APPROVED: December 15, 2015

HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION (HRC)

City Hall, Willamette Room
Tuesday, November 24, 2015
MINUTES

Commissioners present: Javier Cervantes, Kim Whitley, Tina Dodge-Vera, Denise Hughes-Tafen, and Graham Kislingbury (arrived at 7:04 p.m.)

Commissioners absent: Chris Equinoa (excused) and Jay Sluiter (excused)

Staff present: Jorge Salinas, Assistant City Manager/Chief Information Officer; Marilyn Smith, Management Assistant/Public Information Officer; and Captain Eric Carter, Albany Police Department (APD)

Others present: Kalin Salinas; Dr. Don Nelson, Psychologist, Linn County Sheriff's Office/Linn County Mental Health; and Captain Todd Vian, Linn County Sheriff's Office

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Javier Cervantes called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

October 27, 2015, joint meeting with HAC
October 27, 2015

MOTION: Kim Whitley made a motion to approve the minutes and Tina Dodge-Vera seconded. Approved 5-0.

SCHEDULED BUSINESS

Business from the Public

Assistant City Manager/Chief Information Officer Jorge Salinas introduced himself and his daughter, Kalin Salinas. She is a junior studying psychology at Oregon State University, took an interest in the mental health topic on the agenda, and wanted to attend.

Mental Illness awareness discussion

Captain Eric Carter, Dr. Don Nelson, and Captain Todd Vian introduced themselves; and Cervantes explained that the Commission would like to know how local law enforcement officers interact with individuals with mental health issues, including the process of going through the jail.

Vian explained that the Sheriff's Office has recently entered into an agreement with Linn County Mental Health for a mental health outreach coordinator to be assigned to the Tangent substation and provide assistance to patrol deputies in the county. If a deputy comes in contact with a person with mental health issues, the outreach coordinator can assist. He said that if they have someone who comes into the jail and exhibits signs of mental illness or if they say that they have a mental health issue, jail staff will typically defer to Dr. Nelson, who has a lot of experience and expertise with getting them the services they need while in custody.

Whitley asked if they find that services are actually available within the community. Dr. Nelson said that he does find that they're available. He explained that he's been at the jail for ten years, has collected resources from A to Z, from free furniture, free clothing, to housing, etc. He said that there's no reason that an inmate should leave the jail after he comes in contact with them and not have those resources in place; they give inmates all the information, and staff makes sure that they have appointments with the mental health clinic. He said that they do a lot at the jail for those with a mental illness diagnosis.

Cervantes asked what the release process is like. Nelson explained that there is a major revolving door of inmates. Since the jail has such high turnover, the people who are there a lot know to request an appointment with him and to request services.

Whitley asked what kind of mental health training staff receives at the Sheriff's Office.

Vian stated that officers receive roughly four hours per year of mental health training. He said that there was a state grant made available a couple of years ago which would help with 24 hours of additional training, but that has unfortunately been canceled for now. There's been some discussion, though, about refunding that grant program; so that may be available for additional training in the future.

Carter clarified that they are looking to restart the grant-paid training opportunity soon. Kislingbury asked if they were talking about the mental health first-aid training. Carter said, no, this is a different training, geared toward law enforcement and the sort of interactions officers are going to have with people with mental illness. He said that when it was here locally, they tried to get as many people as possible to attend; since the training is free, the only cost is staff time. It's a role play-type training to work toward de-escalations. Carter added that, in his review of this issue, both APD and the County do an excellent job of de-escalation and that, case after case, it's not uncommon for officers to come in contact with someone who has a mental health issue and that they will offer to put them in contact with their mental health officer.

Whitley said she'd been unaware of how law enforcement approaches mental illness. She asked, "Is there a plan for how the County or the City approaches this issue?" Carter explained that all local law enforcement uses Linn County Mental Health; APD officers deal with these situations in the same manner as the Sheriff's deputies. They coordinate with each other to see that people get the care they need.

Huges-Tafen asked, "Do you feel that you receive enough support?"

Carter responded that we do an excellent job with the resources we have. He said it's difficult when they come into contact with someone in crisis who needs to be placed, but they have limited bed space in the area. If they had more bed space and those resources, not knowing specifically what those numbers would be, of course, that would help. He agreed with Vian and Dr. Nelson that it's a revolving door of individuals.

