

Kate Brown
Governor



Oregon Commission on Black Affairs
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MINUTES

Oregon Commission on Black Affairs
Saturday, April 22, 2017, 9:00 AM-12:00 PM
Concordia University
2811 NE Holman Street
George White Library, Room 318B
Portland, OR 97211

ATTENDANCE:

Chair: James Morris
Vice Chair: Robin Morris Collin (phone)
Commissioners: Mariotta Gary-Smith (phone), Musse Olol (phone), Gwendolyn Trice (phone), Representative Bynum
Absent: Kayse Jama, Senator Monroe
Guests: David Rogers, ACLU Oregon; Erious Johnson, Civil Rights Director, Oregon DOJ; Gary Sims, ODOC; Nafisa Fai, Abdiasis Mohamed, Pan African Festival Leadership Team; Nicole Rowe
Staff: Lucy Baker, Nancy Kramer, Ty Schwoeffermann

I. Meeting Called to Order

Chair Morris called the meeting to order at 9:05am. He welcomed Representative Bynum and Commissioners introduced themselves.

II. Review and approval of agenda

MOTION (Collin/Gary-Smith): To approve the agenda as written. CARRIED.

III. Review and approval of OCBA February 2017 Meeting minutes

MOTION (Collin/Olol): To approve the minutes as written. CARRIED

IV. Public Comment – there was no public comment.

V. Nominations for OCBA Chair and Vice Chair

1. Nominations for Chair. Chair Morris opened nominations for Chair. Commissioner Gary-Smith nominated James Morris for Chair. Chair Morris called for other nominations from the floor three times. Hearing no further nominations for Chair, nominations were closed.
2. Nominations for Vice Chair. Chair Morris opened nominations for Vice Chair. He nominated Musse Olol for Vice Chair. Chair Morris called for other nominations from

the floor three times. Hearing no further nominations, nominations for Vice Chair were closed.

The election of officers will occur at the June meeting of the OCBA.

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- A. OCBA 2015-17 Biennial Report to the Governor and the legislature. The OAC's Biennial Reports have been sent to the Legislators and there has been some positive feedback from them about the reports. It may be good to send the reports again after session when the legislators are back in district and have time to review the OCBA's report.

Commissioner Trice noted that she would be happy to assist OCBA hosting a meeting in Eastern Oregon. Gwen will be in Salem later this week when she is recognized by the Senate for her leadership as a Woman of Achievement, OCFW's 30+ year recognition of outstanding, diverse leaders statewide. Everyone is invited to attend her recognition by the Senate on Thursday, April 27th at 10:30 am. Gwen will be visiting legislators in the afternoon on issues of importance to the Commission. Vice Chair Collin invited Gwen and Chair Morris along with the staff to join her for dinner in the evening. The full Commission congratulated Commissioner Trice on her recognition as a Woman of Achievement by the OCFW and now by the Senate.

- B. OCBA vacant positions

There are 3 vacant positions. Nicole Rowe, the Chair of the Urban League Young Professionals, is a candidate for the OCBA. Chair Morris met with her this week and feels she will bring important skills the OCBA seeks and her perspective.

Lawanda Manning is also a candidate.

Both will bring needed skills and great community engagement to the Commission.

The OCBA is also looking to attract another attorney to the Commission. Carolyn Walker was proposed, from Stoel Rives. Melvin Oden-Orr was also mentioned. Joe Pugh, Lewis & Clark Law School, is another idea.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Public Policy research internship update

1. Immigrant re-credentialing internship w/OCAPIA update

Lucy reported that the OCAPIA/Partners in Diversity/Oregon Workforce Investment Board (OWIB) research student will be presenting her major findings from interviews to Mari Watanabe, Sen. Dembrow, and the Governor's Policy Advisors on Workforce on May 5th, 1 – 2 pm in the capitol. All interested Commissioners on OCAPIA and OCBA are invited. The subject of this policy research is the obstacles of immigrants who have advanced degrees from international universities becoming credentialed in Oregon to work in their fields. The policy leaders for an OAC public policy research project intern mentor the intern on the implications of their work for public policy in Oregon.

- B. Legislative discussion

1. Joint Legislative Day with Urban League, 2/24 recap

Ty attended the second Lobby Day with Urban League of Portland with OCBA. This time, only Ty was able to attend due to conflicts on Commissioners' schedules, but he reported that it was well attended and demonstrates the commitment of UL to have a strong, regular presence in Salem around its policy agenda.

