



# City of Milwaukee

200 E. Wells Street  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin  
53202

## Meeting Minutes - Final

### EQUAL RIGHTS COMMISSION

**CHAIR: CHEZ ORDONEZ**

**VICE CHAIR: TONY SNELL**

***Mayhoua Moua, Nathan Guequierre, Martha Collins, Jennifer  
Bennett, William Crowley, and Jessica Boling***

***Staffing: Jessica Langill, 414.286.5532, jlangi@milwaukee.gov***

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**Wednesday, July 22, 2020**

**5:30 PM**

**Virtual Meeting**

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This meeting is being held via GoToMeeting. Please join from your computer, tablet or smartphone at <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/129366237>. You can also dial in at (646) 749-3122. Please use Access Code: 129-366-237.

## **1 Call to Order**

**Meeting called to order at 5:35PM**

**Present** 8 - Moua, Ordonez, Snell, Collins, Guequierre, Bennett, Crowley and Boling

## **2 Approval of Minutes from January 29, 2020**

**Approval of minutes held until next full Commission meeting**

### 3 Fiscal Year 2021 Proposed Budget

Dennis Yaccarino and Sharon Robinson provided an update re: 2021 proposed budget and how the budget process works.

Director Robinson stated that there are many City and community partners who will be able to assist the ERC in the work it wants to do, including taking complaints. Director Robinson stated they are not at the point where DOA can provide a dollar amount for the ERC yet. She anticipates funding will come through a combination of CDBG, levy and private resources. She stated that DOA had to cut \$350,000 for the 2021 budget, and they are being instructed to cut another 5% from the DOA budget due to COVID-19 related budget crisis.

Commissioners reiterated the importance of having a fully funded ERC to allow for more outreach, education, and complaint intake. Director Robinson stated DOA and ERC have the same goals, but are often working in silos. Director Robinson will be added as a standing agenda item to full Commission meetings. Commissioners requested to be involved more in budget and equity discussions in the future.

Dennis shared that the 2021 proposed budget is due at the end of September. He shared the City is currently facing a \$68 million deficit. Dennis shared that approximately 80% of the general city budget goes to Police, Public Works, and Fire. A 10% cut to MPD has been proposed by a directive from the Common Council. Dennis stated that funding would go to minimize the overall deficit, some might go to direct cuts to the department, moving funding to civilian controlled departments, etc.

Commissioners requested to be involved in looking at specific funding in the budget for black, brown, LGBT, and other disenfranchised communities. They stated that it is important to include the ERC in decisions and the budget process before decisions are made. Commissioner Guequierre suggested this work be done through a special committee or through the Governance committee. Commissioner Snell stressed the importance of working together so there are not duplicate services.

Two community members voiced their support for funding the ERC. A community member suggested that DOA look into implicit bias training before using it, as there are studies that have shown that implicit bias training is not always successful.

Director Robinson stated that most of the Commissions at the City do not have large budgets, but DOA understands the importance of funding the work of the ERC. Commissioner Snell stated that most peer cities have an Equal Rights Department that is fully staffed, and then a Commission for appeals. He stated Milwaukee does not have that set up. Assistant City Attorney, Ben Roovers, stated that information on the budgets of all City Commissions and Committees can be found in the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report.

## **4 Inclusive Restroom Policy Workgroup**

Held for next ERC meeting

The workgroup is working on putting together a policy for the City.

## **5 Committee Reports**

Commissioner Snell stated the Governance Committee has sent out a recruitment announcement to fill the empty Commissioner seats. He also stated that the Governance Committee will be making sure that Commissioners and committees are not overworked. The Governance Committee is working on putting together training and an onboarding process for new Commissioners.

Commissioner Guequierre stated the Communications Committee has put together a Committee reporting form that will be used to keep everyone updated on the work being done at the committee level.

Commissioner Moua stated the Outreach & Education committee has been meeting regularly and has been working on an educational toolkit and the Human Rights Day. A community member, Quentella Perry, has joined the committee.

## **6 Merchant Card & Contactless Payment Discussion**

Commissioner Ordonez stated the ERC needs to act on this issue quickly. He stated that businesses overall are looking to use COVID as an excuse to stop accepting cash at their establishments. He stated this disenfranchises groups such as lower income, homeless, and under-banked communities. Rebecca Rabatin stated the ERC should work with the Health Department as well.

Assigned to the Compliance & Enforcement Committee to discuss policy to be recommended to the Common Council.

## **7 Communication Regarding Requested 2020 Peer-City Comparison**

Commissioner Ordonez requested a 2020 update on the Peer City comparison report from the Legislative Reference Bureau (LRB).

## **8 Resolution Declaring Racism as a Public Health Crisis**

Commissioners discussed the issues with the Resolution being an unfunded mandate.

Assigned to the Compliance & Enforcement Committee.

## 9 Discussion Regarding Federal Agents in Milwaukee

Commissioner Ordonez stated that Fire & Police is not in the ERC purview, but that the ERC is committed to being advocates for the community. He stated the ERC rebukes sending in Federal Agents and militia. He suggested the ERC partner with Common Council, Fire & Police Commission, and the City's Intergovernmental Relations department, to convene discussions on how to tackle this.

## 10 Review Potential Amendments to Chapter 109

The ERC is looking to add increased protections to the Chapter 109 Code of Ordinances. Commissioner Ordonez stated the body should start discussing these changes, but a list has not been compiled as of yet. He shared that the Compliance & Enforcement Committee would be handling these proposed changes. Commissioner Ordonez stated that the C&E Committee is looking to add stronger immigrant protections, crown legislation, etc. He stated there is wording that can also be cleaned and tightened up. He stated that the ERC is also looking at removing 109-7.4c which prohibits the ERC from hearing any discrimination complaints that can be heard by a State or Federal organization. Commissioner Ordonez stated that if 109-7.4c is removed, the State Equal Rights Division and EEOC can take over any overflow through an MOU. He stated the State is going to be sharing complaint data with the ERC in the near future.

Commissioner Snell stated that the ERC can take the complaints and then pass them to the state. He said that the ERC could get compensated for taking and handling the complaints. He stated that the State relies on the ERC and other local organizations to educate the community on equal rights protections. He stated that the ERC could also have access to discrimination investigation trainings.

Commissioner Ordoenz stated it makes sense to pursue the change to the ordinance and the MOU as soon as possible. Commissioner Ordonez stated he would call a special meeting by the end of August to get these changes in place. Ben Roovers stated that the ERC is not able to enter into an MOU on its own. He also stated that while he understands the importance, he is concerned about moving ahead with changing the ordinance before getting an MOU in place and having more information on the amount of incoming complaints.

Director Robinson asked the ERC to keep DOA informed on the decisions being made regarding the changes. Commissioner Ordonez stated this agenda item will go back to the committee for further discussion. He stated DOA, the City Attorney's Office, and the Mayor's Office will be included in the decisions. He stated the community and Alders will also be involved in the discussions.

Commissioner Ordonez stated that the ERC will not rush the MOU and removing 109-7.4c, but that the Commission is willing to add protections to the Ordinance beforehand. Commissioner Ordonez stated he would meet with DOA and the City Attorney's Office in August to discuss MOUs.

## **11 Work Share Agreement with State of Wisconsin - Equal Rights Division (ERD)**

Item held.

## **12 Community Dialogue and Upcoming Events**

Rebecca Rabatin, ADA Corrdinator, shared details for the upcoming virtual ADA 30th Anniversary celebration, sponsored by the ERC.

## **13 Adjourn**

Meeting adjourned at 8:27PM

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