Kislingbury added that he took the mental health first-aid course, and they talked about the skill of de-escalation and calming people, not escalating with them. Carter commented that they see this all time when officers are able to have dialogue with people who are in crisis, a lot of times just talking to them, people will tell you what they need. He said that the last thing they want to do is turn that into an arrest situation; so anything they can do to get them to a doctor, get them help, get them to family, etc., they'll try to do. Kislingbury pointed out that half of the class was from the Albany Fire Department, not just APD.

Dodge-Vera asked what was meant by bed space outside of the jail and whether they were talking about shelters in the community. Carter explained that it would be bed space at the hospital, for instance. Samaritan has limited bed space to help these people; so it's a constant juggling act.

Nelson added that they have approx 47 beds available in the area that we can access at any given time including at Good Samaritan psychiatric unit, Salem psychiatric ward, and others. He explained that when they put in the new Junction City facility, they were hoping to gain additional beds there, but that did not happen. He said that the community is doing a lot to help with this situation, but sometimes it's an issue that's beyond the community; when you have someone staying in the hospital for days on end, that takes a lot of resources.

Cervantes asked if the issue of limited beds is an issue of acceptance, a financial issue, or what contributes to the limitations. Nelson believes this is a logistics problem and noted that everyone around the country is in crisis with mental health problems. He stated that the jail will house, at any given time, 17 to 19 people with some sort of mental illness. They get a great deal of support while in the jail, but they don't have the funds or logistics available that they need.

Whitley asked what happens with juveniles with mental health issues. Carter explained that if they get a call about someone in crisis, an officer will go out and assess the situation. If an officer determines that the person is in crisis, they

do their best to work with the person to agree to go with them; if they're not willing, the officer has the authority to detain the individual. The officer takes them to the hospital and explains their observations and reason for bringing them in. The emergency room then does an assessment and determines whether the individual needs to stay.

Whitley asked, when they get a call about a crime, how do they determine when a person is in crisis. Carter said that it's a fine line and sometimes it's both. It's not uncommon to have someone who has committed a crime and they get out there and find out it's mental illness related. He said it's a matter of training and experience to be able to observe that.

Whitley asked whether the criminal charges are still in effect in those cases and if they go to the hospital first and then get taken to the jail after treatment.

Carter explained that these are on a case-by-case basis and that there's discretion involved based on the severity of the crime. He said that, first and foremost, mental health is going to take priority before prosecution and that they believe prioritizing a conviction over getting help for someone that has mental health issues is counter-productive.

Nelson added that the Commission should remember that mental health is 24/7, like law enforcement.

Hughes-Tafen asked about school resource officers and their ability to deal with mental illness. Carter replied that they'll have the same type of training that other officers will have and that there are conferences and training related to schools and specifically school safety. There's not a specific course that they send school resource officers to for mental health. They focus on sending them to conferences related to schools and the issues that go on in schools.

Vian clarified that the four hours of training he mentioned earlier is for jail staff; he's not sure about APD. Carter said he's not sure exactly how many hours of training it amounts to but that they do have training throughout the year for issues related to mental health.

Cervantes asked Nelson whether he was the only doctor who works within this setting or if he had help. Nelson explained that he's the only professional there during daytime work hours. After hours, they have a crisis team that can deal with the patient until he can evaluate them. There are layers to the staff so that they are always available to respond.

Cervantes asked Nelson whether there are any language barriers that he's experienced and whether they have anyone on staff that can help with that. Cervantes observed that sometimes a simple language barrier can come across as a mental health issue.

Nelson said yes, no matter what language, they have the ability to get translation services with someone on the phone, they are very sensitive to that, they have staff that are bilingual, and they do everything they can to make sure that that field is completely level.

Hughes-Tafen also brought up the issue of engaging with someone who is autistic; with simple commands from police officers such as "stop," they may not be able to be compliant. She asked whether there is any training related to that. Carter said there are different trainings for that. He elaborated that one thing they get in law enforcement and on the jail side is a lot of information being pushed out to them regularly. He said that autism is a great example; officers take that time to assess and decide how to proceed with the individual.

