

Minutes of the Cook County
Commission on Human Rights – Open Session
June 10, 2021

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Attendance:

Present: Chairperson K. Gunn; Commissioners J. Block, C. Eatherton, A. Hamada, G. Orr, A. Smock, H. Ratner, Rev. R. Tolliver

Absent: Commissioners C. E. Harris II, K. Ayala-Bermejo, C. Eatherton

Staff: Director S. Baker, Legal Counsel J. King, Investigator A. Cahn, Investigator J. Jones, Administrative Analyst K. Johns

I. Open Session

A. Call to Order

Chairperson Gunn called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

B. Statements by the General Public

There were not statements by the general public.

C. Welcome of new commissioner Rev. Richard Tolliver

D. Agenda Approval

The agenda was approved and adopted by unanimous voice vote.

E. Approval of the April 15, 2021 Regular Meeting Open Minutes

The meeting minutes to the April 15, 2021 Regular Meeting Minutes were approved and adopted by unanimous voice vote.

F. Subpoena Requests

Director S. Baker discussed that because staff has had a difficult time obtaining information for cases 2021E001 and 2021E002 such as employees personnel files, etc., she has requested a subpoena on those cases. Chair Gunn pointed out that rather hold up these cases by waiting for a Board meeting, the rules state that such administrative matters are authorized to be handled by staff.

G. Respondents Request for Extension of Time

Director S. Baker noted that the Respondents in cases 2021H006, 2021JHA003 and 2021JHA004 have good reason and cause to request extension of time and that she nor staff have any objections to the requests.

H. Commission 180-day Extension for Investigation

Chair K. Gunn inquired if there had been any thought to have the 180-day requirement amended. Director S. Baker stated that the 180-day requirement can be difficult, and she would be seeking an amendment to expand the time to one year.

I. Request for Administrative Hearing

Director S. Baker noted that staff did find substantial evidence in case 2019H001 and it's ready to go to an administrative hearing law judge.

J. Approval for members of the Executive Review Committee pursuant to Sections 110 and 440.115, 440.200 of the Rules

Director S. Baker recommended that the Director, Deputy Director and Legal Counsel act as the Executive Review Committee. The Commissioners agreed to assist where needed.

K. Director's Report

Director S. Baker reported that there has been an uptick in the number of Just Housing cases coming from associations and community groups.

Director S. Baker reported that the new minimum wage was issued and became effective July 1, 2021. She noted that the minimum wage pursuant to Illinois State law increased in January 2021 and that pursuant to home rule requirements, the county's automatically goes up at that time as well. Director Baker stated that going forward, she would clarify that when State law increases every January, human rights automatically increase as well.

Director S. Baker reported that pending before the Board of Commissioners are the Covid-19 vaccination rights for employees and employer obligations. She pointed out the department will be enforcing and is expected to be reviewed at the County's intergovernmental committee meeting scheduled for June 23, 2021 and the department can draft rules related to it.

Lastly, Director Baker reported that the position for Outreach and Training Coordinator is in process. She stated that she has been working with directors at the Illinois Department of Human Rights and the Chicago Commission on Human Relations to begin meeting to discuss ways each agency can collaborate to adder human rights issues, share findings, statistics, etc.

II. Executive Session

At 10:39 a.m., the Board adjourned into Executive Session

A. Discussion of April 15, 2021 Regular Meeting Closed Minutes

The meeting minutes to the April 15, 2021 Regular Meeting Closed Minutes were accepted by unanimous voice vote.

At 10:43 a.m. by unanimous voice vote, the Board closed Executive Session.

III. Open Session II

At 10:43 a.m., the Board convened back into Open Session

A. Approval of the April 15, 2021 Regular Meeting Closed Minutes

The meeting minutes of the April 15, 2021 Regular Meeting Closed Minutes were approved and adopted by unanimous voice vote.

B. Adjourn

By unanimous voice vote the meeting adjourned at 10:48 a.m.