

Kern County Human Relations Commission
Kern County Administrative Complex – Civil Service Commission Hearing Room – First Floor
1115 Truxtun Avenue, Bakersfield
Tuesday, July 14, 2015 at 5:30 Pm
Monthly Meeting Minutes

Present: Michael Caves (Cav), Brady Bernhart (Ber), Joseph Snyder (Sny), Louis Medina (Med), David Vivas (Viv), Henry Castaneda (Cas), Jewelle Scales (Sca)

Absent: Mitchell, Singh, Williams

Others Present: Michael Goulart (Mg) Equal Employment Opportunity Officer, Deborah Johnson, California Veterans' Assistance Foundation

Agenda Items: Called To Order at 5:30 Pm

1. **Flag Salute:** Commissioner Snyder.
2. **Public Presentations:** Deborah Johnson.

Ms. Johnson is the President and CEO of the California Veterans' Assistance Foundation (CVAF). She provided a handout and spoke about the Veterans' Stand Down. Kern County will be holding the 17th Annual event at Stramler Park. The Stand Down will be held on October 8, 2015. Assistance will include a Veterans' Court. Registration for the Veterans' Court must be made by 9/11/15. Veterans can register at CVAF, 1120 Golden State Avenue. 661-868-7313.

Veterans must proof of eligibility for services. Dependents of veterans will also be served.
(Med) Two commissioners will be attending. Should the Commission consider attending and have a booth?

***Consideration of HRC attendance at the event will be agendized under New Business for discussion during the August meeting.**

3. **Approval of Minutes:**

Tuesday May 12, 2015. **Motion to approve: Snyder Second: Castaneda Vote: All Ayes,**
3 absent.

4. New Business: None

5. Old Business:

a) Discussion of Mission Statement

After discussion of potential revisions to the Human Relations Commission Mission Statement the following language was proposed: Evaluate, Refer, Recommend, and Follow-up on human and social justice issues so that ALL Kern County Residents are afforded the same advantages and opportunities regardless of race, gender, gender identity, age, physical and mental ability, sexual orientation, social and economic status, education, employment, faith affiliation, and protected veteran status.

Motion to approve language as proposed: Snyder Second: Medina Vote: All Ayes,
3 absent.

b) Discussion of Proposition 47 Resource Guide

(Sca) Stated she would like to receive final remarks about the Guide, discuss the expected impact of the Guide, and dissemination of the Guide.

(Med) We have previously discussed presenting the Guide to the Board of Supervisors one we approve the final edits. We want them to know that this is one of the community engagement activities that the Human Relations Commission took on. We can also let them know that we used mostly existing County resources and extracted information that would be relevant to Proposition 47 parolees and probationers. We can also ask the County Board of Supervisors to assist us with the dissemination of the Guide.

Last time we discussed the Guide there was conversation about the proper form and the salutation on the guide.

(Sca) I would like some final remarks from the Commissioners regarding the guide. I would also like to thank Commissioner Medina for all of the work that he put into compiling the information. I looked through it and think it's short, and to the point. I am not opposed to the "dear proposition 47..." salutation. It reminds me of Dear Abby or Ann Landers when they would give advice in their columns. To me it acts an advice booklet that tells you where to go, not what to do or how to do it but where you can go. The rest of the onus is on the person.

I think this was a great compromise to what Commissioner Williams wanted. He wanted the Commission to do a full scale session where folks would come in and talk about this. This is a great compromise that allows us to provide the information.

(Ber) Is there any way to put the employment section on the first page?

(Med) I followed the order of the DHS guide which appears to be in order of the most pressing need of those coming out of incarceration. For example, parolee support, substance abuse, homeless assistance, etc...

(Cas) I dealt with both parolees and probationers and employment is a requirement. They are given information about employment up front. I can assure you that they are given information about employment resources.

(Sny) Can we possibly have a listing of what is included on the front with bullet points? A table of contents?

(Cav) I like the idea of a table of a table of contents and the fact that it is structured. They will be coming from a world where everything is structures for them and the guide is presented in a structured way.

(Med) The guide may also be useful to service providers that don't want to flip through the whole DHS Guide when they are dealing with this population.

(Sca) What impact do we want to make with the Guide?

(Cav) There are some metrics that we can measure and predict. One of those that we can control is the distribution. A part that we can't necessarily control but is just as important is the feedback from the people that use it and find it helpful. The qualitative part may be just as helpful in terms of making our mission seem clear and important to the Board of Supervisors.

(Sca) Could we work with a couple of County agencies to assist us with the feedback portion?

(Med) GBLA may be helpful. They deal with this population a lot. They also are the agency that spearheads the service providers committee of the homeless collaborative.