Whitley wondered what is being done to support the officers, to make sure that they can take in all this information and maintain their composure in these situations. She asked what is being done to maintain their well-being and their mental health.

Vian commented that he's been in this line of work for 20 years and that there can be information overload, with daily bulletins, the news, training updates, etc. He said that it's very difficult to take all of that information in, put it into practice, and keep on top of the work that needs to be done.

Nelson added that he tries to make contact with every officer who he comes in contact with. He knows there is tremendous strain that these officers have to deal with on a daily basis, the danger with their job; on top of that, their lives away from work, their family lives.

Cervantes asked if there's any kind of stigma about seeing a mental health specialist with regard to stress, trauma, etc., and whether there are any requirements for officers to seek help.

Carter commented that it's much better now than it was 23 years ago when he started his law enforcement career. They now make sure that officers who are in a traumatic situation or significant event take time to debrief the situation, they'll take those officers aside and have conversations about what happened and talk about why it happened the way that it did. He explained that they had an incident recently where they brought in outside help, a doctor to come and speak with the officers, off the record, just for their own benefit.

Cervantes said he has been paying attention to the veterans returning home with PTSD because of combat stress and female soldiers having to deal with sexual harassment issues, for example. He asked whether there is any particular way that law enforcement engages with that population. Nelson told the group that he spent 15 years on a submarine before he went to shore duty. He is very keenly aware what veterans and their families go through. He explained that they have a legal veterans' outreach person who comes in to connect veterans to housing, free counseling, and many other services. If veterans come into Mental Health, he will immediately key in on that and direct them to the appropriate resources.

Vian pointed out that it's a fairly recent thing for the jail to actually identify veterans. It's not a statistic or specific population that they've captured before. He added that in the last two years, they've asked people coming through the jail whether they're a veteran and, if possible, they are ferreting that out and verifying it.

Salinas asked how it happened that they got zero beds when the new hospital opened in Junction City. Nelson said he called a contact of his and and was told they received net zero additional beds; he's not sure why.

Vian explained that what he heard about the situation is that there was a hospital or institution in the Portland area that was shut down and the majority of that population was sent down to the Salem area, putting more strain on resources in Albany and surrounding areas. Nelson added that they continue to look for beds and other resources.

Vian went on to say that it is very frustrating when they have someone in the jail whom they believe is in need of mental health help and there are no beds available. Kislingbury asked if they're getting involved with Helping Hands. Nelson said yes, among others.

Carter explained that one of the biggest challenges is someone who has a mental illness diagnosis but they also choose to use drugs: for example, a paranoid schizophrenic who's a user of meth. Nelson noted that a person who's having a manic phase and a person who's on meth look just alike and it's very difficult when you have someone who's mentally ill and then they do drugs; it's like adding gasoline to the fire. He said that it's a great challenge, but he feels they do a great job for these people. Their goal is to return people back to those who care about them at least in as good a condition, hopefully better.

Cervantes thanked Carter, Nelson, and Vian for coming to speak with them about mental health and invited them to participate in the discussion of the next item on the agenda as well.

Municipal Identification

Cervantes gave a brief summary of the discussions the Commission members have had so far about this issue. He also told of his observations while attending the recent summit on homelessness and that one of the issues he heard, which was really striking to him, was that the homeless community has difficulty finding a means to identify themselves because they don't have ID. He learned that there's the issue of not having a physical address or the funds to pay for an ID from the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). Cervantes then said that they heard testimony from someone who came out of the jail system and he had to use his prison ID for identification and routine encounters which he feels lends to major stigmatization. Cervantes told the group about the issue discussed at last month's meeting with the Mexican woman who cannot get state-issued ID because she is not here legally. He pointed out that there are cities with existing municipal ID card programs, including New York and San Francisco. He said that you can use a municipal ID for things like identifying yourself to law enforcement, establishing a bank account, and then there's the case of the homeless. He continued, saying that the woman who was undocumented couldn't even go to her school to pick up her child without ID

and could not donate blood. It never occurred to him that there would be such barriers to do something that was humanitarian. He would like the HRC to recommend to City Council that they do some research on this subject.

