



Community Relations Commission
~ Minutes ~

Thursday, December 12, 2019

City Hall, Second Floor
Rockford, IL 61104
<http://www.rockfordil.gov/>

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Todd Burton called the meeting to order at 5:37 p.m.

A. Roll Call

Commissioner Name	Status
Eric Brown	Present
Todd Burton	Present
Jurea Crudup	Absent
Victoria De La Rosa	Absent
Erin Hannigan	Present
Nikki Lynch	Present
William Martin	Present
Anqunette Parham	Absent
Ricardo Montoya Picazo	Present
Charles Prorok	Present
Jay Ware	Present

B. Acceptance of Proceedings for the Community Relations Commission meeting held on November 14, 2019.

Commissioner Ware Made a MOTION TO AMENDED the Minutes from November 14, 2019 to say the Cultural problem in District 205. District 205 kids are not considering these higher paying jobs, relative to surrounding districts on page 5. Commissioner Brown SECONDED the MOTION. CARRIED 8-0

II. PUBLIC SPEAKERS

There were no Public Speakers.

III. INFORMATION ONLY

A. Human Rights Campaign Municipal Equality Index: City of Rockford Progress and Opportunities

Nicholas Meyer, Legal Director, stated that the City has been working to increase its score on the Human Rights Campaign Municipal Equality Index (MEI), noting that the City staff who have worked most closely on this were not able to be present at the meeting, including Wester Wouri, Chief of Staff in the Mayor’s Office,

Shurice Hunter, Director of Human Resources, and Zack Wallace, former intern with the Mayor's Office.

Director Meyer noted that the City improved its score by 20 points from 2018 to 2019, and that establishment of the Community Relations Commission was one of the efforts undertaken in response to the City's desire to improve its equality efforts. In the next twelve months, Director Meyer indicated that the City is looking at establishing an LGBTQ liaison in the Mayor's Office. He also stated the City will be working through its Human Services Department to see about improving outreach and services to LGBTQ youth, homeless people, and elders, as well as the HIV/AIDS population and the transgender community.

Phyllis Gallisath, Founder and President of PFLAG Rockford and Skye Gia Garcia, a transgender advocate from PFLAG, addressed the Commission regarding the City's performance on the MEI. Gallisath recognized the work the City has done to improve and noted that PFLAG has played an instrumental part in working with the City to improve its score over the last three years. Gallisath stated the most important area that needs improvement is the LGBTQ police liaison task force. Her recommendation was to establish a diversity task force umbrella and under the umbrella to have people from different minority groups such as LGBTQ, disabled, ethnic, and racial groups so that the task force can work together and in more than one area.

Gallisath also stated that inclusive workplace is only two points, but she feels it is extremely important for partnerships and training and that partnering with different minority groups, not just PFLAG, is very important. PFLAG does training in schools, in employment places, and can come and do gender 101, and LGBTQ overview presentations. She also recommended that the City's Minority and Women Business Enterprise Certification application be revised to leave blank the gender/sex question so that individuals can determine for themselves their gender/sex rather than providing only "male" and "female" as answers. Gallisath concluded by noting that the City's improving inclusivity in the workplace is really about being intentional in its efforts, and that she believes putting an employee liaison in place will help to implement the intentional efforts needed.

Garcia commented that it would have been nice to see all Commissioners present at the meeting and that there are many individuals in the community that would love to have the opportunity to make the kind of impact that the Commission can make.

B. Departmental Overview: Public Works Department

Kyle Saunders, Director of Public Works, provided a presentation describing the work of the City's Public Works Department. Information provided included:

- The Public Works Department consists of 164 employees in addition to the Director.
- Director Saunders did an overview of the divisions in Public Works Department.

Street Maintenance Division

- City-wide street sweeping services, all street patching and repair, and road and bridge maintenance.
- Maintenance and repair of all storm sewers, including the management of inlet repair and conveyance systems as well as the cleaning of basins, inlet/outlet structures, and channels (et al.)
- Trimming and removal of trees, removal of tree stumps, as well as the maintenance of drainage ways and (other) greenways.
- Responsible for ensuring the streets are free of snow and ice during winter months.

Traffic Division

- Installation and maintenance of traffic signals, corridor signal systems, emergency vehicle preemption, and special event traffic control equipment.
- Roadway sign fabrication, installation and maintenance of roadway signs and pavement marking maintenance within the City.
- Repair of City-owned street lighting equipment within the downtown and other outlying districts.

Parking Division

- The primary function of the Parking Division is to provide surface lot/parking deck maintenance as well as the oversight of a third-party operator (ABM).

Internal Service Divisions

- Property Division – maintenance and repair services to COR facilities
- Equipment Division – municipal fleet management
- Central Supply Division – inventory management for operating divisions

Engineering/CIP Division

- Provide design services and construction management for all capital construction projects.
- Planning, development, and management (implementation) of the City's 5-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP)
- Review and approval of plans for single site subdivision development
- Permitting work within the ROW and record keeping of the City's infrastructure (GIS)

- Engineering analyses related to the safe and efficient movement of traffic, intersection studies, geometric design, land development, et al.

