

NORTH CAROLINA HUMAN TRAFFICKING COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

April 28, 2022, 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

Meeting Conducted In-person and by WebEx* through the NC Judicial Center

Commission Members in Attendance In-person, by Video, or by Phone:

Amy Auth, Administrative Office of the Courts

Caitlin Brooks, Public-at-Large

Maggie Brewer, N.C. Department of Public Safety

Jennifer Haigwood, N.C. Department of Labor (Joined at 11am)

Jasmine McGhee, NC Department of Justice (Joined 10:28am)

Marc Nichols, N.C. Sheriffs' Association and Major (Ret.) Highway Patrol (left at 12:07pm)

Caitlin Ryland, Legal Aid of N.C.

Suzanne Mauney Smith, Assistant Police Chief, Gaston County Police Dept.

William “Billy” West, Cumberland County District Attorney

Angelica Wind, NC Coalition Against Human Trafficking (left at 12:15pm)

Commission Staff Present In-person or by Video:

Christine Long, Executive Director

Dr. Nancy Hagan, Commission Analyst

*Members of the public were invited to watch the meeting and access meeting materials through a stream provided on the website.

Call to Order:

Chair Haigwood is unable to join the full meeting and previously requested Commissioner Caitlin Brooks to Chair today’s meeting. Commissioner Brooks called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m.

Roll Call:

The Commissioner Brooks read the following State Government Ethics Act reminder:

- In accordance with the State Government Ethics Act, it is the duty of every North Carolina Human Trafficking Commission (HTC) member to avoid conflicts of interest. If any HTC member has any known conflict of interest in respect to any matter coming in front of the HTC, they must identify the conflict and refrain from any participation in the particular matter involved.

Approval of the Minutes:

The minutes of the February 24, 2022 meeting were approved unanimously.

Committee Reports and Action Items:

Legislative Committee:

There was no report.

Public Safety Committee Report:

Commissioner Nichols discussed upcoming tasks from the committee. Over the next few months, the committee hopes to schedule a training using the Texas DPS Interdiction for the Protection of Children program that was brought in November. Committee Chair Nicholas will be following up with NC Department of Transportation contacts regarding partnership and will also be checking in with the NC Justice Academy about law enforcement certification.

Public Health Committee Report:

Commissioner Bernard was unable to attend the meeting but submitted a report to Commissioner Brooks. Commissioner Brooks read the report to the commission. The report included Committee Chair Bernard's plan to begin approaching licensing agencies for the training material developed for health care providers.

Appropriations Committee Report:

Commissioner Wind reviewed SB 105 Appropriation Act sections and gave an update on the progress (see power point presentation). Commissioners discussed language within the Appropriations Act that designate funding for direct services and how to monitor expenses. The was support for requiring supporting documentation, conducting a risk assessment on agencies, applying the standards, and incentivizing housing certification where appropriate.

Staff Report:

Director Long and Analyst Hagan discussed various happenings since the last HTC meeting through a power point presentation (see in meeting materials).

A venue has been secured for the 2022 Annual Conference. The conference will be September 7-8th at the North Raleigh Hilton.

Chair Remarks:

Commission Chair Haigwood announced that she will be forming a working group to determine a process for 2022 award recognitions at the conference. If any commissioner would like to volunteer for the working group, then please contact her.

Other Business:

Stephanie Benton with Beloved Haven provided a description of their programs and talked about what they are seeing in the Northeastern part of the state. Beloved Haven provides a drop-in center, a case management program, and a jail outreach program. Challenges in their agency or community are related to lack of housing, lack of funding, and difficulty hiring qualified staff.

Commissioner Ryland with Legal Aid of NC also gave an update about their state of services. Commissioner Ryland reported similar challenges due to decreased funding, an increase in referrals, and staff turnover.

Presentation: The Safe House Project

Kristi Well, CEO of The Safe House Project presented about their housing certification program. The certification applies to any type of housing for victim-survivors of human trafficking. The content and material for the certification was developed with survivor leaders and has been piloted in other organizations.

Following the presentation, Commissioner Ryland motioned that the commission consider avenues for supporting an initiative such as housing certification in NC. Chair Haigwood seconded the motion and all were in favor.

Public Comment:

Members of the public shared comments.

Adjournment:

At 11:45 a.m. the meeting was adjourned upon motion by District Attorney Billy West and seconded by Deputy Director Brewer. The next meeting will be held on June 23, 2022 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.