

**Approved Minutes – Meeting of the Iowa Civil Rights Commission,
April 29, 2022**

- I. Roll Call –
Commissioners: Justin Johnston, Sam Kooiker, Patricia Lipski, Dennis Mandsager, Marcelena Ordaz, Holly White.
- II. Recognition of Staff, Public, and Press –
Staff: Director Stan Thompson, Katie Fiala, Charles Hill, Kaitlin Smith, Sierra Walker, Fred Sinkevich, Reece Elphic, Austin Moore, Mathew Gore, Joe Austen, Gillian Madigan, Amy Quail, Jacob Bennington.
Public: Alex Hannah.
- III. Commissioners Johnston, Kooiker, and Lipski indicated on the record that they was unable to attend the Commission meeting in person due to scheduling and travel conflicts.
- IV. Approval of Minutes –
Minutes from the meetings on January 21, 2022, and February 18, 2022, were presented. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Commissioner Mandsager, seconded by Commissioner Kooiker. Approved by vote. Motion carried.

New Business

- V. Public Comment – None.
- VI. Presentation on Attorney’s Fees – Katie Fiala provided a brief overview of attorney’s fees under the Iowa Civil Rights Act. Commissioner Kooiker commented that in cases in which the defendant is determined to be guilty of violating the Iowa Civil Rights Act, he felt there should be some mechanism for the ICRC to recover attorney’s fees from the Respondent. Director Thompson said he would look into similar statutes in other states and report back at the next meeting.
- VII. Discussion on Use of Volunteers and Interns in Case Management Process under Iowa Code Sec. 216.5 – Director Thompson explained that even though Iowa Code allows for the ICRC to have volunteers and interns, the ICRC does not currently use any volunteers. Law school students are hired as summer interns, and their work is reviewed by a Civil Rights Specialist.

Current/Ongoing Business

- VIII. Legislative Update – Director Thompson provided a synopsis of two bills that were passed that involve civil rights, and other pending legislation that could impact the ICRC.
- IX. Final Continued Discussion Regarding Extension Procedure - Kaitlin Smith provided an overview of the current policy regarding the granting extensions at the complaint intake stage. A timeline of the intake stage was provided to the Commissioners
- X. Continued Discussion Regarding Internal Policy for Contacting Non-Responsive Parties - Kaitlin Smith discussed the procedure for contacting Complainants that are non-responsive. She explained that complaints are not closed for failure to cooperate with the investigation during the screening stage. At the investigation stage, a complaint may be closed for failure to cooperate, but numerous attempts to contact are made by the investigators before the complaint is closed. A copy of the checklist followed by investigators was provided to the Commissioners.
- XI. Further Discussion on Video Conferencing Options and Costs - Director Thompson discussed that since we had last talked about Video Conferencing, two meetings had been conducted via Zoom, which only had a small cost per month.
- XII. Further Discussion on Posting of Meeting Audio - Director Thompson and Kaitlin Smith shared that the audio from the past Commission meetings was now available via a link on the website.

Standing Business

- XIII. Director's report
- a. Report on Case Filings/Closures – Director Thompson presented the monthly case processing breakdown. He also discussed the ICRC's efforts to improve its communications with parties during the time a complaint is waiting to be assigned to an Investigator.
 - b. Employee Updates/Training – Retention bonuses were recently approved for ICRC staff, and management has revised the PDQ in anticipation of a request to raise the pay grade for CRSs. Also, staff recently attended two trainings related to implicit bias through the Iowa Law Enforcement Academy and Drake University. Lastly, two CRSs and one Clerk Specialist recently moved on from the ICRC, so are hiring for all open positions at the ICRC is currently in process.
 - c. Finances – Director Thompson presented the monthly financial update.
 - i. Tabled Motion for Discussion on FY24 Budget Request for 3 FTEs - Commissioner Lipski moved to remove the motion from the table, seconded by Commissioner Mandsager. Approved by vote. Motion carried. The commissioners then discussed finding out why three FTEs position removed from the ICRC budent in 2017, and the pros and cons of making a budget request that referenced those three FTEs. Director Thompson said he would look into the matter further and report back at the next meeting.
 - d. Report on Task Force on Communication - Director Thompson reported on the recent meetings of the Outreach Task Force, which particular focused on upgrades to the ICRC website.
- XIV. Litigation Update –Katie Fiala provided a case law update, discussing a recently published Iowa Supreme Court case (*Vroegh v. Department of Corrections*) involving gender identity, and law recently passed in the State legislature that could impact the ICRA.
- XV. Commissioners' Reports
- a. Commissioner Johnston – Nothing to report.
 - b. Commissioner Kooiker – Nothing to report.
 - c. Commissioner Lipski – Nothing to report.
 - d. Commissioner Mandsager – Congratulated Director Thompson on his Senate confirmation vote. He also participated in the recent hearing held by the Iowa Advisory Committee to the US Commission on Civil Rights.
 - e. Commissioner Ordaz – Nothing to report.
 - f. Commissioner White – Nothing to report.
- XVI. Next Meeting(s) 5/20/22 @ 2:00
- XVII. Meeting adjourned by Commissioner Ordaz at 3:27 pm.

6/9/22 