2. Legislative reports from Commissioners and legislators

Rep. Janelle Bynum reported that HB 3267, which supports success for foster kids by allowing them to consolidate their high school transcripts, passed unanimously in the House. Amendments to the bill will include students who have been incarcerated, migrant families and students in military families that move often. High school graduation rates are a high priority for her.

Chair Morris shared his personal experience as a parent of foster children who had a only a fraction of high school credit earned at a special school transfer to the public high school where he began his studies. Chair Morris and the OCBA support the bill.

Rep. Bynum also discussed HB 3266, regarding police using shackles and other restraints on k-12 students. Law enforcement supports this bill, and Rep. Bynum is working with the Sheriff's department. A recent *Washington Post* article about a 10-year old autistic child being handcuffed has raised more interest in this bill. OCBA indicated its support and will provide testimony.

Commissioner Trice discussed the importance of HB 2845 on Ethnic Studies and SB 280 on inclusive social studies curricula and standards. The OAC's have supported these jointly with testimony. Gwen sees these bills as having a major and beneficial impact in rural areas where students of color rarely see themselves and their cultural background discussed in history classes.

Commissioner Gary-Smith and Ty reported on HB 2004A, and on the effect of no-cause evictions on families and health. The Commission thanked Mariotta for her testimony and enjoyed her emailed account of her day at the capitol with Ty, visiting legislators about OCBA's supported bills. The diesel bill may also be of interest as it affects the health of many neighborhoods of color located along major highways. Commissioner Trice hopes to see Senator Frederick on her day in the capitol next week and will talk with him about it.

3. Ratify OCBA's e-votes

- i. SB 280 – Inclusive Oregon Studies
- ii. SB 416 – BOLI Public Works Projects
- iii. HB 2355 – Law Enforcement Profiling
- iv. SB 2845 – Ethnic Studies
- v. HB 3060 – Contract anti-discrimination language for health insurance
- vi. SB 357 – Transportation Misdemeanor (letter of support)
- vii. HB 3266 – Restraints in schools
- viii. SB 1006 – Victims of Crimes Act
- ix. SB 5501 – OACO Budget

OCBA's support for these bills above was approved electronically between its regular meeting in March and now. The bills were read into the record to be ratified by OCBA.

MOTION (Trice/Gary-Smith): To ratify the OCBA's e-votes to support SB 280, SB 416, HB 2355, SB 2845, HB 3060, SB 357, HB 3266, SB 1006, SB 5501. CARRIED.

4. Bi-weekly Legislative Update call – next call 4/28 at 11am.

C. David Rogers, Executive Director of ACLU Oregon

David Rogers discussed the importance of and requested support from OCBA on 2 bills: HB 2355 on Profiling and HB 2004A regarding no-cause evictions.

He noted that the ACLU is deepening work around DAs and public awareness around their roles in prosecution and how they become elected. He would like to come back to OCBA during the summer to report on this further, and the importance of developing public engagement and awareness. DAs rarely hear from voters about what they want.

Mr. Rogers discussed HB 2004A on no-cause evictions. Oregon is experiencing a housing crisis. Vacancy rates are lowest here than anywhere in the country. Rents are rising because of low supply and high demand. Black people and people of color experience discrimination and gentrification at a higher level than the dominant culture. HB 2004A requires landlords give tenants notice of several months for a no-cause eviction, if the tenant has been in the property for 6 months or more. The bill allows local jurisdiction to consider their own policies to slow the rate of rent increases if the public expresses interest. No cause evictions disproportionately affect renters of color and renters with disabilities.

Erious Johnson, who was attending the OCBA meeting for DOJ, noted that renters can file a claim with the Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI) Civil Rights Division if they believe they are experiencing discrimination, such as no-cause eviction, in their housing situation. Discussion followed.

The Commissioners thanked David for returning to OCBA and look forward to inviting him back this summer to discussion public awareness and District Attorneys.

D. Erious Johnson, Civil Rights Unit Director, OR Department of Justice

Mr. Johnson asked for OCBA's help in suggesting names of attorneys who are experienced in discrimination and other legal matters, who may wish to consider contracting as investigators with DOJ. The OCBA will do so.

