

City of Albuquerque Human Rights Board (HRB) Minutes

Date: Thursday, September 19, 2024 5:00 p.m.

Location: Zoom & City Council Chambers

Board Members Present:

- Anami Dass, Chair
- Jack Champagne, Vice Chair
- Kate Boulton
- Leticia Galvez-Trujillo
- Larry Hinojos Jr.

Board Members Absent:

- Kimberly Andujo

Board Members Excused:

- Samia Assed

City Staff Present:

- Dr. Nina Cooper, OEI Community Empowerment Officer
- Cristina Calvo, OEI Public Information Officer
- Charles Davis, Board Attorney
- Vanessa Arballo, Bank on Burque
- Maria Wolfe, Homeless Innovations Officer
- Jodie Esquibel, Director of ACS
- Dr. Charlie Verploegh, Deputy Director, HHS
- Lauren Keefe, City Attorney
- Commander Jason Sanchez, APD Data Analytics
- Carla Martinez, Associate Chief Administrative Officer

Members of the Public (speaking):

- Holly Mell
- Isle Biel
- Sarah Azibo

I. Call to Order & Introductions

- a. The meeting was called to order at 5:10 p.m. by Chair Dass.
- b. All board members who were present introduced themselves.

II. Approvals

- a. **Chair Dass** moved to amend and then approve the **agenda** in two ways:
 - i. “4a - Albuquerque Human Rights Board: 50th Anniversary Legacy Project” was replaced with “a Report from ACS & HHH”;
 - ii. “5a - OCR Report” was substituted with an “OEI Report”.
 - iii. **Member Galvez-Trujillo** seconded the motion, which was approved by unanimous vote of the board.
- b. **Vice Chair Champagne** moved to approve the July 18 HRB **minutes**. The motion was seconded by **Chair Dass**. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

III. Public Comment

- a. **Holly Mell** serves as attorney with Disability Rights New Mexico. She has been doing outreach work with unhoused individuals working on disability issues in the

sheltered system. She indicated that we do not have enough accessible options for unhoused people with disabilities. While we advertise that we have a bed for everyone who wants one, we don't have shelters for people with disabilities. **Mell** has met clients with dementia, short-term memory loss, and other traumatic brain injuries. There are no services to support them. Additionally, key items such as phones and other necessary items are being thrown away as "waste". **Mell** indicates that we have problem with lack of empathy and there is a misunderstanding because we are thinking we have services available that we, in fact, do not. **Mell** invited anyone who disagrees with her assessment to try and call 311 to find a shelter bed for people like her clients.

b. **Ilse Biel** does street outreach mainly in the International District but also through city. She works with various groups through which she gains knowledge about who people are experiencing the streets. **Biel** mentioned the complaints she's heard/read that the HRB hearing and subsequent report was inappropriate and not accurate. **Biel** indicates that those who work with people on the streets know that it is actually very accurate and does not tell the full story. **Biel** indicates that she would love to get her hands on the supposed list of resources that APD, SWMD, and Code Enforcement claim to be distributing because there are not many resources available. She remarked that the HRB are not inappropriate for critiquing City services. If the City wants a pro forma body that is not going to critique as necessary, then should say so. **Biel** also shared her understanding the City was invited to the Hearing and how she was looking forward to hearing the city's response to related topics in the Williams et al. v. CABQ case, but was disappointed that the city's delaying tactics and alleged non-compliance, that trial was pushed back by over a year. She applauds the HRB for paying attention, holding the city accountable, and helping with the data collection.

c. **Sarah Azibo** was formerly unhoused and now advocates for those who are unhoused. On March 29, she witnessed the removal of people items, including food, outside of Hope Village by APD and Solid Waste. **Azibo** quoted Article 24 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and indicated that a veteran's right to food, basic sanitation, and well-being were violated by city workers. She cited she had also been with a group of 43 people who had been moved 5 times in 4 months. These individuals were traumatized, stressed, lacked sleep and needed health care. They feared being

arrested by city employees and were grateful for vouchers. **Azibo** shared observations from a Human Watch Report from Los Angeles and cited similar actions seen in Albuquerque. *“The criminalization of homelessness means the treating people who live on the street and directing resources towards arresting them, citing them, institutionalizing them, removing them from public spaces, denying them basic services and sanitation, confiscating their property, and pressuring them into substandard shelter situations that share characteristics with jails... The city has designed a coordinated system for the displacement of human being and disposal of their belongings. The city has developed a pilot program to collect human waste [instead] of providing public bathrooms. The city has installed ample fencing, sharp rocks, and dog parks to prevent people from enjoying public spaces and resting in their effort to protect city property. Criminalization of people [who are] unhoused in the city of Albuquerque is apparent.”* She remarked that the question is not whether the public testimony was accurate but rather how they will provide for the unhoused for at least 2,740 people.

Vice Chair Champagne commented regarding the City’s request to cross-examine people who provide testimony about incidents and asked Azibo how she felt about this. **Azibo** noted that if people share their lived experience, that it should not be cross examined.