Water Division

- Production Section – Operation and maintenance of water supply wells, booster pumps, ground-level and elevated storage, water treatment equipment, water quality, cross-connection control, and facility management.
- Distribution Section – Maintenance, repair, and replacement of water mains and associated service laterals, valves, and fire hydrants.
- Field Services Section – Respond to customer concerns, meter reading(s), installation/replacement of water meters, and service calls.
- Administrative Section – Responsible for all division administration, fiscal control, system planning, contractual services, and payroll.
- Director Saunders noted that the City of Rockford Water Division is very proactive in how it handles lead.

C. Departmental Overview: Finance Department

Carrie Hagerty, Director of the Finance Department, stated that her department consists of thirty-two employees in addition to the Director; there are 13 degreed professionals, 1 non-union administrative and 18 AFSCME union clerks and customer service staff. The Department consists of the following Divisions and responsibilities:

Finance Administration

- Department management and oversight
- Revenue projections and management, including the annual property tax levy
- Debt issuance
- Debt management
- Administrative support for the Finance & Personnel Committee

Accounting Division

- General accounting, including significant state and federal grant accounting
- Annual Audit and internal controls
- Accounts payable
- General billing
- Banking and investments
- Payroll
- Pension benefits

Central Services Division

- Coordinating and compiling annual budget

- Budget amendments
- Monthly budget reporting and analysis
- Central oversight of purchasing
- Bid/RFP issuance and award
- Pcard management
- Risk management (in conjunction with Legal Department)

Customer Service Division

- Water billing, including bill preparation and distribution
- Water customer service and support
- Business license issuance/renewal
- Payment processing

IV. COMMISSIONERS REPORTS

Commissioner Lynch stated she braved the elements and went to Stroll on State and believes events like this are where Rockford pride shows and enjoys seeing families coming out for it. She wished everyone a Happy Holiday.

Commissioner Martin stated he started a conversation about the underserved and underprivileged children on the southwest side with Jeff Bailey of the Chamber of Commerce as well as the Chief of the Park District Police, Theo Glover. He would like some type of program that would involve that side of town and help out Blackhawk. There will be more information to come.

Commissioner Ware stated that there is going to be an organizing meeting on Tuesday, December 17, 2019 at Unitarian Universalist Church to start an initiative related to belonging. Dr. John Powell is going to be speaking in the fall. Commissioner Ware became aware of this about 4 years ago, that a friends 20 something year old son was driving home and the police started to follow him in an unmarked car and didn't turn their lights until the kid was almost to his parents. He pulled into the driveway, police turned their lights on and looked at him, the kid had weed on him, not an illegal amount. After all of that, they took the kid downtown, then the states attorney's office sent a letter to the father's house that said they found a controlled substance on your property, it was in his kids car, and basically threatened him. We find it again within twelve months there will be all sorts of trouble and it terrorized his family. He wanted to bring this up to this committee because if he doesn't get some satisfaction about that I would like to show this to you all.

Commissioner Montoya Picazo stated that he as attended various neighborhood revitalization strategic meetings that the City of Rockford has been hosting throughout the City. One of the things he heard was a lot of people having issues being the rentee against the landlords. It seems like the landlords continue to

abuse the rentees on multiple issues, so he thinks the Community Relations Committee should take this on as it moves forward for the 2020 year.

Commissioner Brown stated the City just released their Consolidated Plan and they announced their impediments to fair housing. The Community Relations Committee is mentioned in both of those reports. There are Consolidated Plan public meetings on December 16th at Katie's Cup at 3:00 p.m. on December 18th at 5:45 p.m. at City Hall. Commissioner Brown raised that there would be a benefit in bringing the folks that worked on these in to talk to the Commission.

Commissioner Burton stated the Commission is rapidly working its way through the City Department overview presentations and has the Mayor's Office, Human Services, and Police and Fire left to go. He indicated the Commission needs to start developing agendas and identifying those things that it wants to work on through during 2020. He asked that Commissioners let him know if they have particular thoughts, people they want to hear from, or organizations they want to bring in and he will work with City staff to coordinate that. Commissioner Burton also invited everyone to a New Year's Day party from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. at his home. Commissioner Burton stated that he will not be attending the next Commission meeting on January 9th, 2020. In his absence, Commissioner Brown will stand in to chair January's meeting.

Director Meyer stated that the census would be coming up in 2020, which is very important to the Commission. A lot of the funding that the City of Rockford receives is based on its population. The City has a very diverse population, and needs everyone's help in ensuring that all people are counted. Director Meyer asked the Commission to spread the word in the community about how important it is for people to participate. Director Meyer also asked Commissioners to, if possible, bring flyers about the events they bring to the attention of the Commission so that the City can do its best to share the information with the public.

V. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Martin made a MOTION to ADJOURN. Commissioner Brown SECONDED the MOTION. CARRIED 8-0
The meeting adjourned at 6:42 p.m.