

**MEETING OF THE MONROE COUNTY
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
MINUTES**

Wednesday, September 26, 2018 at 5:00 p.m.

1. Meeting began at 5:05 p.m. with the Roll Call and Call to Order:
Members present: Byron Bangert, Doris Parlette, Kathleen Sideli, Paul White, and Sue Wanzer. Staff present: Margie Rice, County Attorney.
2. The Commission unanimously approved the minutes from the August 22, 2018 meeting, with two amendments: to add the words "in alignment" after the words "should be" in the second-to-last line of the second paragraph under Section 4 and to substitute "former associates" in the place of "Amanda Barge" in the third line of the third paragraph of Section 4.
2. Margie provided the Commission updates on three calls or inquiries received informally. These were not formal complaints made pursuant to the Monroe County Chapter 520, but were calls made to County Legal that could be related to the work done by the Commission:
 - A. Michael Johnson – a man who is legally blind needed an accommodation for paying his rent. He is unable to drop off a check at Coffey Realty and wanted a drop box installed or to pay electronically. Jimmie Dean Coffey immediately responded to my email and made arrangements to accommodate the request. No further action is warranted.
 - B. Kaitlyn Miller – a tenant at Millennium Apartments complained about a Facebook post made by a Millennium representative in response to her Facebook complaint about the complex. The statement was: "We do not want individuals like you living at Hunter Properties." After contacting Millennium Apartments, Margie Rice was directed to their attorney, John Richards. She sent an email, John responded and asked for additional time. Margie will report back in October with an update.
 - C. Dana Conway – a resident of Garden Hill Mobile Home Park who is taking care of her elderly, disabled mother and two nephews, who have intellectual disabilities and Individualized Education Plans, contacted County Legal about eviction proceedings begun by Garden Hill management. Dana retained Legal Services Organization's assistance and attorney Marcy Wenzler was requesting additional time to move, as a reasonable accommodation. Margie left Garden Hill management a voice mail, but they were out of the office for one week. Margie will report back in October with an update.
4. Kathy provided a quick update about the efforts she and County Commissioner Julie Thomas have made to try and set up a meeting. She is hoping that their busy schedules will permit a meeting prior to the October meeting and promised a report after they met.
5. Byron gave a summary of his meeting with the Monroe County Sheriff, Jane Walter and others to discuss the reporting of bias crime. The Sheriff's Office is aware of the bias crime reporting requirements; however, their incidents of bias crime are low because the individual officers are not identifying crimes as bias crimes. This is a subjective, discretionary process and it is an issue of interpretation, not a reporting issue. The Sheriff's Office may have a higher bar than others would have and are reporting crimes, but not making a finding that bias is involved. The Sheriff is using the FBI standard, but the way in which the standard is being interpreted results in few findings of bias. There may not be adequate training on this issue across the State. The Commission discussed that agencies and the larger community may need to get past the idea that the reporting of bias crimes is a bad thing. Underreporting of bias crimes prevents action from being taken. The first step is to recognize that bias may be involved in criminal cases. Byron emphasized that he would like to see the law followed, but is not in favor of enhanced penalties. Byron mentioned that he had written a letter to the Herald Times, but it has not yet been published.

6. The Commission discussed appointing a member as secretary, pursuant to Monroe County Code 216. Kathy asked members to consider if they were interested in being secretary. The idea will be revisited in October.
7. The meeting was adjourned.