He further discussed the complexities involved with lodging a BOLI complaint regarding landlords and discrimination or retaliation. After discussion with the Commission, Mr. Johnson and Vice Chair Collin agreed that compilation of a step-by-step process about housing discrimination would be very helpful and should be posted to the OCBA website. Chair Morris suggested that Mr. Johnson and Mr. Rogers, along with OCBA, develop this. Vice Chair Collin acknowledged that the OCBA must focus on its bill support and testimony until session ends.

E. OACO's Budget presentation 2/27/17 recap – Vice Chair Morris Collin

Vice Chair Collin reported on her presentation of the OACO budget to the Joint Ways and Means' General Government Committee of the legislature, with the other OAC leaders and Lucy, It was co-chaired by Senator Manning and had a very positive

reception by the legislators on the committee. They were impressed that the OAC's address rural issues on a tiny budget by leveraging student researchers, the volunteer leadership of all the OAC Commissioners, and community and state partners. Senator Frederick testified on behalf of the OACO budget as well, describing the commissions as "a jewel." OCAPIA Chair Mari Watanabe, OCHA Vice Chair Linda Castillo and OCFW Chair Dr. Barbara Spencer co-presented with Vice Chair Collin. The OAC leaders used the full 90 minute meeting of Joint Ways and Means General Government Committee to conduct their 30 minute presentation on the budget and answer legislators' questions. The legislators stated the work of the OACs is important and highlighted in particular their work in rural areas.

F. Pan African Festival 8/12/17 – Nafisa Fai, President

Nafisa Fai and Abdiasis Mohamed presented to the OCBA on Portland's upcoming 1st ever Pan African Festival on August 12th, noon to 8:30 pm. They are modeling it on the wonderful Indian Festival, which is a day-long event and draws 10,000 people. Their goal for the first Pan African Festival is to attract 2,000 people. There will be live entertainment, food carts, vendors, a panel discussion, and a fashion show. There will be booths for health and wellness also. They would like the event to happen annually, for families to look forward to it each year, and for children to grow up with a sense of pan African cohesion. They envision it will be a unifying event and will showcase the diversity and richness of African cultures. A longer term goal is developing it in to a week-long festival. Discussion followed including the benefit of adding the word "diaspora" to the marketing materials.

Nafisa asked the OCBA to help with planning and promoting the festival as a partner. The OCBA is interested but noted that its members may not be able to participate actively in the planning meeting but may help in other ways.

The Commissioners thanked Nafisa and Mohamed for reaching out to the OCBA and inviting them to partner on this groundbreaking project.

G. Review of OCBA 2015-17 Biennial Report Summary

Lucy has been working with the OCBA to prepare a summary of their 2015-17 Biennial report to the Governor and the Legislature. The Commissioners have been reviewing a draft of the proposed content that was sent out earlier. Following discussion of the content at the meeting, and there being no further edits, the Commission approved the draft summary by consensus.

H. OACO Staffing of Legislative Committees – At the last meeting of the OAC's leadership team, comprised of the Chairs and Vice Chairs of the OAC's, it was agreed that OACO's staff is not large enough to support staffing legislative committees, taskforces or workgroups. The Chairs and Vice Chairs ask all Commissioners who are legislators or who work with legislators on crafting bill language to notify the OAC staff and their Chair if there is interest in assigning the OACO to staff a legislative committee. There are other resources or partnerships between Legislative Committee Services and the OACO that can be negotiated.

I. Recognition of Gwen Trice as an OCFW Woman of Achievement award winner.

Gwen is being honored and acknowledged by the Senate as an honoree for the OCFW's Woman of Achievement. It will be on April 27th at 11 am in the Senate Chamber. Everyone is invited to attend.

VIII. Commissioners' Reports: There were no further reports.

IX. Administrator's Report

- A. Financial Report: Lucy reported that she has recommended to the Chairs and Vice Chairs that General Funds unexpended in June, the end of the biennium and the fiscal year for state agencies, be allocated to replace the OACO's aging computers and possibly phones. They have approved this expenditure.
- B. Administrative paperwork: Nancy provided related forms to attending commissioners who are eligible for travel reimbursement.

X. For the Good of the Order

- A. Next OCBA meeting is Saturday, 6/17/17, Concordia U Campus, 9am–12pm, George White Library Room 120.
- B. OCBA Officers' elections at the June meeting.

XI. Adjourn – Chair Morris adjourned the meeting at 11:58am by common consent.