Nelson said that yes, that's been a problem; but that's an expensive problem. He explained that Fish and Saint Vincent DePaul would help people get an ID or a birth certificate if they needed those documents to gain employment, but the funds dried up, like with many other programs. He said that the only answer to that is to find the funding, which is larger than they can find within their own respective departments, and that Mental Health will actually lend people money in the form of a scholarship so they can get ID cards and similar things, and then they pay a portion of it back. He said that it's a logistics problem and that the need is greater than what's available.

Hughes-Tafen commented that she can see a need for having ID not only for the homeless, but also for undocumented immigrants. She spoke about people who come to this country with H4 visas and said that it's very difficult. She elaborated that scientists or specialists in their respective fields come to work and bring their families but their spouses are not allowed to work, get driver's licenses, Social Security cards, etc., which makes it extremely difficult for those families.

Dodge-Vera said she would support this. She feels it's a huge need for the undocumented population to feel welcomed in the community and have a way to identify themselves and access resources, pointing out that even the school requires an Oregon ID or driver's license.

Nelson said that this issue is far beyond them, is a small part of the mental health community, and a small part of the law enforcement community as well. He feels it's going to take a legislative dump of money in order to fund something like this program. He agrees with the Commission members that it's an important issue but feels it's going to take more than just the people present at the meeting to accomplish.

Cervantes doesn't believe this would be a law enforcement program, he sees it as being be self-sufficient using the income from the IDs that are purchased. He clarified that the ID wouldn't do anything but show who they are and that they live in Albany. Nelson asked how many times they are going to replace these IDs and at what cost. Cervantes replied that it doesn't cost anything to explore the option of offering City ID for people who cannot afford one, whether it's feasible, that's to be determined, and what those fees would be, he doesn't know.

Whitley asked how they book someone who doesn't have ID.

Vian replied that initially they rely on the arresting officer to identify that person. A large majority of the people they see have warrants. It's the arresting officer's obligation to identify that person and make sure they have the right individual. Their checks and balances are through fingerprints, and they fingerprint everyone who comes into the jail. Vian explained that when he started at the jail, they would fingerprint on ink print cards and at the end of the shift they would manually type in all information on the print card that was carbon copied and then send it to the state for processing. They have gone from that to the current live scan machine which uses laser scanning to get an instantaneous capture of the fingerprint and immediately sends it to the State ID Bureau. He said they'll occasionally get someone who refuses to tell them who they are or the arresting officer may not be 100 percent sure of who they are, and if that person has ever been fingerprinted in the U.S., that system will give them an identity within 15 minutes.

Carter added that for officers out on the street, if someone has something that identifies them, they'll use that. They'll accept a Costco card if that's all that someone has. If the person they come in contact with doesn't have any ID, they'll ask questions to help verify who they are.

Kislingbury commented that if there were a municipal ID card program and the information was in a database, it may help to make life easier.

Salinas weighed in saying that from a compassion perspective he understands how this would help. He sees a potential issue with significant initial setup costs as well as the case of the lost IDs, people who might want to have a name changed, would we allow that? He continued that there are policy issues that have to be considered and that there's also the question of terrorist activity with people being able to use this ID as a means to pass around the City or fly under the

radar as well as the question of whether there are any legal ramifications for the City to issue an ID when the City is not able to validate someone's identity.

Cervantes said he would agree with most of what Salinas said. The compassion piece is the most important piece to him, above the procedural issues. He spoke about the polarization that has taken place in our community over this issue.

Nelson asked how it has polarized the community. Cervantes explained that for undocumented immigrants, Governor Kitzhaber signed DMV IDs into law; people didn't like it, and then 66 percent of the voters said they didn't want undocumented immigrants to have that form of ID. He said that in Linn County, it was 88 percent of the population that voted against undocumented immigrants having that form of ID. He feels it's polarizing because there is a subset of the community that can't get identification because a larger portion of the community has said no. He shares some of the same concerns as Salinas but feels all of those procedural things can be sorted out.

Kislingbury suggested that they could find a similar sized city that has this program. He feels they don't need to reinvent the wheel; there are probably examples out there that they can work from.

Salinas pointed out that if 88 percent of the citizenry in Linn County has said they don't want this form of ID, it does not seem reasonable to take tax dollars from those that have said they don't want it and elect to fund it anyway.

