

Human Rights Council Meeting
 Room #208, Lucas Building
 January 12, 2009, 9:00am

x	Director Walter Reed, Jr.	x	Bill Brand	x	Paul Stageberg
x	Joan Moll	x	Kathryn Baumann-Reese	x	Rachel Scott
	Abraham Funchess		Jill Avery	x	Melissa Esquivel, Acting
x	Cyndi Chen				

Also in attendance were Darla Welch-recording secretary, Kim Cheeks on behalf of Abraham Funchess, Gayle Newlin-DHR Human Resources, and members of the public: Alyson Simmons and Debra Carr.

1. The meeting was called to order by Director Walter Reed, Jr.
2. Kathryn Bauman-Reese moved approval of the Agenda. The motion was seconded and carried.
3. Bill Brand moved approval of the December 8 Minutes. The motion was seconded and carried.
4. Benefit Education Presentation. Gayle Newlin provided a brief overview of the benefits website, <http://das.hre.iowa.gov/benefits.html>, which enables state employees to explore benefit information, including health, dental, life insurance, long term disability insurance, deferred comp, retirement and other benefits offered by the state. Handouts were provided show how to access the various areas of the website where online presentations were provided, offering employees direct interaction. On-demand sites are also available, enabling the employee to see and hear the presentation, but do not provide interaction. On-site presentations are also available to agencies upon request. Employees can get further information from Gayle Newlin or from DAS.
5. Employee Recognition. It was determined that employee recognition would be included as a portion of the February 9 PDO. Kathryn Baumann-Reese will arrange for interpreters, and Secretary Welch will provide appropriate certificates.
6. Review DHR Committees/Teams. Director Reed had re-sent DA's a copy of the December 31, 2008 memorandum regarding Department Committees/Teams, and indicated he would like to get additional cooperation for internal committees, discuss the need to combine or add committees, etc. Internal committees help manage policies and programs that come down from management.

Cyndi Chen asked about the possibility of combining the Training Team and the Staff Development Committee. It was clarified that the Training Team was originally established to deal with cultural competency training opportunities for other state agencies and outside organizations, while the Staff Development Team was established to provide educational growth opportunities for internal staff. Director Reed indicated that providing cultural competency training as originally intended would be a way to leverage additional resources for the department; however there needs to be consistency as far as costs for the training, as well as a specific base model for training. At one point there had been discussion whether or not to continue to use the Cross model that was originally presented. We could possibly even add follow-up services after the actual training was completed. With staff changes, the program was somewhat dropped. Rachel Scott and Cyndi Chen volunteered to work on this.

Kathryn Baumann-Reese suggested creating a short-term team to create an orientation program.

The Records Retention Team should cover instructions on retention of both paper and electronic documents. Rachel Scott suggested this be included as a part of the Utilities Team. Much of the problem with records retention seems to center around space, both physical and technical. Records retention was discussed and it was pointed out that every agency is required to have a records retention policy. Each of our divisions pretty much has its own; however, there is one for the department in general as well.

It was suggested we ask Marcia Thompson to put together a "brief" on records retention and give it to each division. This would be in the format of a one-two page document summary. Cyndi Chen suggested we consider a PDO session where the committee could talk about how to better manage storage, and also mentioned that this seems to fit the utilities team function.

It was generally agreed that we need an updated list of the function of the committees, current members, and then open the committees up to others.

Specifically, one of the most crucial of the committees is the Safety Committee, in that it deals with homeland security as well as departmental safety.

It was pointed out that the Utilities Team is one committee which contains several sub-committees, including Space Utilization, Office Equipment and IT. Bill Brand indicated what is ultimately important is how activities of the Utilities Team are communicated to the DA's so they have input. The Space Sub-committee is a good example. DA's were not given a chance to give input on changes in office space that ultimately impacted their divisions. It was suggested that a committee member make a presentation to the DA's on such issues. Director Reed indicated at this point as the committees looked at issues and opportunities within the department, those committees meet and come up with a directive to follow that directive was implemented. It was not necessary to bring it before the HRC. Bill Brand indicated information-sharing is an important part of working as a department, and that this should also apply to any directions coming from outside the department – the DA's should have the opportunity for discussion prior to implementing a new procedure.

