



Metro Human Relations Commission Full Commission Meeting Minutes

Monday, October 1, 2018, from 4:00 PM to 5:30 PM

Lentz Public Health Center

2500 Charlotte Ave, Nashville, TN 37209

The mission of the Metro Human Relations Commission is to protect and promote the personal dignity, peace, safety, security, health, and general welfare of all people in Nashville and Davidson County.

I. **CALL TO ORDER:** MHRC Board Chair, Janice Rodriguez

The meeting was called to order at 4:04p.

Commissioners in Attendance: *Janice Rodriguez, Marisa Richmond, Lethia Mann, Kobie Pretorius, Samar Ali, Oscar Miller, Erin Pryor, Avi Poster, Jeff Gibson, Aisha Lbhalla, Phyllis Hildreth, Linda Robinson*

Commissioners Not in Attendance: *Jeremy Davis, Dave Garrison, Marcela Gómez, Rev. Davie Tucker, Irwin Venick*

Others in Attendance: *Mel Fowler-Green, Sarah Imran, Mayor David Briley (+2), Ashford Hughes, Vanessa Lazon, Hershell Warren*

II. **CONFIRM QUOROM** (Share regrets from Commissioners not in attendance; introduce guests)

III. **REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Comm. Pretorius pointed out a spelling mistake in her name. Minutes were reviewed and approved.

IV. **FINANCIAL REPORT:** Executive Director, Mel Fowler-Green

Reviewed budget. E.D. Fowler-Green Expects to have year-end savings as requested by Finance. Required savings will be achieved by cutting down on some sponsorships with no effect of direct constituent services. The Community Fund is also an available funding option for programming such as the annual Music City Iftar.

V. **TWO MEETING GUESTS:**

1. Mayor David Briley
2. Ashford Hughes

VI. **Mayor David Briley:**

- Became Mayor a little over six months. Started at time when trust was not great in the city. Was also a time when economic growth and vitality was at its highest. 2017 GDP increase in Nashville was 4.7% - 5th highest in the country. 5th highest wage growth in the country. At the same time, there has been data to indicate more than this. White Nashvillians are seeing wage growth while the Black community is not.

- Some main focus areas: Public Education and Public Safety.
- Public Education: A new Education Advisor was just added to the Mayor's office, Indira Dammu (first Indian immigrant to work in the Mayor's office). Helping define a path forward and find the resources to make that possible. Nashville has a low utilization of Tennessee promise. Literacy rate is also low in Nashville. Mayor's office is working with partner organizations to improve the literacy rate.
- Policing: Gideon's army wrote the Driving while Black report. Mayor's Office continued engagement with The Policing Project out of NYU. They have been granted greater access to police data to try to engage in a cost-benefit analysis into police stops and searches – addressing the social costs, and what is the efficacy of the way the stops are being done. Recommendations are expected to be made later in October and the Mayor's Office commits that recommendations will be implemented.
- Referendum on the ballot in November. Mayor stated that he does not support the amendment as written for multiple reasons. Police should also be at the table when designing accountability. Review boards that work the best are ones where police have more buy in. Believes in treating workers fairly and considers police to be workers just like any other government employee. Disagrees with budgeting in the charter. Also expressed the need to have a more thorough conversation before designing a charter and COB. That did not happen this time. Committed that there will be community oversight whether the amendment passes or not.
- Prosperity of African American community is another priority. The city will be investing 2.2 mil in the renovation of the Mcgruder Center – a center for economic prosperity. Partnerships with United Way and Catholic Charities underway.
- City will work hard to provide opportunities to prosperity so more families have the chance to take part in the economic success of the city.
- Question (from Comm. Linda Robinson): How are you planning on raising the funds to support Dr. Joseph and MNPS?
- Mayor's answer: The District and the board have to demonstrate more acumen when managing their budget. MNPS has 50 schools that are 70% capacity or less, i.e. almost a third of the schools. The majority of these schools are priority list schools. Resources are not being managed as well as they should be.

Revenue: We spent \$800 more per student than we did ten years ago (adjusted for inflation). This year, we got \$40 million less than expected on property appraisal taxes. In next year's budget we hope to provide at least a cost of living adjustment for teachers. Mayor's next year will involve working to reach a common set of facts so we can come together as a community to better manage resources and raise funds needed for schools.

