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**CITY OF MESA****HUMAN RELATIONS ADVISORY BOARD (HRAB)****June 24, 2020 Minutes**

The Human Relations Advisory Board (HRAB) of the City of Mesa met on June 24, 2020 at 6:00pm via ZOOM.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Ron Williams- Chair  
Colleen Byron-Vice Chair  
Tom Brennan  
William Campos  
Margaret Duarte  
Bill McAllister  
Lou Wade

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Alvaro Gonzalez  
Amy Faatoafe  
Joseph Holmes  
Jared Smith

**STAFF PRESENT**

Mayor John Giles  
Chief Ken Cost  
Natalie Lewis  
Andrea Alicoate  
Ruth Giese  
Cisco Luzania

**GUESTS****1. Chair's Call to Order.**

Mr. Williams, called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

(1a) Announcement of excused absences

Ms. Faatoafe and Mr. Homes were announced as excused absences

(2a) Announcement of new board member Margaret Duarte.

**2. Items from Citizens Present.**

No citizens wished to speak to the board

**3. Hear and discuss opening remarks by Mesa Mayor, John Giles.**

Mayor Giles was present to discuss updates of the City of Mesa's COVID-19 response. Mayor Giles indicated that he, with council approval, implemented a mask-order in the city after the Governor gave the discretion over mask orders to local mayors and leaders. He shared a presentation by the Maricopa Association of Government relayed that masks were among the most effective ways to contain the spread of the virus. Mayor Giles shared that the City was exploring safe ways for the City to begin the opening process for certain culture and parks programs that won't increase the spread of the virus. This is buoyed by the funds received through the federal CARES Act. He invited the board to view future virtual events to support community business and organizations and the City's response. Additionally, Mayor Giles recognized the disproportionate impact that COVID-19 has had on communities of color. Mr. Brennan asked if there was data that was specific to the cases within the City of Mesa that included demographics. Ms. Alicoate and Ms. Lewis shared that they would provide all available data but that current demographic specifics are not regionally collected. Mayor Giles did acknowledge that within the city, lower income zip codes did have the

highest infection rates. He asked the board for their expertise and suggestions to assist in belaying the negative effects on these demographics. Multiple board members expressed their gratitude to Mayor Giles for taking the lead and implementing a masks mandate.

Mayor Giles additionally shared his acknowledgment of the racial justice movement currently progressing nationally and within the City of Mesa. Mayor Giles said that he had attended multiple in-person and virtual events to promote dialogue between community members and police departments. He also oversaw the City of Mesa's proclamation of Juneteenth, along with HRAB Chair Mr. Williams. Mayor Giles again invited the board to explore and suggest ways for the City of Mesa to approach community issues using their expertise and familiarity with the needs of the community. Mayor Giles wanted to know where connections can be made that would help assist in building trust between municipal police and all members of the community. He also requested that the board explore ways that traditional community events such as the MLK celebrations and Unity Walk can be reimaged to maintain public health in this new, more virtual reality.

4. Hear and discuss update from the Diversity Office.

Ms. Alicoate provided an update on some of the new work that the City of Mesa Diversity Office was accomplishing in furthering equitable programs in the city. Ms. Alicoate updated that she and City Management were currently working on and developing a Diversity Action Plan. This would be done with investment from community leaders, including members of the Human Relations Advisory Board. Once the plan progresses further in the draft process, it would be presented to the board for input and review. Also, Ms. Alicoate echoed the sentiment that Mayor Giles expressed in the board's expertise in reimagining community events moving forward. She invited the board to have community partners and agencies to come and present to the board on how HRAB can promote more community educations and discussions.

5. Approval of minutes from the April 22, 2020 HRAB meeting

It was moved by Dr. Byron, seconded by Mr. Wade that the above-mentioned minutes be accepted as written.

Upon tabulation of votes, it showed:

AYES- Mr. Williams, Dr. Byron, Mr. Brennan, Mr. Campos, Ms. Duarte, Mr. McAllister, Mr. Wade.

NAYS- None

6. Hear and discuss update from the Mesa Police Department.

(4a) Update on police community forums and other community engagement initiatives.

(4b) Reporting and statistics of police cases and trends within the community as it relates to diversity.

Mesa Police Chief Ken Cost was present to share some of the work that the department is doing to address key issues. Chief Cost shared that Mesa PD was the only regional East Valley department that has their own police academy that is utilized by other regional departments to train their officers as well. This academy is the longest in the state and one of the longest in the country. Mesa PD has increased de-escalation training in the academy from 16 hours to 45 hours. This is in addition to implicit bias training that every member of the department is required to take

every two years. In reference to the events currently transpiring in the country, Chief Cost shared that Mesa PD has a “Duty to Act” policy that ensures that all police staff are required through duty to intervene if they or another officer is using force outside of normal procedures. This extends to the academy as well where recruits are failed if they do not act in training situations where excessive force is used.

Chief Cost shared with the board how Mesa PD has been increasing staff time and focus in increasing the diversity of new recruits. More information can be made available as more data and information is compiled and available. Mesa PD’s goal is to create an environment where the department is both well trained and representative of the community. The Chief shared that the department has a focus on ensuring that any officer is encouraged to report acts of misconduct by any other member of the department. More training is being promoted to allow for additional transparency in the reporting of these acts. Chief Cost shared that there is a codified discipline for those officers who either commit excessive actions or not report those acts. Mr. Brennan shared with the Chief and Mayor that he and other Mesa high schools’ principals are fully supportive of the School Resource Officer presence in their schools and that they appreciate Mesa PD’s support in educating youth moving forward.

7. Hear and discuss Citywide efforts to COVID-19 including Mesa CARES programs.

Ms. Alicoate shared an update on the continuation of the City of Mesa; Mesa CARES programs. She reported that the partnership between the City and the United Food Bank was maintaining the success of the Feeding Mesa programs. This includes the food distribution events at the Mesa Convention Center, Food Drives and Restaurants buyout programs. Ms. Alicoate also shared that using additional funds from the federal CARES Act and CDBG funds to implement an Eviction Prevention program. More details on sign-ups and distribution will follow.

8. Scheduling of meetings, future agenda items, and general information.

(11a) Next HRAB meeting will be held on August 26, 2020 at 6pm in the Lower Level City Council Chambers (57 E 1st St) or via ZOOM.

9. Hear reports on conferences and/or meetings attended.

Dr. Byron has begun the joining process of the board of the Arizona Historical Society and attended her first meeting via Zoom. Mr. Williams reported that he had attended a listening session with the Pinal County Sheriff Office for community feedback with regional leaders. He also attended the Hero Zona forum with Mayor Giles as well as political and community leaders from Maricopa County and the State of Arizona.

10. Adjournment.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:49 PM.

**\*Members of the audience may address the Board on any item. The Arizona Open Meeting Law (ARS § 38-431 et seq.) limits the Human Relations Advisory Board to discussing only those matters listed on the agenda and other matters related thereto.**

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Si necesita asistencia o traducción en español, favor de llamar al menos 48 horas antes de la reunión al 480-644-2767.