



MINUTES OF DHR BOARD MEETING

March 1, 2022 1:30 – 3:00 via Zoom

Members Present

- Chair Judge Jeffrey Neary, Justice Advisory Board
- 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 and Pacific Islander Affairs
- Telina McKenna-Quintana, Commission of Deaf Services
- Timothy Perkins, Commission of Native American Affairs
- Rachelle Hunt Russian, Public Member
- Michael Sullivan, Public Member
- Senator Sarah Trone Garriott, Iowa Senate
- San Wong, DHR Director

Members Absent

- Marlu Abarca, Commission of Latino Affairs
- Beth Wilde, Commission of Persons with Disabilities
- Senator Dennis Guth, Iowa Senate
- Rep. Amy Nielsen, Iowa House of Representatives
- Rep. Carter Nordman, Iowa House of Representatives

Guests Present

- Caroline Barrett, Assistant Iowa Attorney General
- Peggy Chicoine, American Sign Language Interpreter
- Jeff Reese, American Sign Language Interpreter

1. Chair Judge Neary called the meeting to order. A quorum was present. Introductions were made of new DHR Board members.
2. Beth Coonan moved to approve the November 1, 2021, minutes as corrected; seconded by Tim Perkins. Motion passed by voice vote.
3. Coonan moved to approve the minutes of the December 1, 2021, meeting; seconded by Dr. Baba-Singhri. Motion passed by voice vote.

4. Department Updates

- a. **Department Report** - Director Wong reported that the DHR Day on the Hill was held on March 1, 2022, with a focus on youth programs. DHR provided youth program participants with opportunities to learn about state government, job shadow, and visit

with leaders in the executive, judicial, and legislative branches. Between 40 and 50 youth participated in those activities.

- b. **Administrative Rules** – Sonya Streit reported that the administrative rules have moved through the rulemaking process and became effective February 2, 2022.
- c. **Strengthening Families** – Bill Brand reported that applications are being accepted through April 30, 2022, for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), which helps eligible households with a one-time payment towards their home energy bills. The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds were used for Emergency Crisis Intervention Program assistance to households facing utility disconnection, are disconnected, or need furnace repair or replacement. ARPA funds were also used to increase the average benefit per household for the regular LIHEAP program and serve additional households.

In-person in-home visits have resumed with the Family Development and Self-Sufficiency Program (FaDSS). Virtual visits may be made in certain circumstances.

- d. **Youth Engagement** – Steve Michael gave an overview of the various youth programs. Recent activities included job shadowing and visiting with state leaders. Some youth who job shadowed in the Secretary of State’s Office also registered to vote, and then were invited to the Governor’s Office for a proclamation signing of Iowa High School Voter Registration Day.

A new initiative is the Youth Opportunity Pathway, which will provide continuing opportunities for youth leadership, skill development, research, civic engagement, and educational and career development.

- e. **Broader Impacts** - Monica Stone reported that the Department has completed the development of its Language Access Dashboard that allows Iowans to explore which languages are spoken, and where, in the state.

The Department is a member of the Disaster PrepWise Advisory Committee to help older Iowans prepare for disasters. The Committee plans to create a portal that allows Iowans to share their preparedness documents with local emergency response organizations so that they can more effectively provide services to individuals in great need quickly in case of emergency, and to provide the tool in other languages.

With an increase in requests from local governments regarding establishing of Human Rights organizations, the Department created the Local Human Rights Commissions Organizational Framework Models Guide. This guide was adopted by the City of Ottumwa, and the Department has been invited to present this guide at the upcoming Iowa League of Cities Conference.

The Department is partnering with the Iowa Developmental Disabilities Council and the Governor’s Office to develop and deliver training for board/commission administrators throughout the state on how to be inclusive of persons with disabilities

on a board or commission, as well as in public participation.

5. Updates from Board Members

- a. **Commission on the Status of African Americans** – Dr. Baba-Singhri stated that the Commission has not met but does plan to meet in March 2022. Dr. Baba-Singhri asked what the policy and procedure are regarding scheduling a meeting with the Governor, given a meeting has not been scheduled when the Commission requested one last year.
- b. **Boards and Commissions Training** – In response to Dr. Baba-Singhri's question, Judge Neary and Assistant Attorney General Caroline Barrett stated that they are working on a legal overview for AAG Barrett to present to DHR boards and commissions that will outline their roles, responsibilities, and statutory requirements, including laws about lobbying. This training will help with continuity of understanding across the boards and commissions about state and department policies and procedures.
- c. **Commission on the Status of Women** – Beth Coonan reported that the Commission met on March 1, 2022, and adopted a policy statement to guide decision making. The Commission is gathering information on the impact of COVID-19 on women in the workplace and addressing other topics such as paid family leave, discrimination, sexual harassment, and violence against women. For Women's History Month (March), the Commission is seeking nominations for the Iowa Women's Hall of Fame.
- d. **Commission of Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs** – Ben Jung reported that the Commission met and set long-term priorities such as education and youth.

CelebrAsian Asian Heritage Festival will be held in May in Des Moines.

Jung and DHR staff members, Trevy Augustin and Sonya Streit, provided an interview with Mike Pace/*Pace of the City* cable access channel about their refugee stories and issues facing the Asian community.
- e. **Justice Advisory Board** - Judge Neary reported that the Justice Advisory Board met on March 1. They are working on a survey regarding law enforcement encounters with mental health crisis, reviewed pending legislation regarding sex offenders, will make recommendations to legislature.
- f. **Commission of Deaf Services** – Telina McKenna-Quintana reported that the Commission has not met yet. No new business at this time.
- g. **Commission of Native American Affairs** – Timothy Perkins reported that the Commission will meet on March 10 to work on priorities. The Commission continues to educate schools about the use of Native American mascots. Perkins shared that there is a new center at University of Iowa Hospital and Clinics that addresses

trauma and resiliency in Native American children and families.

The 100-year anniversary of Native Americans being granted U.S. citizenship will occur on June 2, 2024,

6. Public comment – none.
7. Perkins moved to adjourn, seconded by Jung. Motion passed by voice vote.

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