**Approved Minutes-Meeting of the Iowa Civil Rights Commission**

**April 21, 2023**

1. Roll Call

Meeting called to order by Chair Ordaz at 1:15 pm. Commissioners Mandsager, Kooiker, Ordaz, Lipski, and White appeared in person.

1. Recognition of Staff, Public, and Press

Staff Kaitlin Smith, Jacob Bennington, and Charles Hill in person; Sarah Vanderploeg and Roberto Rodriguez appeared virtually. Public: Russell Lovell, NAACP, and Daniel Kennedy, future Commissioner appeared virtually. David Walker, NAACP, appearing late virtually.

1. Approval of Minutes from March 24, 2023 meeting

Minutes from the previous meeting were presented and Commissioner Kooiker moved to approve. Commissioner Mandsager seconded and minutes were unanimously approved.

1. Recognition of Outgoing Commissioner, Patricia Lipski. Speeches by Commissioner Lipski, Charles Hill, and Commissioners Kooiker and Ordaz detailed the commendable service that Commissioner Lipski offered to the Commission, the State of Iowa, and the citizens of Iowa.

New Business

1. Public Comment

Russell Lovell of the NAACP discussed their Legal Redress Committees’ meeting with Nate Ristow. He urged the Iowa Civil Rights Commission to act expediently on rulemaking to incorporate the recommendations of the Iowa Advisory Committee to the US Commission on Civil Rights. Calling for simultaneous Red Tape Review and substantive rule changes. Commissioner Kooiker requested that this matter be put on the agenda for discussion at the May 19, 2023. Motion seconded by Commissioner Lipski. Further Public Comment offered by David Walker discussing changes his organization would like to see regarding sharing of documents, mediation, and procedure.

1. Announcement of New Director

Charles Hill welcomed new director, Kristen Stiffler, and three new Commissioners, Don DeKock, Daniel Kennedy, and Dr. Kit Ford. Comments from Commissioner Kooiker thanking Charles Hill for being the Interim Director.

1. Legislative Update

Sarah Vanderploeg indicated that budget bills were the only outstanding bills. Senate File 252 is pending. It allows additional accommodations for pregnant students. Senate File 496 passed limiting teaching on HIV and gender identity in K-6th grade. Written permission from parents to use non-birth names and pronouns. Commissioner Mandsager commented that he expected the following bills to be brought up again next year: Files 190, 290 and 325. Commissioner Mandsager had proposed opposing those bills. Commissioner Kooiker proposed having a fulltime staff member to handle legislation, outreach, education, and social media. Commissioner Kooiker and Ordaz suggested having additional discussions on this matter once Director Stiffler is onboarded.

1. Mediation Update – Presented by Charles Hill

Every case that is screened in is offered mediation. The Commission is continuing to use volunteer mediators. As of the date of the meeting, five cases had settled in April for a total of $90,000. Mediations are being done virtually. Commissioners Kooiker, Mandsager, Lipski, and White asked questions or made comments related to the mediation program.

1. League of Iowa Human and Civil Rights Commissions Letter

A letter from the League was discussed. No action on the letter was taken.

1. Election of Officers

Discussion of the election of officers at the May meeting. The Commissioners discussed the creation of a Historian (traditionally called a secretary) position. Commissioner Kooiker formally requested that the position of Secretary/Historian be added to May’s agenda.

1. Discussion on *Iowa Civil Rights Commission, ex rel Kristi McMillin v. Teresa Roby*

Commissioners discussed whether to also hear arguments on damages related to this appeal. The case was appealed only to consider whether the decision was correct. Pursuant to Rule 4.23(2), the Commissioners voted unanimously to also review the damages awarded in the Administrative Law Judge’s decision. The motion was made by Commissioner Mandsager and seconded by Commissioner White.

1. Director’s Report – Presented by Charles Hill.
   1. Update on Anniversary of Coger case – Interim Director Hill discussed that there would be a History 101 Lunch and Learn about Coger on June 22, 2023, at noon. Discussed the popups that would tell these stories. Costs where discussed. Approximately $200 per popup and $1500 for graphic designer. Historical Society will provide images. Commission staff would need to create the content.
   2. Outreach – T-shirts for the Commission’s busy outreach season have been secured. Charles and Jana Lomax attended the Black Law Student Association gala. Natalie Lamarque was the keynote speaker.
   3. DIAL Attachment – Continue meetings, townhalls, and trainings this past month. Extensive IT inventory was completed by Charles and Kaitlin with corresponding meetings with the project management group overseeing the IT merger. The role of the DIAL was discussed as it relates to the ICRC. DIAL will handle budget and human resources issues. These details are still being worked out.
   4. Staff Update—New hires: Adrienna Sanchez is working as a Civil Rights Specialist now. Bryan Garner and Natalie Sherman will join the Commission as Civil Rights Specialists. Only one CRS position remains unfilled.
   5. Rulemaking – Jacob highlighted the work Jacob and Joe have been working on. Jacob provided examples of their work to shorten existing code sections and to remove redundancies.
   6. Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights Report – discussion regarding recommendations and determination on pathway forward with Commission and new director.
   7. Production: Housing production was down in the first half of the fiscal year, but Housing team is increasing production. Currently have submitted 87 complaints to HUD for credit. Additional staff and resources have been committed to the housing department to correct this. Non-housing production is on course to meet our normal number, but there has been a slight increase in inventory which may cause increased production times. CRSs Lomax, Pawnell, Peterson, and Verhein are being giving investigation training to help with the inventory.
2. Commissioners’ Reports
3. Commissioner Sam Kooiker- Commissioner Kooiker had a question on budget. Charles indicated that the final budget had not yet been passed.
4. Commissioner Patricia Lipski—No report
5. Commissioner Dennis Mandsager- Attended the Iowa Bar Association CLE called Transgender 101 for Lawyer and Judges.
6. Commissioner Marcelena Ordaz- Discussed a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion training she attended in New Orleans.
7. Commissioner Holly White- No report
8. Set Next Meeting for May 19, at 1:15 p.m., Grimes Building.
9. Adjournment at 2:46 p.m.

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Kristen Stiffler, Executive Director Date