Rachel Scott suggested we set up a human rights culture committee that could be responsible for welcoming new employees, doing a newsletter, setting periodical "social" events, etc. so employees see themselves as part of the department as a whole, not just their division. This could be part of the Staff Development committee.

Director Reed indicated we need to tweak the information we currently have, then get it out to the employees. At the February meeting, we can talk about protocol and take another look. We will do an employee survey on the 9th and that may give us more information.

Paul Stageberg suggested that the Utilities Team might need to be split up. Kathryn Baumann-Reese, however, indicated there really isn't a problem with having the various components to the Team, and that the team links up with the DAS Utilities Team.

Director Reed would like committees and teams to be talking about what future needs and opportunities within the department are within their particular areas. It was also suggested the chairs of each committee should be asked if there is anything they want on the HRCC agendas, or possibly invite the chairs to come in to address the HRCC meetings.

Kathryn Baumann-Reese suggested employee orientation be moved from the Training Team. Director Reed indicated Gayle Newlin is working on employee orientation.

7. Fiscal Update. Joan Moll indicated there were 1.5% across-the-board cuts to budgets. She will be talking to each Division Administrator to determine how to cover their portion of the cut. Future appropriation transfers, etc. can be discussed at the next HRCC. Appropriation transfers must first be approved by management and then are sent to legislature where they have thirty days in which to comment, especially if they wish to voice any objections. He appropriation transfer request is then sent back and management prepares the actual official paperwork which is then sent over for the Governor's signature. Appropriation transfers are generally done to cover day-to-day expenses.

If a division is short a relatively small amount of money at the end of the year, it's likely this can be transferred from within one division to another without the usual amount of paperwork.

The 1.5% has been deducted from I-3 now; however, expenditure lines have not been adjusted for that 1.5% adjustment. Director Reed indicated it's likely we won't know the final budget outcome until April. Ray Walton, DAS, indicated that they, too, are reducing their budget by 1.5%, even though they were not mandated to do so.

Joan Moll asked that all DA's who haven't yet done so, should send her their Performance Reports for FY08 which were due December 15. These results have to be put onto the I-3 system in order to appear in the budget reports. She must have this information today.

DA's who have not given her a performance plan for FY08 need to do this as well, including targets and results.

In addition, Joan needs Performance Plans for FY09. Some DA's have been working with management on these. Please make certain she is copied on anything that you might have sent over.

She will be talking to individual DA's as needed.

Rachel Scott indicated the Governor's recommendations should be done by the end of the month. They are waiting to see what money will be released by the Feds after Obama takes office.

8. Guiding Principles Roll-Out. Secretary Welch had previously distributed notes taken at the Strategic Planning meeting in December, including Guiding Principles and Action Steps.

Kathryn Baumann-Reese suggested we share this with all staff at the next PDO on February 9. She indicated she will put the information into PowerPoint format.

We will need to create an Agenda for the PDO. Guiding Principles, Pre-Test, and discussion of Internal Survey should be included on the Agenda. This will also help identify overlapping areas.

The pre-test will ask people to indicate how they feel things currently are, and the questionnaire will ask them to indicate what they want in the future. We will have paper copies to hand out at the meeting to encourage a good response. Bill Brand and Rachel Scott will work on the pre-test. Rachel indicated the pre-test could be ready one week from today, which would give employees two weeks' response time. Melissa Esquivel and Cyndi Chen will work on the survey. The survey will be given during the meeting. DA's were asked to send their ideas for questions to Melissa.

We will need to move the HRC meeting to the afternoon of February 9.

