



MINUTES

Tuesday, January 24, 2023

6:00 pm – 7:30 pm

Virtual Meeting via Zoom

<https://orangecountync.zoom.us/j/85782134210>

MEMBERS PRESENT	STAFF
Allison Mahaley	Melvyn Blackwell, Civil Rights Specialist
Nathalie Volkheimer	Courtney McLaughlin, Community Engagement & Outreach Coordinator
Michael Fath	Shameka Fairbanks, Chief Equity & Human Rights Officer
Ana Taylor-Garcia	
Jenn Sykes	
Anjail Taylor	

MEMBERS ABSENT
Ruby Garcia (excused)

- I. **Call to Order** | Commissioner Mahaley, Chair
 - A. The meeting was called to order at 6:04 p.m.

- II. **Minutes Approval** | January 24, 2023
 - A. Commissioner Volkheimer motions to approve January minutes. Commissioner Fath seconds motion. All commissioners are in favor of January minutes. Minutes approved.

- III. **Executive Committee Report**
 - A. Community Conversation
 - i. Commissioner Mahaley sent out the questions from the 2022 Community Conversation to the superintendents and equity directors for both school districts. The Orange County Schools superintendent thanked Commissioner Mahaley.
 - B. Pauli Murray Awards
 - i. In regards to who will be accountable and who will be responsible for the Pauli Murray Awards, the Office of Equity & Inclusion (Office) represents the County as an organization and the Human Relations Commission (HRC) are a volunteer body to the County. Should any complaints, concerns, or feedback be received from the community regarding an HRC event, the Office is responsible for representing the County in response to those matters.
 1. *Discussion*
 - a. Commissioner Fath suggests that the nature of the Office be appropriately reflected on the website. Mr. Blackwell advises that the advisory board policies and ordinance be referenced for clarification and that the Executive committee can have further discussion regarding the matter. Mr. Blackwell states that this is everyone’s event and the intention is for it

to be collaborative. Commissioner Mahaley suggests further discussion offline if more clarification is needed.

IV. County Updates

- A. Black History Month programming will be robust this year. Events are listed on the County Website. There will be a movie night to watch My Name is Pauli Murray at the Passmore Center and guests will be provided a promotional movie ticket to attend the Pauli Murray Awards on February 26th. The Pauli Murray Award ceremony flyers will be provided to Commissioners to promote the event.

V. HRC Applications

- A. Six applications have been received for the HRC to consider for selection. There are four open seats available. The HRC agreed to prioritize diversity in the process of selection for the seats that are currently open.
 - i. Commissioners have agreed to rate the applicants for selection and then make contact with each candidate (starting with the highest rate) to ensure interest, availability, and commitment to HRC before submitting names forward to the BOCC.
- B. Commissioner Mahaley will be in contact with Jameelah Merritte, Lynn McGee, Deborah Baker, and Josh Ravitch to share with each applicant information about the HRC and identify if they were still interested in proceeding. If all applicants agree to proceed, the HRC agrees to have those names submitted to the BOCC for approval. If any applicant decides not to proceed, Commissioner Mahaley will be in contact with Michael Delafield, then Brooke Capps-Yaroni until she can reach four applicants in agreement to proceed.

VI. Orange County Community Remembrance Coalition MOU

- A. MOU provided to Commissioners. MOU was signed in 2021. MOU states that the HRC will provide support to the events the OCCRC puts forward. In December, James E. Williams Jr. requested HRC support for their efforts to recognize the anniversary of the Letter from a Birmingham Jail. Commissioners did not express any concerns about moving forward.

VII. MLK Day Support 2024

- A. Commissioner Volkheimer met with the chair of the communications committee for the MLK Day event organizers. The organizers are seeking to develop a higher-profile event. Commissioner Volkheimer is interested in supporting the group in developing a stronger digital presence by sponsoring the cost of their webpage development, creating a digital presence for the group, and developing a handbook on the digital presence strategy to be handed over to someone internally to maintain.

- i. Discussion

- 1. Mr. Blackwell states that this proposed opportunity sounds similar in structure to the relationship the Office holds with the Community Dinner. The Office serves as a fiscal agent to the Community Dinner but the organizers maintain the organizational efforts. Commissioner Sykes expressed concerns regarding whether there would be any prohibitions because of church involvement in the organization's efforts. Commissioner Mahaley suggests that the HRC join the coalition and become a sponsor. With the HRC as a sponsor, Commissioner Volkheimer would be interested in personally volunteering to assist them with their digital presence.

2. The HRC is not ready to vote on a decision at this time. Commissioner Mahaley would like to invite MLK Day organizers to an HRC meeting in the future to express how they would like for the HRC to be involved in their work.

VIII. HRC Events & Committee Reports

A. Committee Report

i. Pauli Murray Awards Committee | Commissioner Fath

1. Catering has been selected. Mr. Blackwell will send all nominations forward to the planning committee at the closing of the application period. The Office has only received adult applicants but is making efforts to solve for lack of youth and business nominations. Commissioner Fath would like to continue the standard approach to selecting the winners. Commissioner Sykes offered to join the Committee in reviewing and scoring the applications.

Commissioner Mahaley confirms that there previously had been a rubric utilized to score nominations. Mr. Blackwell will send the scorecard forward.

2. Commissioner Mahaley would like for the HRC to have reserved seating, that elected officials and members of the Commission be recognized.

ii. Communications Committee | Commissioner Volkheimer

1. Commissioner Volkheimer sent forward a document regarding the kind of posts that she will be looking for when posting to Facebook to develop more energy around the HRC and Office of Equity & Inclusion. This includes locally streamed events and fun facts or activities of significance. The approval process would include a review from Mr. Blackwell and the HRC Chair's endorsement of the posts. Commissioner Mahaley has experienced some challenges in getting onto local profiles and encourages Commissioners to connect her with local businesses and organizations to build community familiarity, support, and trust.

iii. Freedom Celebration | Chair Needed

1. Commissioner Sykes volunteers to chair the committee. Commissioner Mahaley will serve as a member of the committee.

iv. Community Read | Chair Needed

1. Commissioner Mahaley suggests that the Community Read be facilitated in September in the case that the HRC would like to bring in the author and would need to have an available budget to accomplish that endeavor. HRC will discuss selecting a chair for this committee at a future date.

IX. Commissioner Check-in (2 mins each)

- A. Commissioner Sykes shares that the Burwell School, Orange County Remeberance Coalition, and Orange County Government are hosting a Finding Your Roots with Judge Beverly Scarlett event in Hillsborough to support the community in learning how to do ancestry searches.

- B. Commissioner Mahaley shares that there will be a Black Entrepreneurship event happening at the Agricultural Center in Hillsborough.

X. Other Business/Announcement/Upcoming Event

- A. The Office will facilitate a walking tour with Whistle Stop Tours and Pauli Murray Center for History & Social Justice on Thursday, February 23, 2023. It will be open to Orange County employees and HRC.
- B. The Office will be sponsoring HRC participation in Racial Equity Institute training opportunities.
- C. Fair Housing Training will be happening on January 28, 2023, with Stella Adams.

XI. Adjourn

- A. Motion to adjourn by Commissioner at 7:38 p.m.

NEXT MEETING: February 28, 2023, on Zoom (<https://orangecountync.zoom.us/j/85782134210>)