

Human Rights Council Meeting
 Room #201, Lucas Building
 May 11, 2009, 9:00am

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

Also in attendance were Lori SchraderBachar on behalf of Rachel Scott. Minutes were taken by Darla Welch, recording secretary.

1. The meeting was called to order by Director Preston Daniels. A quorum was present.
2. Paul Stageberg moved approval of the Agenda. The motion was seconded and carried.
3. Paul Stageberg moved approval of the March 9, 2009, Minutes. The motion was seconded and edits were made. Minutes were approved for filing as edited.
4. Proposed DHR Reorganization. Director Daniels indicated there are areas in the bill about which he is interested in sharing his thoughts and hearing those of the DAs. It appears to him the bill was submitted without a great deal of input from the department, and he does not have a background on what prompted the bill to be submitted. Kathryn Baumann-Reese indicated there had been discussion on the part of the Governor's office regarding reorganizing state government in general, and after spending considerable time working on this, the legislature determined DHR and Veterans Affairs would be good places to start the process. Cyndi Chen had been advised the new structure as proposed would save money, and Paul Stageberg indicated he had been told there would be no reduction in FTEs. Bill Brand indicated there was a general lack of communication on the issues from the Governor's office to DHR, and between the DAs and the Director.

Cyndi Chen indicated in response to a request from Syeta Glanton, considerable time had been spent working with IGOV and the Attorney General's office on a draft bill to update Code sections of the divisions, making them more consistent throughout the department. Many mutual recommendations were arrived at during the process of working on the draft, and the DAs left with the understanding this would be the bill presented to the legislature. Further restructuring of the department would be left until after a strategic plan was developed for the entire department. While each division has a strategic plan, there isn't one covering the department as a whole.

Paul Stageberg mentioned that for several years, former Director Reed has been attempting to obtain a receptionist and a person to do grants.

Kathryn Baumann-Reese indicated IGOV was aware that the department had communication problems. Syeta Glanton had commented at the retreat that IGOV doesn't really like that all of the administrators and the Director are appointed, as this created the problem of there being too many people to adequately supervise. She indicated as it exists there is no clear disciplinary process when problems arise between appointed individuals as this isn't an area DAS will handle. Baumann-Reese indicated one issue they were attempting to work on with the Code changes was to clarify the structure of the Department. The Code sets out the duties of the Director; however doesn't specify duties of the DAs. She indicated she was somewhat disappointed the Code changes didn't go on through, and suggested if the legislature doesn't consider the Code changes at the next session, this could be something that the department needs to present to them.

Director Daniels indicated he has not seen the recommendations that were made for Code changes at the retreat. Kathryn Baumann-Reese will send those to him, as well as sending the information to all DAs to make certain everyone is working from the same copy.

Bill Brand indicated he believes perhaps the legislature is planning to set up a reorganization committee for state government in general, and that they will likely be starting from scratch. HF 809, Section 12(11), sets out that the Department "shall conduct a study to examine the organization and duties of the department and whether reorganizing the structure of the department could provide enhanced service to lowans in a more efficient manner." A written report is due to the General Assembly by January 1, 2010. Kathryn Baumann-Reese suggested this report contain more than just Code changes, including items from strategic planning as well as information on what the constituents groups say they "can't do without". She also suggested the Department have someone sit in on the reorganization committee meetings.

The question was raised on what became of the Guiding Principles meeting where we established values and goals for the department. At one point a follow-up staff PDO was scheduled; however, it was canceled with a new Director coming in to make sure this is still the direction we are going to go. Bill Brand indicated people are understanding of the fact that we are on hold because of the legislature and change in Director; however, we do need to schedule a follow up on this. Director Daniels will let staff know that we will be putting together a process that will involve them to every extent we can. We will definitely be taking a further look on this matter.

Cyndi Chen indicated the issue of the Latino Affairs Division Administrator position has not yet been resolved. A recommendation was proposed to IGOV in December. In February the reorganization bill came out and Syeta indicated they were not going to need to hire an administrator as the bill was going to pass.

Director Daniels indicated IGOV is expecting us to put together something to submit to them on the structure of DHR going forward. Both the LA and ICNAA Divisions have no Administrator, and ICNAA basically has no funding.

Kathryn Baumann-Reese mentioned that Syeta Glanton had indicated they are envisioning a structure with a Division of Disabilities which would include more divisions than just the two that DHR now has. We need to know more what IGOV is envisioning before we can submit a structural plan to them. Baumann-Reese indicated the Deaf Services Division had been discussing the need for two sections within their division, one for persons who are hard-of-hearing and consider themselves within the disabilities category, and a separate section for persons who are deaf and consider themselves cultural minorities who fit better into another group. She feels this is an opportunity for DHR to be thinking about what our constituents need, and what should be changed in the Code and Administrative Rules.