- Question (from Comm. Richmond): Transgender employees - what can be done to provide full healthcare benefits to transgender employees?

- Answer: We currently have a draft score from the Human Rights Campaign: 63/100. We did not get points for full health insurance for trans employees. That request should be made to the benefits board, and doesn't believe it would be a heavy lift.
- Questions (from Com. Hildreth): When and how will the findings from the Policing Project be reported in a transparent and accessible way?
- Answer: There will a presentation from the Policing Project staff + statisticians from Stanford. The idea is to have a public meeting to explain this.
- Question (from Comm. Hildreth): You mentioned that improvements are needed for de-escalation and use of force. Is training a bit too late? Is there a way to look at selection and promotion of the force?
- Answer: Marcus Floyd has joined the office.

Mel Fowler-Green mentioned meetings and working with Marcus Floyd, including on issues of selection and promotion.

- Question (from Comm. Poster): I have watched the maturation of this table from when I first joined to where it is now, largely because of our ED, and also because the people on this table are of the highest pedigree. We have the capacity to reach deep into the community. What can we be doing?
- Answer: in terms of what this commission can do: I consider this commission to be partners in the policing work we are doing.
- Question (from Comm. Poster): I understand the role of Mayor in terms of putting our best foot forward. But I am concerned with messaging. As much as we have economic growth, it is reaped by the higher economic class. Housing costs going up, wages not keeping up. Also, how welcoming are we?
- Answer: You will continue to see action on all the points you have raised. We have lost a lot of staff on the past year. And I think it's difficult to appreciate how hard it has been for us and how much it has slowed us down internally.
- Mayor says that he recognizes that things aren't getting better for everyone in this city, Expresses commitment to making things better for them. In the last year wages have gone up, and housing has gone down. Provided example of San Francisco. SF has a radical supply problem. That is not true for Nashville. We do have the space and capacity to build more affordable housing. Also, it is as important if not more important to focus on education, capacity development and skills building in people as it is to build houses.

VII. **Ashford Hughes:**

- This is our third disparity study; first in 1990s, second 12 years ago.
- More common for these studies to be conducted every 5 years.
- The study period is from 2013-2017. Shows there is an underutilization of ethnic minorities and

women owned businesses in Metro procurement partners.

- The study presents ten recommendations.
- Mayor wants the team to move forward on all recommendations in the study. 20 year plan to ensure that ethnic minorities and women are also to reap the benefits of this rapidly growing city.
- As the team works with council and stakeholder groups, they need the support of the Commission to ensure passage of a robust piece of legislation. Help people understand how equity in contracting with black and brown and female led business is important to close this wealth gap.
- Public town hall: Commission requested to help plan and implement such an event.
- Question (from Comm. Hildreth): In the age of Twitter, how would you tweet this? How would you communicate this in an elevator pitch? In the era that we are in and the way people consume information, this information is too important to get lost. What is the communication plan?
- Answer: Still working on it. The plan is to focus on 5-6 talking points that will be honed in on and highlighted. Also, a new social media person coming onboard.
- • Commission members and Mel Fowler promise that members and staff will communicate this message in our circles.

VIII. ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Commissioner Richmond shares that Barbara is getting an award from Nashville Black Pride on October 12th.
- Commissioner Poster shares that Charles Strobel is also being honored for his lifelong service.

IX. ADJOURN

Comm. Rodriguez moved to adjourn. Comm. Hildreth seconded. Meeting was adjourned at 5:50p.

MHRC Priorities

Racial/Social Inequity

Affordable and Fair Housing

Law Enforcement/Policing

Title VI

Appeal of Decisions From the Metro Human Relations Commission

If you are not satisfied with a decision of the Metropolitan Human Relations Commission, you may appeal the decision by petitioning for a writ of certiorari with the Davidson County Chancery or Circuit Court. Your appeal must be filed within 60 days of the date of the entry of the Human Relations Commission's decision. We advise that you seek your own independent legal advice to ensure that your appeal is filed in a timely manner and that all procedural requirements have been met.

If any accommodations are needed for individuals with disabilities who wish to be present at the meeting, please contact MHRC at 615-880-3370 or MHRC@nashville.gov. Requests should be made as soon as possible but at least 24 hours prior to the scheduled meeting in order for the entity to provide such needed aid or service.