

MICHIGAN CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION SPECIAL MEETING

Wednesday, September 30, 2020 ~ 5:00 P.M.

Virtual Meeting: Zoom web conferencing platform; Livestreamed via You Tube and Facebook

In compliance with the State of Michigan's Open Meetings Act, "the minutes must show the date, time, place, members present, members absent, any decisions made at a meeting open to the public, and the purpose(s) for which a closed session is held; the minutes must also include all roll call votes taken at the meeting." The minutes are limited to these requirements and do not reflect all subject matter that occurred during the Commission meeting. Meetings are audio recorded and kept on file with the MDCR.

MINUTES

PRESENT: Commission Chair Stacie Clayton
Commission Vice Chair Laura Reyes Kopack
Commission Secretary Jeff Sakwa
Commissioner Ira Combs, Jr.
Commissioner Denise Grim
Commissioner Zenna Elhasan
Commissioner Portia Roberson

EXCUSED: Commissioner Regina Gasco Bentley

CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

The meeting of the Michigan Civil Rights Commission was called to order by Chair Clayton at 5:01 P.M. Roll Call of the Commissioners was taken by Clerk Dan Levy to determine a quorum. Commissioner Clayton, Commissioner Kopack, Commissioner Sakwa, Commissioner Grim, Commissioner Elhasan, Commissioner Roberson were present. With five of eight Commissioners present, quorum requirements were met. *Commissioner Combs and Commissioner Roberson joined the meeting shortly after the roll was called and before any votes.*

WELCOME

Chair Clayton welcomed participants to the meeting by way of Zoom web conferencing and Facebook / You Tube livestream platforms.

Chair Clayton called for a moment of silence to honor the life of United States Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, who passed away on September 18, 2020.

Chair Clayton welcomed the new Department Director, James White; Mary Engelman was also recognized for her service as Interim Executive Director.

HOUSEKEEPING RULES FOR MAKING PUBLIC COMMENT

Interim Executive Director Mary Engelman provided instructions regarding Public Comment.

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APPROVAL OF MEETING AGENDA

MOTION: Move to Amend the Meeting Agenda by moving Agenda Item X to follow Item VII. Following discussion, on Motion duly made (Kopack) and supported (Combs), the Meeting Agenda was Amended. Motion carried unanimously.

ADOPTION OF CONSENT AGENDA

MOTION: Move to Adopt the Consent Agenda as submitted. No discussion initiated. On Motion duly made (Combs) and supported (Roberson), the Consent Agenda was Adopted. Motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM AUGUST 24, 2020 MEETING

MOTION: Move to Approve the Minutes as submitted. No discussion initiated. On Motion duly made (Sakwa) and supported (Combs), the August 24, 2020 Commission meeting Minutes were Approved. Motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chuck Heit, Undersheriff, Berrien County Sheriff's Office
Mr. Heit spoke in support of Senate Bill 321 regarding the Michigan Law Enforcement Memorial Wall, 2 Berrien County officers killed in the line of duty have not been added to the Memorial Wall because they were not MCOLES certified.

Rebecca Cory
Ms. Cory is a claimant who filed an age discrimination complaint with the MDCR, and brought concerns about the handling of the investigation.

Ms. George, Advance Practice Registered Nurse
Ms. George brought concerns about the impacts of structural racism on the African-American Community.

The Honorable Gary Bruce, Berrien County Trial Court Justice, Criminal Division
Judge Bruce spoke in support of Senate Bill 321 noting the omission of the names of the Berrien County Court officers killed in the line of duty in 2016, from the Michigan State Law Enforcement Memorial Wall, as they were not MCOLES certified.

Diana Marin, Attorney, Michigan Immigrant Rights Center
Ms. Marin brought concerns regarding the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the MSFW community. Ms. Marin asked the Commission to investigate non-compliance of the implementation of the Governor's Executive Order for free COVID-19 testing, which violates the ELCRA.

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PRESENTATION ON SB-321, John F. Szczubelek

Mr. Szczubelek's presentation focused on his opposition of Senate Bill 321, which he believes violates the ELCRA in that criteria to qualify for the names of law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty being inscribed to the Michigan State Law Enforcement Memorial Monument is discriminatory. Mr. Szczubelek asked the Commission to consider communicating to the Governor the Commission's opposition to SB-321. SB-321 has already passed the legislature.

Dan Levy provided an analysis of SB-321 for the Commission.

There was no action taken by the Commission.

DELIBERATIONS AND VOTE FOR EDUCATION EQUITY IN MICHIGAN REPORT

Chair Clayton called upon consultants Teresa Bingman and TJ Bucholz of Vanguard Public Affairs and Alfredo Hernandez of MDCR to provide brief remarks and were on hand for questions from Commissioners. Dr. Michael Rice, Superintendent of the Michigan Department of Education and Kyle Guerrant, Deputy Superintendent of Finance and Operations for the Michigan Department of Education also provided brief remarks. Former commissioners Rasha Demashkieh and Mumtaz Haque were acknowledged for their work on the report during their term, and were brought online for brief remarks.

MOTION: Move to Adopt the Education Equity in Michigan Report. No discussion initiated. On Motion duly made (Combs) and supported (Elhasan), the Education Equity in Michigan Report was Adopted. Motion carried unanimously.

Roll Call:

Chair Clayton – Y

Commissioner Kopack – Y

Commissioner Sakwa - Y

Commissioner Combs - Y

Commissioner Grim - Y

Commissioner Elhasan - Y

Commissioner Roberson - Y

DIVISION REPORTS

Director's Report, James White, Executive Director

Director White was appointed on August 24, 2020, and his term began September 21, 2020, Director White provided brief introductory remarks, and reported on his activity with the Department thus far.

Budget Report, Mary Engelman, Deputy Director

Ms. Engelman provided a brief report on the Department's budget.

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COMMISSION BUSINESS

Chair Report, Stacie Clayton

Chair Clayton was joined by Sylvia Elliott to acknowledge her service as Senior Advisor to the Commission. Ms. Elliott retired September 4, 2020 following 23 years of service.

Attorney General Report, Ron Robinson, Assistant Attorney General

Mr. Robinson provided status updates on the following cases: ***American Freedom Law Center v. Michigan Department of Civil Rights and the Michigan Attorney General; Roush World v. Uproot Electrolysis; Defillippis v. City of Redford and the Michigan Department of Civil Rights.***

Proposed 2021 Commission Meeting Schedule

Chair Clayton proposed the following dates for consideration for the 2021 Commission Meeting Schedule: January 25, 2021; March 22, 2021; May 24, 2021; July 26, 2021; September 27, 2021, November 22, 2021. These dates will be deliberated and voted on at the next Commission meeting.

ONGOING BUSINESS

There was no ongoing business.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

COMMISSIONER COMMENT

Commissioner Roberson announced that FOCUS: HOPE is hosting a community event entitled "Virtual Weekend of HOPE" October 9-11, 2020. All are welcome to participate. More information may be found on the website: www.focushope.edu/weekend .

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Move to Adjourn. No discussion initiated.

On Motion duly made (Combs) and supported (Sakwa), the meeting of the Michigan Civil Rights Commission Adjourned at 6:39 P.M. Motion carried unanimously.

The next regular meeting of the Michigan Civil Rights Commission will convene on November 23, 2020 at 5:00 P.M. at a location to be determined.

MINUTES APPROVED AT NOVEMBER 23, 2020 MEETING.