

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

Wednesday, December 5, 2018 at 5:00 p.m.

1. Meeting began 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 October 24, 2018 meeting.
3. The Commission briefly discussed the *Race and Criminal Justice in Monroe County, Indiana: A Long-Range Perspective Report*, by the Monroe County Branch of the NAACP and the Racial Justice Task Force, Unitarian Universalist Church of Bloomington and the press conference to be held on 12/12 at 11:00 a.m. It was decided that Guy Loftman would be asked to attend the January HRC meeting and Margie Rice was asked to contact him and invite him to attend.
4. The hiring of the new Monroe County Correctional Center's Access Officer was mentioned and the November 30, 2018 Herald Times article was distributed. The HRC members agreed it was a proactive step that should help promote better communication between inmates and their family members. The plan is to promote someone from within the Correctional Center, who has good working knowledge of the Correctional Center.
5. The HRC continued its conversation about bias-crime and/or hate-crime legislation. Paul mentioned that trial court judges already have discretion to impose stricter sentences for crimes that are targeted at a protected category. Byron emphasized that he is not in favor of tougher sentences. Byron believes bias crimes are underreported. He explained that only about 14 out of 300 agencies are following Indiana's law and reporting bias crimes. It may be that the definition of bias crime is not clear and/or that there is a great amount of latitude, personal discretion, and interpretation involved in reporting by law enforcement. Byron stated how fortunate we are to have advocates like John Clower in our community, but reporting by local media could be better. Byron has written a guest column that has yet to be printed by the Herald Times. The HRC agreed this is an issue to continue to watch and follow, as it will most likely be taken up by the Indiana General Assembly.
6. Margie updated the HRC on the Beth Reed informal inquiry. This case did not involve a formal, written complaint made pursuant to the Monroe County Chapter 520, but was an employment issue involving a temporary employee at PTS Corp. Margie provided information she received from Rhonda Foster, the Human Resources Manager at PTS. Ms. Foster said they would be willing to have Beth return to work, that there was no conversation about Beth returning to work in a wheelchair; however, they did have concerns about her working on crutches. No further action is recommended on this complaint. Paul mentioned that he knew Ms. Reed and had heard about this issue separately.
7. Doris followed up on the issue of accreditation for the Monroe County Correctional Center. She stated that she did not think it was not an appropriate issue to pursue at this time.
8. The meeting was adjourned.