

**URBANA HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION  
MINUTES  
November 14, 2001**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Naomi Jakobsson, Cope Cumpston, Lester Pritchard, Marion Knight, Willeta Donaldson, Myrna Golden, Ralph Langenheim, Jean Gomez Talley, Turhan Peacock

**STAFF PRESENT:** Bruce Walden, Vacellia Clark

**GUESTS:** Amy Kummerow, Ruth Fliegel, Esther Patt

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The regular meeting of the Urbana Human Relations Commission was called to order at 5:35 p.m.

**II. INTRODUCTION OF NEW COMMISSIONER**

New Commissioner Turhan Peacock was introduced and welcomed to the Commission.

**III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of October 10, 2001 were reviewed. A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes as presented.

**All voted aye. The minutes of the meeting of October 10, 2001 were approved as presented.**

**IV. UPDATE – DIVERSITY/HIRING PROCESS**

Bruce Walden, Chief Administrative Officer, addressed the Commission concerning staff's review of diversity in the hiring process. Lester Pritchard suggested that questions to Mr. Walden's presentation be formulated and have a subcommittee review to present at the next commission meeting.

Mr. Walden stated that the Personnel Annual Report shows that there needs to be new energy and focus in the area of diversity. He indicated that he has been meeting with Vacellia Clark, Steve Holz and department heads to look at some of the structural issues in this area. Mr. Walden stated that diversity is one of the top 10 staff goals.

He stated that some of the issues that have come up during review is to look at what kind of training and accountability there is internally for the people making the hiring decisions. Staff is currently looking at a training session in February or March for supervisors and is currently taking proposals. In addition, department heads and

managers are looking at past records in each department to determine what obstacles have been preventing a more diverse workforce. The following are ideas that staff has developed for possible changes to be suggested to the City Council:

1. Establishing larger candidate pools: The current interview pool is 12. A pool of 30, as utilized by Champaign may better reflect the available workforce and provide more diversity.
2. Blind pool process: The interview pool of 30 would reflect those minimally qualified based on the Civil Service merit process as opposed to a list ranking of those minimally qualified for entry level positions.
3. Establishing residence bonus points for initial hires: Residency after the initial hire is governed by union contracts. Only 12 of 44 full-time hires we have made in the last 3 years reside in Urbana. Most of these hires are from surrounding suburbs with a few from Champaign. Increasing the number of Urbana residents in the candidate pool will statistically improve the likelihood of minorities on the qualified list or more Urbana residents being employed.
4. Establish internal part-time register in Public Works: This modification would allow jobs to be offered to those that work for the City part-time prior to external recruitment and advertising. The internal register process at present only permits full-time employees to be present on the register. The City utilizes a large number of seasonal and part-time workers who are getting significant on-the-job experience.
5. Greater frequency in testing: Presently some registries may be for an extended period of two years per code. Recruitment efforts may be improved if testing is more frequent.

Mr. Walden added that staff is currently examining recruiting efforts and are developing customized recruitment plans for each department. He added that staff is currently looking at training programs that could be sponsored with Urbana High School and/or Parkland College to prepare students for future positions with the City.

Mr. Walden indicated that he would be distributing a report that has been tendered to the Mayor and he asked for any input the Commission might have on whether or not any of these suggestions would be beneficial in moving the City in the right direction.

Ms. Clark encouraged the commissioners to review the report Mr. Walden distributed and submit any questions to him either by email or they can be given to her.

Ms. Cumpston stated that the Commission appreciates Ms. Clark's efforts in working with City Staff on the recruitment and diversity hiring goals.

## **V. PUBLIC INPUT**

There was no public input.

## **VI. NEW BUSINESS**

### **A. Set Initial Public Hearing Date**

An initial public hearing date was set for Case #UC0101-02 for January 9, 2002 at 5:30 p.m. in the City Council Chambers.

## **VII. OLD BUSINESS**

### **A. HRC Retreat Update**

Lester Pritchard distributed a summary of the Retreat and there was a discussion that followed.

### **B. Resolution/Reception for Shirley Hursey**

A resolution has been prepared and signed by the Chair. A reception will be held in December to present Ms. Hursey with the resolution.

### **C. Hate Crimes**

Cope Cumpston asked that the subcommittee for hate crimes become active again due to the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks.

It was discussed that Marion Knight, Cope Cumpston and Jean Talley will serve as the subcommittee.

Lester Pritchard moved, Marion Knight seconded that the Commission will give the Chair and Vice-Chair permission to request from the Mayor:

1. Copies of police reports
2. Copies of CPFs currently in effect that require HRO signatures

## **VIII. COMMISSIONERS' REPORT**

### **A. 2002 MLK Program**

There was a discussion regarding the current status of the MLK Program and it was noted that a speaker has been identified.

## **IX. OFFICER'S REPORT**

### **A. HRO Activity Report**

B. Budget Report

Ms. Clark indicated that she would mail commissioners a copy of activity report and the budget report.

**X. ADJOURNEMNT**

There being no further business to come before the Commission, a motion was made by Cope Cumpston and seconded by Naomi Jakobsson to adjourn. All voted aye. The motion carried.

**The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

Jolinda Ross  
Recording Secretary