDA**

- Read aloud Mission Statement
- Approval of Minutes for the April 4, 2024, meeting
- Guest Speaker Kavita Sawh with UCF's Ginsberg Center for Inclusion and Community Engagement

Adjournment: meeting adjourned at 7:43 p.m.

ATTESTED:



Recording Clerk

APPROVED:



Chairperson