



Governor Kim Reynolds
Lt. Governor Adam Gregg
San Wong, Director

Iowa Department of Human Rights
Minutes of DHR Virtual Board Meeting
December 2, 2020 2:00-3:30 pm

Members present

- Chair Floyd Winter, Public Member
- LaSheila Yates, Public Member
- Dr. Ahmadu Baba-Singhri, Commission on the Status of African Americans
- Anna Brown, Commission on Community Action Agencies
- Elizabeth Coonan, Commission on the Status of Women
- Ben Jung, Commission of Asian/Pacific Islander Affairs
- Telina McKenna-Quintana, Commission of Deaf Services
- Judge Jeff Neary, Justice Advisory Board
- Karen Mackey, Commission of Native American Affairs
- San Wong, Director, Iowa Department of Human Rights (ex-officio)

Members Absent

- Michelle Ray Michalec, Commission of Persons with Disabilities
- Rep. Holly Brink, Iowa House of Representatives (ex-officio)
- Rep. Phyllis Thede, Iowa House of Representatives (ex-officio)
- Senator Zach Wahls, Iowa Senate (ex-officio)
- Senator Zach Whiting, Iowa Senate (ex-officio)

DHR Staff Present

- Bill Brand, Administrator, Division of Community Action Agencies
- Jim Mezera, Fiscal Officer
- Steve Michael, Administrator, Division of Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning
- Monica Stone, Deputy Director and Administrator, Division of Community Advocacy and Services
- Sonya Streit, Executive Officer 2
- Sonia Reyes, Executive Officer 1, Office of Latino Affairs

Guests Present

- Caroline Barrett, Assistant Attorney General
- Megan Hall, Policy Advisor, Governor's Office
- Carrie Wood, American Sign Language Interpreter
- Jeff Reese, American Sign Language Interpreter
- Rep. Chuck Isenhart, Iowa House of Representatives

1. Call to Order and Introductions

Chair Winter called the meeting to order. A quorum was present. Introductions were made.

2. Approval of Minutes

Judge Neary moved to approve the minutes from the December 2, 2020, meeting, seconded by Mackey. Motion carried by voice vote.

3. Board Updates

a. Lasheila Yates reported that the Multicultural Institute and Newbo City Market hosted the second Black owned business market. Eighteen vendors that were black business owners sold a variety of products and services. She hopes to continue the partnership and get more exposure in Cedar Rapids.

b. Commission on the Status of African Americans

Dr. Baba-Singhri reported that the Commission elected Lynn Sutton as the new Assistant Chair for the Commission. The Commission plans to meet this week or next week to review their letter to governor.

c. Commission on the Status of Women

Commissioner Beth Coonan reported that a video was created for the 2020 Women's Hall of Fame in lieu of an in-person ceremony due to COVID-19. The nomination process for the 2021 Women's Hall of Fame will begin soon.

The Commission met on December 2, 2021, and set their legislative priorities, which include defining domestic violence and domestic assault.

The Commission joined a coalition that supports the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). The Commission may be planning a forum in early 2021 with U.S. Senators Grassley and Ernst to discuss the ERA.

The Commission will be working with a handful of states in the region to share aspects of the Iowa Talent Bank.

d. Commission of Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs

Commissioner Ben Jung reported that the Commission will follow up with the Governor's office regarding two issues: 1) Medicaid for COFA migrants, and 2)

the sharing of drivers license information between the Iowa Department of Transportation and the Census Bureau.

The Commission will meet on December 12 to discuss goals and priorities for 2021.

e. Commission of Native American Affairs

Commissioner Karen Mackey reported that the Commission met on November 5. They continue to encourage local school districts to not have Native Americans as mascots. One of the commissioners developed a letter to editor on the use of mascots, which was published to Des Moines Register.

f. Justice Advisory Board

Judge Neary reported that the Justice Advisory Board met on December 4, 2021. They coalesced to discuss the recommendations in the Three-year Criminal and Juvenile Justice Plan dated December 1, 2021. The new Vice Chair of the Justice Advisory Board is John Haila, Mayor of Ames.

The Justice Advisory Board identified the following three-year goals:

- Racial justice – ending racial profiling; eliminate racial disparities to create an unbiased criminal and juvenile justice system; eliminate disparities in excessive use of force and death and custody situations; study and gather information.
- Mental Health – identify needs, provide safe treatment and living conditions with mental health needs.
- Community based corrections and alternatives – reduce recidivism, reduce revocations and increase use of treatment courts.
- Sex offenders – study effect of sentences; examine technical violations which may lead to returning to prison or additional time to serve; examine efficacy of sex offender residency restrictions.

The Justice Advisory Board will work in conjunction with the Governor's FOCUS committee and other organizations.

g. Commission of Deaf Services

Commissioner Telina McKenna-Quintana reported that the Commission will meet in January 2021.

4. Department Report

Director Wong reported that DHR Day on the Hill is scheduled for February 25, 2021. Given the COVID-19 pandemic, the plans have yet to be determined.

The Department continues to support other organizations and collaborate with them to help lowans during the pandemic.

5. Division Updates

a. Division of Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning

Administrator Steve Michael reported that DHR Juvenile Justice Specialist Dave Kuker is retiring after 30 years. Jill Padgett, who worked at Des Moines Public School District, was hired to fill his position.

The COVID-19 and Racial Justice Youth Action Squads are each meeting weekly and learning leadership skills, advocacy, research, and developing action plans.

The following reports were published recently and available on the DHR website: Justice Advisory Board Three-Year Criminal and Juvenile Justice Plan; Iowa Prison Population Forecast; and Racial Disparities on Juvenile Justice Decision Points.

DHR/CJJP submitted a prefiled bill for the legislature to amend state law to comply with federal law regarding juvenile detention facilities. Federal law requires states to forbid youth who will be tried as adults to be held in adult jails—they should be held in juvenile detention centers. There are exceptions to the law.

b. Division of Community Action Agencies

Administrator Bill Brand reported that the Commission on Community Action Agencies met in November 2020. Their legislative recommendations centered on two main areas: 1) support for FADSS program that works with families to attain self-sufficiency; and 2) improve state's childcare assistance to receive for a longer period of time as they move out of poverty.

Congress has not passed the budget for Federal Fiscal Year that began October 1, 2021.

The Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) began October 1. Applications are accepted online or by phone during COVID-19.

c. Division of Community Advocacy and Services (CAS)

Administrator Monica Stone reported that the Iowa Talent Bank has a mentorship component. Those who serve on boards and commissions can be matched with a mentee.

The Latino Hall of Fame ceremony had a closed ceremony that was shown on Facebook. You can visit the Iowa Department of Human Rights' Facebook page or website for information on the ceremony.

EducAsian scholarship recipient video can viewed on youtube:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EIM9uDyXrOo&feature=youtu.be>

6. Public comment

Rep. Chuck Isenhart stated that COVID-19 has a disproportionate impact on minorities and communities. He would like to see early access to the vaccine for vulnerable populations.

Healthcare access for COFA migrants is important. The Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs sent a letter asking the Governor for a state waiver to allow COFA Migrants to be part of Iowa's Medicaid program. He would like the process to be accelerated.

Rep. Isenhart expressed concern regarding low attendance by legislators who are on the DHR Board.

7. The next DHR Board meeting will be held on February 25, 2021.

Dr. Baba-Singhri moved to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Coonan. Motion carried by voice vote.