

**HUMAN RELATIONS DIVERSITY
BOARD**

1 N. Bluford Avenue
Ocoee, Florida

March 7, 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 and a heartfelt tribute to the late Tom Lowrie. **Recording Clerk Torres** proceeded with the roll call, and confirmed the presence of a quorum.

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

Absent: Member Cease

Also Present: Commissioner Hart, Support Services Director Gaines, and Recording Clerk Torres

Guest(s): Joy Dickenson from the League of Women Voters

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 February 1, 2024:

Motion: Move to approve the February 1, 2024, Minutes; Moved by Member Mellen, seconded by Member Singh. Motion carried unanimously.

Joy Dickenson, representing the League of Women Voters, addressed the significance of Women's Rights, weaving in her personal experiences. She shared the challenges she faced and highlighted the remarkable strides women have made today. Ms. Dickenson emphasized the crucial task of preserving our history and imparting this knowledge to future generations, and stressed the importance of education in shaping a brighter future.

• **OLD BUSINESS**

2024 Calendar Observances

Chair Moyer informed everyone that he recently attended the last Commission meeting, where he highlighted the significance of March as Irish American Heritage Month and Women's History Month. Additionally, he noted that April is designated as Arab American Heritage Month.

HRDB Yearly Budget

Member Beck distributed a printed document during the meeting, sharing her communication with UCF's Ginsberg Center for Inclusion and Community Engagement. She proposed that the board could receive Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) training from them, specifically in two courses: 1. Fostering a Sense of Belonging and 2. Inclusive Communication. The cost for each course would be \$250, totaling \$500. In addressing the decision-making process, Commissioner Hart was consulted on whether the board needed approval from the Commission or could independently decide during the board meeting. **Commissioner Hart** assured he would verify the procedure and provide guidance.

Member Beck noted the positive reaction from the community regarding the Human Relations Diversity Board (HRDB) sharing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives on the City's Facebook page. She acknowledged a single complaint, clarifying that it stemmed from a misunderstanding. The concern arose when a citizen questioned if the City of Ocoee was financing the DEI initiatives program. However, Member Beck clarified that the program is free and accessible through an Orange County library card.

Member Beck extended her proposal to bring a representative from UCF's Ginsberg Center for Inclusion and Community Engagement to speak about Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI). **Chair Moyer**, in response, sought the board's input on Member Beck's suggestion. All members unanimously agreed to the proposal.

Motion: Move to bring a qualified representative from UCF's Ginsberg Center for Inclusion and Community Engagement to speak about DEI during the May and June meeting. Moved by Member Mellen, seconded by Member Singh. Motion carried unanimously.

Support Services Director Gaines chimed in, inquiring whether **Member Beck** envisioned the speaker addressing only the board or if the presentation would be open to the public. **Member Beck** clarified that she wanted the board to promote the event, inviting residents to attend and benefit from the training. **Support Services Director Gaines** emphasized the necessity of obtaining approval from the Commission for this proposal. **Commissioner Hart** agreed, advising the same course of action.

Member Mellen requested inclusion in email correspondences, and expressed concern that Member Beck was responding on behalf of the board. **Chair Moyer** concurred, suggesting that such emails be shared during board meetings when a member is representing the board. **Support Services Director Gaines** clarified that the email was sent individually to the elected officials, and he assigned Member Beck to respond to the resident as she was the originator of the DEI initiative.

Vice-Chair Maxwell raised the question of the board's commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), suggesting the need for a clear and concrete definition of their objectives. **Member Beck** responded by emphasizing the advisory role of the board, stressing their duty to advise the city on DEI matters, referencing the bylaws and mission statement. **Support Services Director Gaines** reinforced the city's support for the DEI initiatives presented at the City Commission meeting. **Commissioner Hart** encouraged the board to continue in moving forward.

Motion: Move for Member Beck to go before the City Commission on April 2nd to present the HRDB's request for approval to promote the DEI Speaker's on the City's website and social media; Moved by Member Mellen, seconded by Member Singh. Motion carried unanimously.

Discussion: Diversity Drives Ocoee

Chair Moyer distributed packets he personally crafted for discussion on the Diversity Drives Ocoee initiative and shared concerns with the graphic. **Member Beck** revealed plans to update the graphic for accuracy, specifically addressing the separation of the terms "Race" and "Ethnicity". **Commissioner Hart** encouraged the board to maintain momentum, and emphasized the importance of continuous progress without becoming overly preoccupied with minor details. **Vice-Chair Maxwell** suggested making the most of what they currently have, striving to enhance it, and move forward.

Motion: Move for Member Beck to update the graphic to correctly reflect the Race and Ethnicity of the City of Ocoee; Moved by Member Beck, seconded by Member Cummings. Motion carried unanimously.

- **NEW BUSINESS**

Follow-up on Commission Meeting

Member Beck reported a positive outcome, and noted the success of the Facebook posts with only one person expressing concerns. **Chair Moyer** expressed his approval, and shared that he found the presentation to be effective.

- **DEPARTMENT UPDATES**

Community Market – First Thursday of every month 5 p.m. – 9 p.m.

Spring into Conservation – Saturday, March 9th

Ocoee Music Fest – April 12th & 13th

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Commissioner Hart commended the board, and encouraged them to persist in their efforts. He emphasized the importance of keeping their focus on the broader goal, which is to contribute to the overall improvement of Ocoee.

- **SET NEXT AGENDA**

- Read aloud Mission Statement
- Approval of Minutes for the March 7, 2024, meeting
- Guest speaker from Arab American Association and a member from the Orange County Diversity Board.

- **OLD BUSINESS**

2024 Calendar Observances

- **NEW BUSINESS**

April 2nd presentation for DEI Speaker

Adjournment: meeting adjourned at 7:33 p.m.

ATTESTED:



Recording Clerk

APPROVED:



Chairperson