

# Human Relations Committee Meeting Minutes

**DATE**

June 1, 2023

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**TIME**

4:00 PM

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**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER BY**

Chair, Dr. Stephanie Credle

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## **IN ATTENDANCE**

Stephanie Credle, Hazel Blount, Robert Bigham, Steve Green, Renee Perry, Terry Buffaloe, Jessica McMillan, Tony Brown

## **ABSENT**

Myra Belgreat and Rodney Pierce

## **MINUTES**

Roll call performed.

Approval of Minutes from May 4 minutes. No additions or corrections noted. Motioned made to accept minutes as presented by Steven, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Robert Bigham. All in favor no Nays.

Review of upcoming meeting dates and time.

Review of Bylaws:

Current Mission Statement

The mission/function of the Halifax County Human Relations Committee is to conduct and promote activities that foster mutual respect and understanding, protect basic human and civil rights and create an atmosphere using education and collaborations that promote amicable relations among all people of Halifax County

- Reviewed and changed “peoples” to “people”. Remaining mission was found acceptable.

As the Philosophy was being reviewed a consensus was reached that the by-laws should mirror the verbiage of the Resolution.

Steve added the description from Wake County and stated would like the gender category to be expanded.

Additional, extensive discussion were had, as it relates to “gender” definitions.

Tony questions, what the County’s position is as it relates to protection, citing EEOC or state level definitions may define HRC’s position in a more comprehensive way to give us better direction on a broader justification.

Stephanie shared that EEOC definitions would include any federal law established. EEOC states sex-based discrimination to include, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, transgender status.

Renee reminded that the Resolution includes .... With regard to race, gender, ethnicity, age, education and socio-economic background. Section 3, item e. states: ... without regard to race, color, religion, gender, sex, age, national origin, disability of genetic information. For now, the by-laws should mirror the resolution. If necessary, the resolution may be updated at a later date.

Terry shared Human Rights covers all humans and the extra distinctions can address issues, however, basic human rights of human needs are without discrimination. Human rights protection should be all inclusive without making distinctions to what we perceive to be our differences.

Hazel added, respect and dignity for all people – be specific of what issues are when presented.

Stephanie requested Steve to elaborate on the LBGQ+ Community

Steve explained that gay pride exists because the gay community were discriminated against, just as people of color were not given certain rights and marry people of different races. There was a need to bring this to the attention of the communities. These are some of the types of issues that should be listed because of discriminatory behaviors. People see just “sex” it does not represent “gender”. Sexual identity and gender are not the same.

Stephanie believes an increased awareness is required to address “sex” versus “gender”. Gender identity, sexual orientation, pregnancy. Make people aware of the limitations of categories. Add sex and extension and natural origins

Terry – If anything religion is what makes people draw all the different distinctions and points of discrimination. Should be viewed from a Human point of view. Query if everyone was in agreement to having the category extended to list.

Tony – Make sure general public understands definitions. This will require a way to educate our communities.

Further discussion extended to state that “human rights” would be inclusive of all, to include:

- Gender
- sexual orientation,
- natural origin,
- disability, age (age 40 or older)
- genetic information sex-based discrimination, etc.

Add genetic information, national origin.

Renee advised that the resolution will go back before the Commissioners, with changes

Move Objectives from the Resolution to Article II, Section 2, rather than being under mission and Philosophy

Stephanie suggested utilizing Section 3 Purpose and objections from the resolution.

Terry made a point that this verbiage is too broad, and as Stephanie suggested a distinction of what it is we do and have something to explain what is in our charter to do.

Purpose and objectives are not clear. Maybe remove Purpose and Objectives and refer to resolution, option presented.

Tony suggested instead of referring to an additional document to include purpose and description to the By-laws and all agreed so that readers will not have to refer to a separate document.

Stephanie mentioned that this committee may require some type of governance to assist in having authority to make certain changes.

Terry stated that we are the place you come if you feel like your rights have been violated, how are we going to address that when that happens.

- Promote advocacy

Some distinction of what it is we do. Terry asked the question:

- Where will our focus going to be?

\*\* Advocacy for those who feel that they have been violated (discrimination in any form) \*\*

Stephanie inquired, how are we going to triage discrimination complaints. When people come, how will we, as a committee, determine how issues are to be addressed.

Terry suggests that we research and show our findings, depending on issue, and move the issue to the appropriate individuals in leadership that can address that issue.

Tony added that elected officials are an arm of authority. This committee has no authority so how will we or what level of assistance will we be able to provide.

Steve suggested when the need arises to seek authority from Commissioners, however Tony pointed out that the Commissioners have limited authority, unless there is a law in place as it relates to that specific issue. That will be our challenge as we are a volunteer organization to keep people happy.

Terry recommended that acquiring data would allow us to create a database (per issue) to assist in what direction to take and identify additional issues.

Stephanie provided some goals to consider

- Educate the public on their concerns.
- Provide forums
- Community involvement for discussion
- People have rights of redress with timelines
- Annual Unity Conference with speakers
- Educate employers (small business) and share with them
- Make available literature, educational resources (packaged) to provide citizens.

We were asked to be mindful of trying to investigate or lead public to believe we are able to assist individuals with issues. Our goal should be to refer and advise,

Terry added that each issue presented from citizens should require some type of assessment (an assessment form) to determine what their specific issue and what, steps to be taken to assist them. Stephanie added that these findings should be shared with the commissioners.

Renee asked Tony if the HRC was active during his tenure. He said they were never active and never had a meeting. We hitting a “restart” button now.