(Sca) Do we have other distribution outlets?

(Med) You can write protect the file and do an email blast as a PDF.

(Cav) Another thing that we can do to make it let work on the part of the people distributing the Guide is to do a mass printing of the Guide and distribute them to the agencies that partner with us. There are also specific judges that I work with who would really like to have something like this that is ready to go in the courtroom.

(Mg) We can do a mass printing in my office the Human Relations Commission is budgeted for reprographics.

(Sca) When would we like to start the distribution process?

(Cav) If we are going to participate in the Veterans' Stand Down I would hope that we would have something prepared by the time of the event.

(Sca) ***I would like to add Distribution of Prop. 47 Resource Guide to New Business on the August agenda.**

Commissioner Scales called for a motion to approve Prop 47 Resource Guide.

Motion to approve Proposition 47 Resource Guide with amendments as discussed: Caves

Second: Vivas Vote: All Ayes, 3 absent.

d) Planning Matrix (taken out of order at the prerogative of the Chair)

(Sca) I have provided copies of the Planning Matrix for your review. I have made some updates and added some activities. You will find what I call “tweener” activities. These are smaller activities that occur between our quarter activities. Are there any updates.

(Cas) I just wanted to speak to the meeting in Delano that was cancelled. I was waiting to receive information and I assumed that is what was going to happen.

(Sny) I was under the same impression. I thought we would be given a time and place to meet and move forward from there.

(Med) I believe that Commissioner Vivas did tell us at the last meeting that he had a date and a place, July 14 at the Delano City Hall Chambers. For my part I became concerned when we couldn’t meet a quorum for the June meeting. I was worried that the same thing may happen in July. Immediately after the June meeting was cancelled I sent an email to the entire Commission that said we need to make sure that we make an extra effort to meet quorum for the July meeting in Delano or if we are not going to meet the quorum be prepared to just be there to meet the public.

I was hoping that other Commissioners might comment on that to say if they were agreeable or not and there was silence. I think Michael echoed that in terms of not seeing any back and forth. I then thought that I would rather error on the side of caution and not publicize an event rather than to have people show up and us not be there. That is what ended up happening. I think that it is still a worthwhile idea.

(Cas) I think that it is a great idea. I believe what happened was a miscommunication in addition to the fact that we were unable to meet the month before. I just want to apologize to Commissioner Vivas for all of the work that he had done.

(Viv) I did confirm that the location was available and sent the information out as soon as I had it.

(Mg) You are correct. I received the information and sent it out. Part of my email talked about the plan to do some advance PR and PSAs to let the community know that you were going to be there. I think the fact that you did not meet in June to have further discussion about the meeting was the biggest problem. When Commissioner Medina sent his email stating his concerns I was of the same mind. I was concerned that either people would not know about the meeting or we would plan the meeting and fail to meet a quorum.

(Sca) It is also difficult with the Brown act to reply to emails that everyone is involved in without breaking the rules.

(Ber) I will not be replying to all for any emails. I agree and I think that if we are going to do something like this we need to get it resolved here or at a committee meeting.

(Sca) I know that there are concerns about meeting in an outlying area without having an issue but I think that we need to have a presence first. Once we have a presence that will generate the issue. If no one knows that we exist the issues really do not matter. The goal of the Commission is to be visible, trusted and credible so people will come to us.

(Med) So Commissioner Bernhart, if it is just a matter of setting a date you are averse to responding to an email like that?

(Ber) It sounds like there is still some confusion about that. I just think that we need to funnel everything through staff for timing and dates. If he has a majority of people responding that we will be there he can report back to us.

(Sca) I would like to continue discussing the planning matrix and third quarter activity.

(Cav) I reached out to staffers for the five members of the Board, the Registrar of Voters and a couple of instructors. I have explained that we want to do a civic engagement event as either a

roundtable or open forum about the importance of voting and how it can change your life. Hopefully instructors and leaders called talk about the history of voting rights and the struggle to get to where we are today. The Registrar can talk about the process for registering and voting.

I would like to get some feedback from community leaders that are part of the process. I will send out a copy of the most recent letter that I sent for feedback.

(Cas) This sounds like a good idea. You have already put a lot of work into it.

(Sca) Do you need to set a committee date? You can work with Michael to do that.

(Sny) Would there be value in contacting the schools to see if they want to send their elected student bodies to the event?

(Cav) That would be great and it would give us a captive audience.

(Mg) You may also want to contact High School Government teachers. They have the task of preparing students that are going to vote for the first time.

(Cav) I think if we get down to the high school level those instructors are probably more accustomed to dealing with the basics that we will be discussing. I can send out some feelers to local high schools and let them know that the event is coming. I can also let them know that we are so early in the planning process that if they get involved now we have the chance to adjust both our target audience and the focus of the event.

