

# Human Relations Committee Minutes

**DATE**

August 3, 2023

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**TIME**

3:30 PM

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**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER BY**

Dr. Stephanie Credle

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## **IN ATTENDANCE**

Stephanie Credle, Robert Bigam, Steve Green, Hazel Blount, Tony Brown, Renee Perry, Commissioner Vernon Bryant, County Manager Dia Denton, Myra Belgreat, Terry Buffaloe and County Attorney Glynn Rollins

## **ABSENT**

Jessica McMillan

## **MINUTES**

Meeting called to order by Stephanie Credle. Hazel made a motion to approve minutes, all in favor, minutes approved.

Stephanie welcomed Commissioner Bryant and introductions of the members were made.

Commissioner Bryant gave a brief history of the Human Relations Commission and gave directions as it relates to the questions that were presented to him.

- Be the eyes and ears of the Halifax County communities
- Provided a description of role as County Commissioner
  - Oversight
  - Appoints Ad-HOC Committees
  - Work closely with school systems and municipalities
  - Work closely with County Manager and staff
  - Frequently review and sign documents
  - Appoint individuals to 40 or 50 boards/committees in Halifax County
- Three top goals for the county
  - Referred to the six (6) goals listed for the Commissioner's on the County website
  - Highlighted "Encourage citizen input and promote awareness of issues to improve decision making within county government. This where Commissioner Bryant believes the Human Relations Committee will be supportive.
  - The top three (3) goals would be
    - Economic Development
    - Education
    - Good stewards over tax payer dollars

- Proudest accomplishments:
  - Pay increases for employees, which help with morale, recruitment and retention
  - Economic Development
  - Two new schools (Eastman and Weldon Middle & High School)
  - Ongoing projects (waste water, broadband, etc.)
  - Stable finances
- Plan for Homelessly and/or Safe quality housing for the county
  - Housing Consortium in place, which Halifax County serves as lead entity (Halifax, Northampton, Bertie, Hertford and Martin Counties are a part of this Consortium)
  - Benefits would be: new resident housing, renovated housing and new apartments
- Project studies or concerns to be addressed:
  - How we can become more unified as a county, an effort to understand and appreciate differences. Also being able to come together regardless of where you live to do what's best for our county (unifying the county)
- Vision for Human Relations Committee
  - Promote mutual understanding and fair treatment around all people of Halifax County, education being the key. (Footnote: Don't do more than we are charged to do)
  - Suggested training for members
- Committee networking with other municipalities:
  - Networking with HCIA when the time is right as Glynn Rollins pointed out that each municipality has the right to form their own Human Relations Committee and are independent of the county and if asks for assistance we may respond appropriately.
- What outcomes would like to be seen.
  - Plan of Action of the HRC to include long range goals.
  - Social and Media
  - Proactivity vs. Reactivity (make law enforcement inclusive in some way)
- Challenges to overcome to meet goals
  - Changing mindset of people (education, facts)
  - Advocating for the County
- Scale of 1-10 how do you think HRC is important to the county
  - Rank 8 out of 10
- Does HRC have full support of Commissioner's and what would change that
  - HRC has full support
  - Not working together would change that opinion as well as
  - Not performing duties as have been described.

NOTE: If we receive complaints, we are to point them to the appropriate county head.

Stephanie asked about training and the possibility of funding for some projects. Commissioner Bryant stated he supports, however wants us to be reasonable in our requests. County Manager Dia Denton also supports these efforts, within reason. We should plan on presenting a budget.

Hazel questioned if shelters are being considered. Glynn stated that the program is intended to meet housing needs in these counties and is not sure if Shelters would be included. Hazel adds that shelters is something that is sought after.

Commissioner Bryant asked County Manager Dia Denton to discuss the shelter options with Christina Wells.

Terry Buffaloe spoke of function and structure of the HRC and that and believes that the HRC is a valuable resource and concerned that we have not yet reached out to the communities.

Myra questioned what proposed ideas are in place to reflect the different languages spoken in Halifax County. Commissioner Bryant replied this is a legitimate question and he currently does not have an answer for that.

Dia Denton stated that there is a Vendor that does interpretation for the County, which includes the hearing impaired.

Discussion as to how to address interpretations in different circumstances and what may be done about it, extending these ideas/solutions to municipalities.

Additionally, Stephanie asked if it would be acceptable to connect to other HRCs throughout the state, which Commissioner Bryant was agreeable to.

The revised by-laws were reviewed with County Attorney Glynn Rollins.

- Establish meetings for the year and publish on website (which has been done)
- Special meetings - Public - 48 hours not 12 not hours
- Emergency meeting – does not have to be in by-laws
- Treasurer – can have someone to track but not handle funds
- Committee appointments – via Commissioners based on members recommendations
- Auditing – not necessary

We have a tent for Harvest Days, Oct. 21<sup>st</sup> from 10am to 4pm

Meeting adjourned

## BOARD MEMBERS

BOARD MEMBER	CONTACT DETAILS
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