Kislingbury thinks this is worth bringing to Council. He recognizes that it may not receive any play, but he thinks it's worth pursuing for the compassion piece of it. Salinas agreed that there are other examples, such as people who were brought here as a child, where he can see this being helpful to them.

Cervantes clarified that 88 percent of voters said no to driving privileges, not to identification, which he feels is an important distinction. Salinas recommended that they start the conversation with some of the Councilors, outside of the Council meeting, and test the waters.

Cervantes said that the idea would be going to a work session, not a regular meeting. He asked what the harm would be in making people think outside of the box a little bit. He thinks that they can figure out answers to the concerns and to the questions being brought up. He stated that the Commission is trying to bring unity within the community and one way to do that is by people being able to identify themselves. Salinas explained that he doesn't want to see the noble effort that they're trying to push forward become another controversial issue which is why he would recommend that they start a conversation with individual Councilors first.

Cervantes reiterated he would like to see the Council discuss this issue. He doesn't have a problem if it's voted out; he just wants to see it discussed. He doesn't want the Commission to be paralyzed by the notion of defeat. Dodge-Vera said she thinks it's an opportunity to create awareness in the City about this issue and believes that most people operate in this City without even thinking about the people that are disenfranchised.

Following the discussion on municipal identification, the Commission members were in agreement that they want to look into this issue further. Cervantes said he would like to take it to a Council work session and ask Council to do some exploratory work. Salinas suggested again that he first speak with a few of the Councilors casually and get a sense of their stance on this issue, and Cervantes agreed he would do that.

<u>December meeting schedule (regular meeting date is Tuesday, December 22)</u>

There was discussion whether to change the December meeting date or cancel the meeting altogether, and it was suggested to move the date up by one week. The Commission agreed to change the meeting date to Tuesday, December 15, 2015. Cervantes asked staff to send a reminder e-mail to the Commission members about the change in meeting date.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Homeless Persons' Memorial Day observance [Monday, December 21; 5:30 p.m.; City Hall]

Smith explained that the event recognizes people who have died within the last year because of homelessness. In this case, there will be some who died in past years but were not previously recognized. If there are people who knew, or were friends or acquaintances of the individuals that died, they are welcome to say a few words if they'd like. Smith explained that the event will be a candlelight service with Lebanon Police Officer David Dominy and his family providing music. Coats, hats, socks, and long underwear will be collected and distributed to local shelters. Smith added that this will be the first time the event has been held on the actual shortest day of the year and the first time held in the evening.

Cervantes encouraged the Commission members to attend.

Event for Martin Luther King, Jr., Day [Friday, January 15, 2016; ~~5:30 p.m.~~ noon]

Cervantes asked whether they wanted to use MLK's Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech for this year's event. He believes this would be an appropriate speech, given recent events. The group agreed that it would be appropriate and that it would be the speech they would read at this year's event.

Kislingbury suggested having a video of MLK delivering his speech playing on the TVs in Council Chambers with no audio – just for visual interest – and then they will read the speech along with the video playing. Kislingbury will report back at the December meeting whether or not he's able to find the speech online in its entirety. Smith is going to check into the logistics of playing the video on the TVs. The Commission member also asked her to begin recruiting members of the public to read portions of the speech, as she has done in the past.

Cervantes pointed out that the event will be at noon, not 5:30 p.m. as listed on the agenda.

DEBRIEF

Summit on Homelessness [November 4]

Smith told the group it was the largest homelessness event the City has ever had. Kislingbury liked that the focus was on housing, and he feels that all the right people and agencies came together. Smith explained that they made a point of inviting landlords this time, and there was good discussion about what would make it easier to rent to people who were homeless, who had mental health issues, who had convictions on their records, etc. The question was how we make it easier to rent to those people because they're the most difficult to house. She stated that it comes down to case management and having those resource connections in place. Smith explained that the Community Services Consortium (CSC) is having their Second Chance Renters Program again, starting next week, which she feels is a great resource. The program focuses on basic things like paying bills on time, taking care of the place you live in, being a good tenant, etc.

Cervantes added that the diversity of information shared that day was a light bulb moment for him. He didn't even think about how not having identification impacts the homeless or post-offenders in being able to identify themselves when they come out of the jail system. He believes it was very timely with their discussions about municipal identification at the last meeting.

