

# MINUTES

Thursday, April 18, 2019



Sioux Falls  
Human Relations  
Commission

12:00pm – 1:00pm  
Commission Room  
First Floor, City Hall

## Commissioners:

**Present:** Sarah Bouwman, Bill Wood, Alex Ramirez, Justine Donaway, Brian Majerus, Anny Libengood

**Absent:** Megan Myers, Megan Grode- Wolters, Lindy Obach, Kayla Heber, Kassidi Smith

**Staff:** Valerie Schonewill, Human Relations Specialist

**DAC Member Present:** None

**Guests Present:** None

### 1. Call to Order/Welcome Guests

The meeting was called to order at 12:05 pm.

### 2. Approval of Minutes

February minutes were unanimously approved.

### 3. New Business

**a) Human Relations Update** – Schonewill informed the commission that the new Human Relations attorney, Daniel Haggart, would be starting on April 26.

The commission also discussed concerns regarding the investigation process of the discrimination cases, namely the importance of receiving sufficient information to make a decision, and whether having just one person doing the investigation and analysis of the case may lend itself to bias. Also, Majerus invited members of the commission to participate in the City's Housing Summit, and suggested we invite the City's new Housing director to an upcoming HRC meeting.

**b) Active HRC Cases Statistics** – Schonewill informed the commission that there are currently 43 active discrimination cases, and the top three bases are: Race – 15 cases, Disability – 12 cases, and Sex – 11 cases.

### 4. Civil Rights Update

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development recently announced that it is charging Facebook with violating the Fair Housing Act by encouraging, enabling, and causing housing discrimination through the company's advertising platform.

The Department of Justice recently filed a lawsuit against a landlord in Lexington, TN. According to the complaint he conditioned housing or housing benefits on female tenants' agreement to engage in sexual acts; subjected at least one female tenant to unwanted sexual touching; made unwelcome sexual comments and advances to female tenants; and took adverse housing-related actions against female residents when they refused his sexual advances.

Wood informed the commission about the Equality Act which was recently introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Libengood presented the commission with information about the Union Gospel Mission's statement regarding the man they refused shelter to because he was inebriated and froze to death that night, questioned whether that may be a civil rights issue.

**5. Public Comment**

None

**6. Adjournment**

Having no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:05.

The next Human Relations Commission meeting will be May 16, 2019, at 12:00pm.

***Minutes respectfully submitted by Valerie Schonewill.***