Abraham Funchess inquired about how engaged the Governor personally is on the reorganization. Even though he appears to support certain areas, this support doesn't seem to trickle down to those who are actively involved. Director Daniels indicated the realism is that when you sit down with any individual in a top governmental position, you cannot take everything that is said as being written in stone. Regardless the level of personal support, there are still processes that must be followed. While he will be involved as much as possible, the reality is that it's unlikely he will have the time to personally deal with the reorganization planning. IGOV has certain high priority issues that must be dealt with such as the flooding upheaval and the economy. Other items will be passed down to staff. We need to take the initiative on what happens to our department.

Director Daniels indicated there are certain important questions DHR needs to consider.

- When was the Department created?
- Why was the Department created?
- Why were the various Divisions created?
- Why do they still exist?
- How do these parts come together?
- What are the similarities and dis-similarities?
- What does "human rights" really mean today?
- What kinds of issues should we be weighing in on?
- Do we weigh in on these issues separately, or as a department?
- Do we function as a department?
- How do we save money?

Those are just some of the items that Director Daniels sees as concerns for the Department, and stressed that the department needs to prepare for the future. Some divisions will be safe, especially those with Federal funding; however, is there really going to be a need for a Human Rights Department in the future, and if so, what do we see that need as being? Things are changing, and we need to be pro-active in preparing for that change. Kathryn Baumann-Reese indicated it may be time to consider whether we actually do fit together any longer. As we move into the strategic planning process, we may decide there are other places into which some or all of the divisions may find a better fit.

The department needs to have a viable product that is recognized and valued by the constituents we serve. Unless we can demonstrate that the Department is valuable, budgets will continue to go down.

Joan Moll indicated she has been here since the beginning of the agency, and isn't certain that human rights was actually supposed to be the original focus of the department. There were many years when they debated changing the name altogether. Perhaps there is a name that would be more descriptive of what we are trying to do. The name is often confused with the DM Human Rights Commission, Human Services Division, and the Civil Rights Department. Paul Stageberg indicated he had heard the department was originally set up to fail, and Kathryn Baumann-Reese indicated every few years, someone tries to dismantle the department. Joan Moll indicated there has never been a

great consensus on what we do. One thing remains certain – we cannot leave it up to someone else to say how we function. We need to determine our own destiny.

Bill Brand indicated Director Daniels has actually hit on all the right questions. The DAs actually started thinking along the “Who are we?” line last summer. While there were a lot of discussions attempted, it became evident there is not the right kind of communication or collaboration within the administration of the department to be ready for this step. This realization led the department to the Guiding Principles step.

Abraham Funchess asked Director Daniels what defines success for him. The Director indicated his success is dependant on the successes of the DAs and the divisions. He does not consider himself an advocate; however, if that is what DHR wants, then we must become strong advocates. He indicated he is more service-oriented, and that he would like to see DHR actually provide specific services to our constituents. He sees a number of special needs groups within the department, and sees this as a defining point where the divisions can begin to pull together as a unit. For example, Paul Stageberg’s area deals with a huge amount of data. Can their data-gathering skills be used in any of the other divisions?

He indicated he would like to see DHR built into a structure that is so respected it is clearly defined that this is the place to come when information is needed. He believes it is necessary that the department have a purpose and that it is up to us to define what that purpose is. He used the Native American Commission as an example, stating that within their community is an element of each and every division within the department. Our future is dependant on bringing all of our resources together to serve our constituents. Through strategic planning, we must define who we are and what we have to offer, then begin to collaborate to define our group for the future.

Kathryn Baumann-Reese indicated we need to also consider at what point do our resources become so minimal that it doesn’t make sense for us to exist any longer. Director Daniels indicated we are approaching that point. He indicated DHR was likely created during a period of time when people were actively speaking out, and that translates into votes. Politically, that time is going away, and we are now becoming a burden. We need to reverse this if we wish to survive. Budget should be based on service that goes out and what being delivered. What is DHR delivering? He asked the DAs to begin thinking about those point.

He will be looking for a couple of Division Administrators to head up a strategic planning exercise and to examine reorganization. This needs to be handled on a fairly rapid timeline as it must be submitted through IGOV. He would like to see our commissions and constituents driving this effort.