IV. Presentations | Prop EC-2024-03 Preliminary Findings on Hearing Reports

- a. **Jodie Esquibel**, director of Albuquerque Community Safety (ACS), **Maria Wolfe**, Homeless Innovations Officer, and **Dr. Charlie Verploegh**, Deputy Director, HHS, began the presentation ‘Outreach and Assistance for Unsheltered Individuals and Response to Draft Findings and Recommendations.’ Key highlights of the presentation included a discussion of ABQ’s continuum of housing, the proactive outreach services that are provided, the encampment removal process, criteria and response for qualifying ACS calls, proactive outreach, community partners, and services at Gateway East, Gateway West, and Gateway Family.
- b. Various City staff responded to preliminary findings of the HRB Hearing Report. In addition to those listed previously, this staff included **Vanessa Arballo**, Bank on Burque Program Manager; **Lauren Keefe**, City Attorney; and **Commander Jason**

Sanchez, APD Data Analytics. Detailed responses of report finding can be viewed at the 26:00 Minute mark: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E4cKG76DP-0>

- i. The slide deck from the presentation will be posted for viewing on the website once it is made available to the board.
- c. **Vice Chair Jack Champagne** moved to approve the reports as submitted. **Member Larry Hinojos** seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.
- d. 311 Complaints: **Member Boulton** remarked on circumstances in which recipients are unsatisfied with services received. She indicated that many of those comments are not typically included in a report narrative. **Member Boulton** remarked that it would be valuable for the City publish this information in a transparent manner.
- e. **Member Boulton** made a motion that the CABQ publish information about complaints and/or grievances submitted to 311 with sufficient detail to understand the number of complaints submitted by unhoused people, the nature of those complaints, and the City's resolution of those complaints. **Chair Dass** moved to approve this motion. **Member Galvez-Trujillo** seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

V. Director's Reports

a. Office of Equity & Inclusion:

- i. Community Empowerment Officer (OEI Deputy Level), **Dr. Nina Cooper** provided the OEI report. Detailed responses of the submitted can report can be viewed at the 1:51:20 minute mark at the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E4cKG76DP-0>
- ii. OEI are vacancies that have been completed or are at near completion to be filled: deputy director Dillon Shije; and fiscal officer Jocelyn Montoya. The liaison position for the Office of Native American Affairs is expected to be filled by the end of September. There is a great prospect for the OCR-Consumer Protection position. Our new Asian Pacific Islander Native Hawaiian liaison position in currently under completion in Human Resources.
- iii. **Chair Dass** expressed concern that the OCR position has been long vacant. Dr. Cooper reported that during the last three (3) months of new

OEI leadership, hiring for the OCR position has been a top priority. In the last two (2) months, they have undergone two (2) rounds of postings and interviews that did not produce high caliber candidates. Currently, we have identified a top prospective candidate that we anticipate will be hired through the appointment process to foster hiring in the next few weeks.

- iv. *Office of Black Community Engagement*: Launching of a 2-month Ujima training program for Entrepreneurs within the Indigenous and Black Communities.
- v. *Office of Immigrant & Refugee Affairs*: Developing Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia webinar in partnership with the U.S. Attorney's Office and GOV TV that will be featured during United Against Hate week on September 23-28.
- vi. *Office of Native American Affairs*: Completing a Native American Housing Survey, which has reached the analysis stage. Aiming to share with the community Indigenous Peoples' Month.
- vii. *Office of Financial Empowerment*: Coordinating with several Bank On partners to provide onsite account openings at Bernalillo County Tiny Home Village and several other community sites.

VI. Discussions & Proposals

- a. **Chair Dass** thanked all the presenters for their thoughtful responses to the board's findings. She thanked everyone for participating in a very difficult conversation and upholding standards for human rights. In doing so, they contributed to the betterment of humanity in this city.
- b. **Dass** indicated that she withdrew report from the boards' consideration because of the City's response. Initially, the report was not approved by the board. **Dass** indicated that she heavily revised the report and chose to self-publish after withdrawing the report. As a result, the document is not approved by the HRB. She indicated the importance of the HRB maintaining a neutral or positive relationships with the City. **Dass** wants to talk about other topics and needs board members to participate and provide directions for future initiatives. She wanted to amplify voices of unhoused since she was

appointed to board and now wants to now amplify the voices of the other six (6) members.

VII. Subcommittee Report-Outs: *None*

VIII. Announcements

- a. The next Human Rights Board meeting will be on Thursday, October 17 at 5pm in City Council Chambers.

IX. Adjournment

- a. **Vice Chair Champagne** moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by **Member Galvez-Trujillo**. The motion was approved by unanimous vote. Meeting adjourned at 7:11p.m.

Next regularly scheduled Human Rights Board Meeting will be Thursday, October 17, 2024.



Chairwoman Anami Dass

10/18/2024

Date