Smith pointed out that for the last five years, Fish of Albany, as part of their United Way allocations, has dedicated financial resources to helping people get identification. She explained that there are a few people who have a hard time hanging onto their IDs and will come back several times; it's an ongoing effort.

Kislingbury said he appreciated hearing the testimonials. Smith said it's worth doing; they've done it now for 11 years, and it's always beneficial. She explained that they had planned for a family of five to speak, but the family was unable to make it because of work schedules. The family got their start at Signs of Victory. They moved from California with nothing and worked their way into finding jobs and housing. She also thanked the Commission members who were able to attend.

UPDATES

GAPS Centro de Bienvenida [Welcome Center]

Cervantes reviewed the details of Chris Equinoa's e-mail, which was included in the packet. He directed the Commission members to e-mail Equinoa if they have any more questions about the issue.

Human Relations Award (HRA) for Calendar Year 2015

Cervantes believes there has only been one nomination so far and asked the group if they would like to extend the deadline. Kislingbury said he believes they're going to have another one coming in soon. The Commission agreed they should extend the deadline to December 14, 2015, since they will not be meeting again until December 15 anyway.

HRA subcommittee selection

This was not discussed.

Other volunteer opportunities

Kislingbury invited Commission members to volunteer at this year's Annual Mental Health Association Christmas Dinner at First Christian Church on Monday, December 7, at 5:00 p.m. He added that they're trying to bring back the talent show from 15-20 years ago; it was a big hit in previous years.

Hispanic Advisory Committee (HAC)

Dodge-Vera gave the Commission members a brief overview of the discussions at the Hispanic Advisory Commission (HAC) meeting that took place the same day. She explained that two of the HAC members attended a racial summit report hosted by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). From that, they learned that Corvallis is starting their visioning process for the City and that they've hired an outside company to help manage that process. The NAACP doesn't have a chapter in Albany, but CARE is in both Linn and Benton Counties. The NAACP is looking for more representation in Albany and is interested in starting a local chapter. Dodge-Vera mentioned that there are a lot of racial injustice groups forming but that they're not well coordinated with each other. She said it's exciting that so many people are interested and want to help, but she thinks better coordination is needed.

Hughes-Tafen explained to the Commission members the different roles played by the NAACP, CARE, and SURGE; how they are different from each other; and when and how they were established. Dodge-Vera added that the NAACP is advocating for a Human Relations Commission to be formed in Corvallis. Whitley pointed out that Corvallis has an MLK Commission that plays a similar role.

Dodge-Vera explained that one of the HAC's initiatives for next year is voter registration. She invited the Commission members to attend a holiday potluck at OSU Extension Service on December 16. At the potluck, they hope to put together the agenda for next year's HAC retreat. The date of the retreat has not yet been set. She also mentioned that they will be meeting with the owner of Stahlbush Island Farms in January.

Calendar of Events: 2015 & 2016

Dodge-Vera asked to add the CARE Anniversary event to the Calendar of Events and handed out a flyer for the event (see agenda file). The event will be on Sunday, December 6, 2015, from 4:00 – 6:00 p.m. at the Albany Main Library and will feature guest speaker Erlinda Gonzales-Berry, author of *Mexicanos in Oregon*, to speak about the rich history of Mexicanos in Oregon. There will be translation in Spanish for those who need it.

Kislingbury mentioned a workshop on racism that will take place on January 24 and 31, 2016. He will e-mail the details of the event to the group.

BUSINESS FROM THE COMMISSION

Dodge-Vera would like about 30 minutes at the January 26 HRC meeting to present to the Commission the educational assessment conducted by OSU Extension Service in partnership with Greater Albany Public Schools, funded by the Linn-Benton Health Equity Alliance. She indicated that they should be finalizing the report soon and that it will include the youth focus groups, whereas before it was just the adult focus groups.

ADJOURNMENT

Cervantes adjourned the meeting at 8:35 p.m.

NEXT MEETING DATE: *Tuesday, December 15, 2015*
Tuesday, January 26, 2016

Respectfully submitted,

Signature on file

Holly Roten
Administrative Assistant I

Reviewed by,

Signature on file

Wes Hare
City Manager