
Minutes Human Relations Commission June 16th, 2009

**Minutes of the HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION held on TUESDAY, June 16th, 2009
6:00 P.M. at City Hall, 3rd Floor Conference Room, 31 East Fifth Street, Tempe, Arizona.**

(MEMBERS) Present:

Colleen Byron
Arlene Chin
Kathy Dietz
Linda Ritland
Thaddeus Swiecki
Josephine Vega
Janis Webb
Patricia Young

(MEMBERS) Absent:

Zach Berning
Florence Boyle
Joseph Mann
Frank Morales

City Staff Present:

Rosa Inchausti
Brandy Naleski

Guests Present:

Meeting convened at 5:35 P.M.

Chair Arlene Chin called the Ad Hoc meeting to order. The purpose of the meeting was to create a letter responding to the issues raised in by the Service Employee International Union (SEIU), as well as information shared by Don Hawkes and a presentation by Cheryl Allen. Commissioner Colleen Byron also advised commissioners that it is important to differentiate what may be concerning to us as individuals and what can be concerning to us as a commission.

The commissioner reviewed a draft of the response. Discussion was held on the three main points of 1)Employee Safety, 2) Cost to taxpayers and 3) Management issues within the Water Utilities Department. Commissioner Thaddeus Swiecki stated that there is no technical information in the letter. Commissioner Janis Webb stated that she felt the letter was too detailed and should be summarized in a single paragraph. Commissioner Kathy Dietz stated that she thought the letter was well written and good as is. There was consensus that the key point of the letter is that the commission advises the Mayor and Council to direct City Manager and Assistant City Manager to work with Water Utilities Department to resolve the issues. Discussion continued on the details of the letter and debate about the ending of letter. Chair Arlene Chin stated that as a commission we are acknowledging the issues and letting the people responsible be accountable. It was decided that the letter state a recommendation that "the WUD management team submit updates to Mayor and Council on their progress towards resolutions of the three issues identified."

MOTION: Commissioner Janis Webb made a MOTION to accept letter was revised and send it forward in our advisory capacity as Human Relations Commission to Mayor and Council.

SECOND by Commissioner Kathy Dietz

Letter will be signed by Chair Arlene Chin and distributed to Mayor and Council.

The commission's next meeting is scheduled for August 11th, 2009.

Meeting adjourned at 6:20 P.M.

Prepared by: Brandy Naleski

Reviewed by: Rosa Inchausti

Rosa Inchausti, Diversity Manager

Attached: WUD response letter

June 17th, 2009

Dear Mayor Hugh Hallman and Council Members:

In direct response to a recent presentation to the Human Relations Commission by senior members of the Water Utilities Department management team, the HRC received a letter from Service Employees International Union members addressing their concerns regarding the information presented. Additionally, the HRC heard a presentation from a former staff member of the WUD at a recent meeting.

In response to the information received, the Human Relations Commission submits the following recommendations for your immediate consideration and action.

1. Employee Safety- There is significant concern regarding the work environment and the safety of workers performing their duties within that environment. Long term solutions to resolve the safety issues need to be implemented.
2. Cost - There is concern that the current solution of utilizing an outside contractor to perform the screen cleaning is an expensive, short-term response to a problem that needs to be addressed with a cost effective long-term plan. We are concerned about the cost to taxpayers and the impact relative to our current budget situation in Tempe.
3. Management/WUD Labor- There is strong evidence that indicates the need for leadership development and training within the WUD. The entire staff and management team need direction and training to create an environment that is productive and positive. The cost of mistrust and miscommunication is high. We encourage them to work together in an effort to create an environment that is efficient, effective and representative of our community's values of fairness and respect for each other.

Since this situation has been ongoing for more than two years at the WUD, we recommend that the City Manager and Assistant City Manager be directed to work with the staff and management of the WUD to address these concerns to resolution. Additionally, we recommend that the WUD management team submit updates to Mayor and Council on their progress towards resolution of the three issues identified above.

Respectfully,

Arlene Chin
Chair
Human Relations Commission