(Mg) We may think about finding out if the Board Chambers would be available for the event. This could draw a large number of participants.

(Sca) Do we have a date for the event?

(Cav) We have talked about it being in the third quarter but far enough away from an actual election that we resist the temptation to turn it into a platform for any candidate. It may be helpful to reach out to the Kern High School District now.

(Sny) I can reach out to the Tehachapi School District.

(Sca) If we can get a date we can prepare a save the date flier.

(Med) Should we consider reaching out to someone like the Dolores Huerta Foundation for assistance with translation/interpreting for new citizens? If you can provide more information I can reach out for assistance.

(Sca) There is a proposal for an annual event in the packet that I gave you. Please think about potentially planning an annual event. There is an example in the packet that also explains the logistics. We can talk more about this during the August meeting.

c) Discussion of Committee Activity (taken out of order at the prerogative of the Chair).

(Sca) There are some committees that need to remain active throughout the year. Community and Media Outreach should be active for monthly meeting reminders and announcements about HRC events.

We may want to think about changing the name of the Education and Essay Contest Committee.

(Mg) I think that you may want to drop the Essay Contest from the name of the committee and just maintain an Education Committee. The last time the Commission attempted to have an essay contest, the same logistics were used but students did not enter the contest.

(Med) There is also another essay contest that is done locally by The Writers of Kern with participation from Judge Tafoya. Since that effort is going on it may be kind of hard for us to compete with that.

(Sca) I would like to continue to think about developing a signature event and place the work with the committee.

Since we have \$167 and change in our treasury, I would like to see how we could grow that. The Grants and Funding committee and a signature event could help. We need one more person to have an active committee.

There has been recent landmark legislation passed by the Supreme Court. We need to make sure that the Judicial and Legislative Review committee is active. We need one more person for an active committee.

We also need to prepare an Annual Report. We have not done one in a long time. I have given you a draft of what the report should look like.

I would also like to talk to Commissioner Castaneda and Commissioner Snyder if he would like about the HRC/Community/Sheriff's Department ad-hoc committee. We had developed a lot of momentum with that and I would like to see it come back.

All of the committees are important but I think there are certain committees that need to be more active.

6. Committee Reports:

Judicial and Legislative Review, (Cav): The Supreme Court agreed to hear arguments on a case and the opinion is due in June of 2016. The case involved whether unions can require members to pay union fees and then use a portion of the fees to fund political activity without the consent of the union members.

Housing, (Ber): The San Joaquin Housing Summit is coming up on November 3, 2015. I plan on being there.

(Sca) Would you like the Commission to talk about being there as a group?

(Ber) I will bring more information to the August meeting.

(Med) I attended the summit last year in Stockton. To have the summit here is a big deal. The people who put it together are the California Coalition for Rural Housing. They are a very smart

group of people doing a lot of innovative things with GIS, highlighting things such as redlining. They are helping people think about issues dealing with fair housing.

As far as Community and Media Outreach, I can start working with community calendars of media outlets to share our meeting date, times, and location. I can use the newly revamped Mission Statement to say what our meetings are about.

(Sca) I would like for the active committees to meet and put together a mini strategy to decide what the committee means and how it can impact the Commission. Please think about additional committees that you may be interested in joining and we can discuss at the August Meeting.

I also have one update that falls under Judicial and Legislative Review. The Boys Scouts of America are discussing transgender issues and we may see members of the public come here to discuss this issue.

As far as the Annual Report, I have given you a proposed table of contents and I didn't get any feedback. Please take a look at it and maybe we can talk about it in August.

7. Staff Report

(Mg) Effective July 17, 2015, the Kern County Personnel Department will become part of the Human Resources Division of the county Administrative Office. The New Human Resources Division will include Employee Relations, Health Benefits and the Former Personnel Department. The Human Resources Division will continue to support the Human Relations Commission.

At the May meeting of the Commission the transfer of the remaining funds from the Human Relations Commission Bank of America account to Commissioner Scales was approved. I am giving Commissioner Scales the funds tonight.

(Sca) I am a believer internal controls. I would like to add myself to the Grants and Funding Committee and work with Commissioners Medina and Bernhart to maintain the funds.

8. **Commission Member Presentations or Announcements:**

(Sca) I would like everyone to check the website to make sure that your terms is not expiring or has not expired already. If your term has expired please check with staff from the office of the Supervisor that appointed you to discuss reappointment. I will also be asking Michael to look into replacing Commissioner Singh and Commissioner Williams.

9. **Adjournment: Motion: Caves, 2nd: Snyder, Vote: all ayes, 3 absent 7:00 P.M.**