



HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION (HRC)  
City Hall, Willamette Room  
Tuesday, October 25, 2011

**MINUTES**

Commissioners present: Julie Jones, Kim Whitley, Michael Thomson, Margaret Martinez, and Tina Dodge Vera  
Commissioners absent: Linda Hart (excused), Nancy Greenman (excused)  
Staff present: Wes Hare, City Manager; Marilyn Smith, Public Information Officer/Management Assistant  
Others present: None

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Kim Whitley called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

September 27, 2011

MOTION: Julie Jones made a motion to approve the minutes; Michael Thomson seconded. Approved 5-0.

**SCHEDULED BUSINESS**

**BUSINESS FROM THE PUBLIC**

None.

FSS Program of the Linn-Benton Housing Authority (LBHA)

Whitley said that at last month's meeting it was suggested that Anna Benson of the LBHA bring some folks back to the next meeting to talk with the HRC. Benson has not been able to contact any FSS recipients to speak at this meeting. Whitley asked the group if November would be a good time to meet or if January would be better. Jones asked when the Human Relations Award is due. Marilyn Smith said that it is due on November 15. The HRC agreed that they would like to meet with Benson and the some FSS recipients at the November meeting.

Annual Report

Whitley asked the HRC to be thinking about the annual report as they move into the next year. She said that the last two reports have gone to the City Council in June. She asked the HRC whether they wanted to create one this year or wait to do one next year as some commissions create reports biannually. Smith said that the City Council appreciates the reports. The members agreed that they would like to prepare one for June. Smith suggested using last year's report as a template. *[Editorial Note: The last HRC annual report was for the Calendar Year 2009, which was presented to the City Council at its August 25, 2010, meeting.]*

Whitley requested that this be a standing agenda item.

## UPDATES

### Human Relations Award

Diana Eilers said that the Commission has received one application. Smith said that the application appeared in the *Albany Democrat-Herald Newspaper*, the Albany Chamber of Commerce will include the application in their newsletter in November, and the applications have been distributed to the local Ministerial Association, Kiwanis, Soroptimist, Optimist, both Rotary clubs, both high schools, and Linn-Benton Community College's diversity program. Tina Dodge Vera will distribute applications to the HAC. Smith suggested that Dodge Vera could refer people to the City of Albany's website where the application is fairly prominent on the home page as something new.

### Hispanic Advisory Council (HAC)

Dodge Vera reported that the HAC met with the new superintendent, Dr. Erin Prince, for the Corvallis School District. She said that the group is trying to figure out what they want to do with the Festival Latino event. She said that as a volunteer organization it is hard to keep the momentum going. She said that they feel it is important for Albany, but they need to figure out how they can make it happen again. Dodge Vera said that there was some discussion of moving the event to the end of the school year and partnering with the high school's diversity clubs, but this may be a lot for the students to take on.

### Calendar of Events: 2011 and 2012

Jones said that the award wasn't included on the calendar. Whitley asked that it be included on the calendar for November. *[Editorial Note: The Human Relations Award was, in fact, listed on the 2011 Calendar of Events for October and November dates and also listed on the 2012 Calendar of Events. See pages 4 & 5 of the October 25 HRC agenda packet.]* Jones said that there will be no meeting or events for December. Smith suggested thinking about a Martin Luther King, Jr., day event in January. Whitley asked if the HRC wanted to have a Martin Luther King Day, Jr., event. Dodge Vera asked if LBCC or other organizations are doing any events. Smith said that she will check with LBCC and that OSU usually has a week's worth of activities planned. Hare said that he would like to pull OSU over this way and keeps looking for ways to get them involved. Smith volunteered to contact Jody Nelson and Larry Roper to see if they might be interested in helping with an event. Whitley suggested that each member commit to attending some of the local events. She recalled attending LBCC's event last year and how nice it was. Whitley requested that the Martin Luther King event be added to the November agenda.

Hare said that an internal diversity group has been created and shared that their first meeting is scheduled for November 2. Whitley asked what the group's goals would be. Hare said that they are focusing on how our workforce reflects our community as a starting point. Hare also said that involves a lot of different things such as recruitment strategies. For example, the Library would like to hire a native Spanish-speaking person. He said that a good percentage of the library patronage is Spanish speaking. Whitley said that the HRC would like to invite David Shaw, Human Resources Director and leader of the Diversity Committee, to give a report at a future HRC meeting.

## BUSINESS FROM THE COMMISSION

Hare reported on the Linn County tax situation and how it is affecting the City. He explained how the Linn County Assessor's Office report showed that there has been a significant drop in tax revenue due to compression. He said that the City is looking at some substantial cuts in expenditures in the General Fund which includes police and fire. He said that 80 percent of the General Fund is for public safety.

Hare said that there will be some tough decisions ahead. He said that Albany's funding is short about one million dollars. He said that there will be a General Fund hiring freeze which could affect hiring someone for the Library.

Hare shared how we have already reduced our workforce from about 421 three years ago to 390 positions mostly through attritions, but that isn't enough. Hare explained that all departments are discussing the problem and working on plans. Whitley asked about the outlook for future years. Hare said that the County Assessor's best guess is that next year will

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not be any better. He said that we would need to see some big changes in assessed value. The Wal-Mart development will help some. Hare explained that the Albany properties in Benton County have had increases to their property taxes this year. He went on to say that the effects of Measure 5 and Measure 50 limitations, masked by new construction, were not really felt until now. He said that it is not just Albany that has seen decreases this year, but all of Linn County. The City had no way of anticipating this shortfall. Hare said that the good news is that the City has pretty good reserves and staff and City Council have been making cuts the last three to four years.

NEXT MEETING DATE

Tuesday, November 29, 2011, 7:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Signature on file.*

Gina Burrese  
Administrative Assistant

Respectfully submitted,

*Signature on file.*

Diana Eilers  
Administrative Assistant I

Reviewed by,

*Signature on file.*

Wes Hare  
City Manager