5. Proposed Website Revisions. Director Daniels sees the website as being a very important factor in spreading information about the department. Each DA was provided with a copy of changes that have been proposed for the website and were asked to review those changes. Director Daniels, Laura Roeder-Grubb, Paul Stageberg, and Rachel Scott will be meeting with Rick Rosno from IowaInteractive on Tuesday, May 12, to discuss these changes on DAs were asked to get their comments to Paul Stageberg.
6. Joan Moll and Director Daniels have met regarding budgets, and he has expressed to her that he is conservative when it comes to finances, and will be looking at expenditures very closely.

Kathryn Baumann-Reese asked whether any divisions will have budget issues prior to the end of this year. It is possible she may be able to assist with some of DS’ funds. In addition, there needs to be discussion regarding next year’s budget and the possibility for shared staff, etc. Joan Moll is looking at the budget and will be talking with Director Daniels regarding these things. She will also be visiting with each Division Administrator. Transfers of appropriations between divisions should not be done until after the legislative session is over. Next year’s budget information must be entered into the system between May 28-June 14.

Kathryn Baumann-Reese asked whether there are any concerns regarding FTEs for the coming year. Joan indicated that there are concerns, and that the department needs to be looking for alternatives to lay-offs. Director Daniels indicated one priority is going to be a one-half FTE for ICNAA.

Syeta Glanton was unable to attend today’s HRCC meeting; however, Director Daniels did have the opportunity to visit with her briefly. There has been no action taken yet on appointment of an administrator for LA. Legislation should be prepared.

Paul Stageberg indicated the bill on Iowa Collaboration for Youth Development passed and was signed. No state funds are attached to this bill. They elect their own chairperson. Steve Michael, CJJP, has been working on this.

Bill Brand indicated there may be an interim job training program. The reorganization commission is going to come out with a Legislative Council to designate a commission.

Kathryn Baumann-Reese mentioned it will be interesting to see how much stimulus money comes in and if there are opportunities to collaborate on any of these funds. DHS, Workforce Development, and DED are receiving funding that could benefit our constituents. There is a lot of accountability and reporting attached to stimulus funds. Joan Moll pointed out Federal money that comes into the State is bound by State rules as well as Federal, meaning that goods and services must be received by the end of the year, not simply committed to.

Kathryn Baumann-Reese remarked that it is generally assumed that everything we provide should be free. This is an issue that should be looked at down the road.

She asked if anyone else had seen language that there is to be no allowance of extra pay for anyone during this next year. Bill Brand indicated he saw this as well. Joan Moll indicated she will be visiting with Gayle Newlin about this. She questioned whether this would apply to appointees.

Bill Brand indicated they are in the process of hiring one person to help with energy evaluator training and inspection of homes. They are looking internally at fiscal management as well. Most of the hiring for the program will be done through the local agencies that actually do the work of the weatherization program. This could be part of the discussion on sharing staff internally.

Kathryn Baumann-Reese indicated we do not know how funding of partner agencies will impact us. Bill reported their FaDSS funding did not get cut as much as some programs. There was only an approximate 1.2% cut. State funding comes from DHS and is then transferred to us. The fact that this program received only a minimal cut would be an example of a product of value.

7. Director Daniels indicated the HRCC may need to have a meeting before next month to discuss plans for the Department. The DAs mentioned that they are not opposed to meeting more frequently if needed. The next meeting of the HRCC has been set for Tuesday, May 26.
8. Abraham Funchess reported the results of the Davenport disparity study were now complete, showing there is significant disparity among their contractors. So much so, in fact, that the City is going to mandate a quota. Over the next 5 years \$10 million should flow to African-American contractors. If the funds are not awarded, this will constitute grounds for lawsuits. The study was a partnership between the City of Davenport and the Commission, at a total cost of \$150,000. A Minority Enterprise Construction Council has been formed in Davenport to monitor ongoing progress on this. Kathryn Baumann-Reese suggested a best practices paper be done to market this to other communities, and Abraham indicated this is being done. Bill Brand indicated it would be interesting to see what disparity is of minority participation in job training programs.

Cyndi Chen reported the annual Asian Heritage Festival will take place this Saturday, 10:00am-8:00pm, with an anticipated 40,000 people. The Festival will be located between the Lucas/Grimes/Hoover buildings.

In addition, Cyndi indicated she will be out of the office May 18-June 7.

Director Daniels indicated he would like to have 1-2 people designated to serve as the "voice" for the department, responsible for press contacts. In addition, he would like 2 Division Administrators to volunteer to head up the strategic plan process.

Kathryn Baumann-Reese asked Director Daniels if he would be agreeable to a welcome reception, to be held in the cafeteria area to give staff, other Directors, etc., a chance to meet him. Receiving his approval, she will head up scheduling a meet and greet.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

NEXT MEETING: May 26, 2009

Submitted by
Darla Welch, Recording Secretary