Stephanie mentioned that on the State’s Human Relations Commission website, it shows they have statewide meetings with are virtual. By attending some of these virtual meetings we may obtain some insights from this commission. Steve added his desire to see us a partnered/associated with the State’s HRC.

Stephanie recommended that the by-laws not to be too specific as it will allow us to expand our focus in the future as we develop.

Do we have enough resources amongst the group to support communities? Renee suggested student government for resources that we may access for training.

Stephanie had suggestions for training

- EEOC conference
- University of FL diversity and inclusion training (self-paced @ no cost)
- NBC Rural forward for Tier 1 Counties (Steve)

Will the county provide some training? We need to educate ourselves so we know the message we are sending to people. (The same message)

Move responsibilities/duties from the resolution to the by-laws.

Goal or objective date to complete by-laws: will require another work session to complete

Steve would like to have our statement of inclusion reviewed by group he’s associated with.

Duties are more laid out in the original by-laws. Add duties from original bylaws and color code for comparison.

#### Section 4 – Authority of Commission -

Discussed budget for HRC. Renee states that because other boards do not have budgets it is not likely that we would have one. Our option would be to go before the commissioners to recommend an allocation (as needed). Therefore, the Committee will make a request for funding for events, outreach efforts, etc.

Discussion as to the HRC comprehensive annual report to be in January each year.

NOTE: Budget year July to June 30 and Budget request go in September (July 1, 2024), You can request expenditure any time of the year.

#### Exposure Ideas

- Map out a plan of activities to submit to the commissioners.
- Think about an Annual event so that people know what this committee does.
- Booth on Harvest Days

We are to think about a month for the annual event and discuss further.

Noted that Juneteenth celebrations are being held in Weldon, NC and Northampton County. Halifax county has not participated in previous years.

Stephanie would like to see some brainstorming activities. (will be scheduled at a later date)

Any event a municipality is presenting should have the presence of the HRC. i.e., Haliwa-Saponi (POW WOW) and next year concentrate on education and exposure.

Steve proposes creating event(s) and solicit participation. A request may be made to the commissioners for support needed for HRC events and activities (funding)

Hazel recommends creating literature/documentation to hand out to citizen. A generic email address will be required. For now, these emails will be filtered through Renee.

#### Social Media

- Facebook (The Halifax County page will be utilized)
- Webpage (HRC currently has a page on the County website, which requires updating)
- Publicity Committee for ideas, ensuring postings on social media platform, including website

#### Article II Section 4

b) we will provide a comprehensive report to be prepared describing the objectives, programs and activities and accomplishments of the Committee. This report shall be prepared January of each year and shall be submitted to the Board of Commissioners. Special reports and recommendations can be made to (or requested by) the Halifax County Commissioners as the need arises in the judgement of the Committee or at the specific request of the Halifax County Commissioners.

Change June to January

Membership; Article 3

Section 1. The membership of the HRC shall be citizens of Halifax County officially appointed by the Halifax Board of commissioners.

Section 2. The appointments shall consist of nine members.

Section 3. The term of office for each member shall be as follows:

Members shall be appointed for terms of two (2) years each, except for the initial appointments, which shall be as follows: three (3) of the members appointed by the county commissioners shall serve a one (1) year term; three (3) shall serve for a two (2) year term; and three (3) members shall serve for a three (3) year term. Thereafter, each newly appointed member shall serve for a two (2) year term. Members will serve no more than three (3) consecutive terms and reappointments shall be for terms of two (2) years or to fill vacancies for the remainder of a term vacated.

Each member shall hold office until the qualification and appointment of a successor or until one (1) year has lapsed since the expiration of the term for which the member was appointed, whichever first occurs

Term limits will be addressed at later meeting(s). Need further clarity

Section 4. In the event any member shall fail to attend three consecutive meetings (without just cause), the same shall constitute an involuntary resignation by said member. The Committee shall promptly notify the Halifax County Commissioners of all resignations (whether voluntary or involuntary) and other vacancies on the Committee, and such vacancy shall be filled for the un-expired term by the Halifax County Commissioners  
CLAIRTY NEEDED

Section 5. Clarity Needed

Section 6. Notwithstanding any of the language set out above, all members shall serve at the pleasure of the Board of Commissioners of Halifax County. Members of the Committee shall receive no compensation for their services

NEXT MEETING START WITH ARTICLE IV

Everyone was asked to Read through the minutes, articles and resolution before next meeting.

Next meeting will be held on July 6, 2023 at 3:30 PM

Reminder to send questions for Chairman Bryant 's visitation to Jessica

Motioned made to Adjourn at 5:30 PM.

## BOARD MEMBERS

BOARD MEMBER	CONTACT DETAILS
Rodney Pierce (rodneypierce1@gmail.com)	rodneypierce1@gmail.com
Stephanie Credle (drstephaniecredle@gmail.com)	drstephaniecredle@gmail.com
Tony Brown (tonynealbrown@gmail.com)	tonynealbrown@gmail.com
Robert Bigham	
Myra Belgreat (myrabelgreat@gmail.com)	myrabelgreat@gmail.com
Hazel Blount (hpb1023@aol.com)	hpb1023@aol.com
Steve Green (slgreen66@charter.net)	slgreen66@charter.net
Terry Buffaloe (tbuffaloe@hotmail.com)	tbuffaloe@hotmail.com
Renee Perry (perryr@halifaxnc.com)	perryr@halifaxnc.com
Jessica McMillan (mcmillanjd@yahoo.com)	mcmillanjd@yahoo.com