



Metropolitan Human Relations Commission

August Commission Meeting

August 5, 2024 | 12:00 PM

Metro Conference Room

2310 Parnell Avenue Fort Wayne, IN 46805

Meeting called by:

Statutory Monthly Meeting

Type of meeting:

Commission Meeting on the first Monday of each month.

Note taker:

Nikki Quintana, Executive Director

Metro Commissioners:

Aisha Arrington, Chair; Tabitha Ervin, Vice Chair; Dorian Maples; Lana Keesling; Larry Wardlaw; Dr. David Lombard; and Tony Burrus

Agenda:

Call to Order

Roll Call of Commissioners

Reading of Minutes

Office Report

Old Business

New Business

Concerns/Comments from the Public

Adjournment

Call to Order/Roll Call:

12:01 P.M.

Commissioners Present:

Arrington (not present)

Ervin (in-person)

Wardlaw (not present)

Burrus (in-person)

Lombard (virtual)

Maples (in-person)

Keesling (in-person)

Other Persons Present:

Nikki Quintana, Executive Director

Lakisha Woods, Staff Attorney

Leslie Hernandez, Administrative Assistant

- July 1st meeting minutes were approved unanimously.

Office Report

EEOC

Employment Case Processing (10/1/23 – 9/30/24)

Intakes (by 9/30/24): 120 (contract number) 104 (current status)

Contract number of case closures by 9/30/24: 237

- 170 No Probable Cause Cases
- 22 Settlements (\$114,201.23)
- 6 Withdrawals
- 0 Lack of Jurisdiction
- 0 Right to Sue or Full Credit Transfer to the EEOC

HUD

Housing Case Processing (7/1/23 - 6/30/24):

65 Cases closed for Contract

- 12 HUD Settlement
- 1 Lack of Jurisdiction/Withdraw/Admin
- 45 No Reasonable Cause
- 1 Withdraw after Resolution
- 6 Reasonable Cause
- 0 Judicial Closures

24 Pending (Open being investigated)

Attended Events/Outreach:

July 9, 2024: Investigator Brake attended the Fair Housing Center of Central Indiana's fair housing basics virtual training.

July 17, 2024: Director Quintana conducted Metro Process and Services training at Templo Aposento Alto.

July 17, 2024: Investigator Benson attended a NFHTA forum on assistance animals in housing.

July 22, 2024: Director Quintana attended the Welcoming Fort Wayne Plan Steering Committee meeting.

July 23, 2024: Investigators Kelsaw, Brake, and Guayamo attended the Fair Housing Center of Central Indiana's virtual training on manufactured housing.

July 24, 2024: Investigator Bey attended a virtual EEOC ARC training.

July 27, 2024: Investigator Guayamo conducted Metro Process training at My Autism Ally.

Personnel Issues:

Our new investigator is training and shadowing.

We will be posting the Senior Investigator position internally first.

Director Quintana mentioned that Investigator Benson submitted her resignation today due to an upcoming move out of state. The investigator position will be posted later this week.

Budget/Calendar of Events:

Admin Hernandez reviewed the current budget status and went over calendar of events.

Commission Vice Chair Ervin asked if the remaining balances in the partnership and SEE budgets would roll over. Admin Hernandez clarified that while the funds won't roll over, they remain in the same project, and Director Quintana will seek HUD approval on how to use the remaining balances. Director Quintana added that she will later discuss how she plans to use the remaining partnership funds and request the Commission's approval before presenting it to HUD. She also noted that they have up to five years to use HUD funds, following HUD's guidance.

Commissioner Burrus sought clarification and confirmed that the funds do not roll over or return but can be used within the five-year period.

Legal Update/Matters:

Mediations: The Commission conducted two mediations for the month of July. Both mediations were successful.

New Business:

- **Door Signage**

Director Quintana requested approval to spend \$211 of EEOC funds on a new door decal featuring Metro's updated logo, contact information, and hours of operation. Commissioner Dr. Lombard suggested adding a QR code to the decal, which the other commissioners agreed was a good idea. Director Quintana then requested approval for up to \$300 to cover potential cost increases, including the QR code. Commissioner Keesling inquired if the QR code addition would raise the cost to \$300. Director Quintana responded that while she doesn't believe it will, the increased budget would account for possible changes and prevent the need for further approval.

Commissioner Keesling moved to approve the \$300 to be used for a new door decal, Commissioner Maples seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously.

- **2025 Budget**

Director Quintana reviewed the changes from the 2024 to 2025 budget with the Commission. Commissioner Keesling confirmed that a 3% wage increase was used, but Commission Vice Chair Ervin noted that the overall increase averaged 4.07%. Admin Hernandez explained that the slight increase was due to the cost-of-living adjustment, which had been removed from the 2024 budget but was reinstated in the 2025 budget.

Director Quintana mentioned that the 2024 liability insurance and garage fees were used in the 2025 budget, as recommended by the Controller's office, though those amounts might increase.

Commissioner Burrus moved to approve the 2025 Metro budget, Commissioner Keesling seconded, and the budget was approved unanimously.

- **Metro Vehicle**

Director Quintana reported that an internal audit last year recommended a cost assessment of the department's vehicle, with a proposal to review it annually. For 2024, \$1,960 has been spent on the vehicle's upkeep, including gas, a garage contract, and liability insurance. The vehicle was used for 447 miles between August 2023 and July 2024. Despite limited usage, Director

Quintana noted that staff mileage reimbursements could total the same amount currently spent on upkeep.

Commissioner Keesling mentioned that the low usage was discussed last year, and Commission Vice Chair Ervin asked what Director Quintana would like to do with the vehicle. While Director Quintana noted that one staff member uses it regularly and it's available for travel, she acknowledged that the internal audit suggested getting rid of it. Commissioner Burrus agreed with the audit's recommendation based on the numbers but asked about the availability of fleet vehicles if needed for travel.

Director Quintana explained that the vehicle was purchased with EEOC funds, and if sold, it is her understanding that the proceeds would return to the EEOC budget. Director Quintana explained she would need to investigate the options available to the department in using fleet vehicles for travel.

Commissioners agreed to revisit the subject in six months to assess usage and explore alternatives for travel needs. Director Quintana requested to revisit the issue in November.

Commissioner Burrus moved to revisit in November, Commissioner Keesling seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously.

- **HUD Cases**

Director Quintana informed the Commissioners that HUD's Region V Director contacted her to consider taking on direct complaints from HUD, which would add about four extra housing inquiries per month. The Commissioners discussed the proposal and agreed to move forward with it.

Current Case Age: 155.26

- **HUD Partnership Funds**

Director Quintana requested Commission approval to use the remaining \$1,639 in HUD partnership funds for the upcoming Unwelcomed Exhibit in collaboration with the Fort Wayne Urban League and the Fair Housing Center of Central Indiana (FHCCI). She proposed allocating \$1,000 to FHCCI for transportation costs, including setup and teardown, and \$600 for hiring an audio and video company for the event. She also mentioned that HUD approval would be needed.

Commissioner Keesling asked if they could exceed the remaining amount, to which Director Quintana responded that if they went over, regular HUD funds would be used to cover the excess.

Commissioner Keesling moved to approve the use of the remaining funds, Commissioner Burrus seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously.

Old Business:

Concerns From the Public:

Meeting Adjourned at 12:44 p.m.