Regarding going through the actual Action Plans, Director Reed indicated perhaps the groups that actually worked on the individual steps should meet to renew their sense of direction and to put together their suggestions on finalizing that portion of the plan. That way when we bring in additional staff on this, we are ready to proceed forward.

Rachel Scott will check on the cost of using Survey monkey. Kathryn Baumann-Reese indicated we have IT money that we could use for this purpose.

9. DHR Code Updates. Rachel Scott indicated she had just received an e-mail from Syeta Glanton, IGOV, giving permission to go ahead with the Code changes that were discussed with the AG's office.

Director Reed indicated the best way to handle this would be each DA to look over their individual section and get back to Syeta if there are any questions, concerns or amendments. She asks that they get back to her by close of business tomorrow, January 13. He asked that DA's copy him on any comments to Syeta.

10. Other.

- Director Reed clarified with visitors that in the past the HRCC has been a managers meeting and we are now changing our format to that of an open meeting. He asked for comments by the visitors.
- Debra Carr asked about the 1.5% across the board cut and indicated the news media had suggested even more extensive cutbacks were going to occur. She asked how realistic it is for our department to make these kinds of cuts. Joan Moll indicated there was no option on making the 1.5% cut. This year we may have the option of allocation transfers. Next year the legislature will give us a new number and we don't know what types of action we might have to take to meet that goal. Debra Carr asked whether we anticipate additional cuts above the 1.5%. Joan Moll indicated we don't know at this point. Now that session is back in, there could be changes. Debra Carr indicated it seems even more essential now than ever before that timelines for reports and projects be met in detail, including justifying measures.
- Alyson Simmons inquired about where to find information regarding commission meetings and other division events. Were these posted to the individual division websites? She was advised that this information was included on most of the division websites, and that Press Releases were sent out as well as Agendas posted prior to meetings.
- Bill Brand commented that he has recently heard the Governor refer to "reorganizing departments". He asked whether Director Reed had heard anything regarding possible reorganization at this point. Director Reed indicated he had received no word on this, nor has he been called into discussions with any other directors or legislative staff on it. Brand indicated we need to be ready this year to discuss this and to be prepared with rationale for our existence, and that we need to be prepared in advance to engage in any of these discussions.

Rachel Scott indicated Representative Hunter said that he foresees having all of the Division Administrators coming over to talk about what the department does. There is a new Admin and Regs Committee this year. Joan indicated nothing official has come over on this. Bill Brand indicated the Republican strategy this year seems to be that agencies should come in expecting one-half of the money they have requested, then be ready to justify

anything beyond that. Director Reed indicated this would be a good opportunity for our department to what we do. He indicated there is always the possibility that they will chose not to engage us in any discussion at all. He also stressed that rumors are likely to run rampant, but until official word comes down, all we can do is to be ready.

- Kim Cheeks indicated the Martin Luther King event will be held at 10:45 Thursday, January 15, at the State Historical Building, to include a commemorative celebration, awards, and a state employee mass choir.
- Rachel Scott indicated the Status of Women legislative breakfast will be held January 21 with commission meeting following. Joan Moll reminded all that there are forms to be filled out when a division hosts an event inviting legislators.
- Bill Brand indicated FaDSS Day on the Hill has been postponed.
- Melissa Esquivel reported that Latino Affairs has been denied their request for a full time temporary employee. The division is functioning with only one employee until such time as a Division Administrator is hired. Bill Brand had received a call from an individual who indicated she wanted experience practicing her Spanish skills. He referred her to Melissa and there is the possibility she might want to work as a volunteer taking phone calls, etc. Director reed asked Melissa to be sure to keep he and Secretary Welch advised when she would be out of the office. Kathryn Baumann-Reese indicated she has an intern two days per week that might be able to help Melissa occasionally.
- Cyndi Chen mentioned that beginning January 13, there will be bi-weekly 30-minute sessions on conversational Chinese.
- The Persons with Disabilities Commission will be meeting January 20.

NEXT MEETING: February 9, 2009 – Time TBD

Submitted by
Darla Welch, Recording Secretary