

NORTH CAROLINA HUMAN TRAFFICKING COMMISSION Meeting Minutes
June 25, 2020, 10:00am-12:00pm
Meeting Conducted by WebEx* through the NC Judicial Center

Commission Members in Attendance by Video or Phone:

Danielle Carman, Administrative Office of the Courts
Judge Sherri W. Elliott, NC Association of District Court Judges
Judge Claire Hill, NC Conference of Superior Court Judges
Jennifer Haigwood, NC Department of Labor
Caitlin Brooks, Public-at-Large
Tammy Harris, The Ursus Institute
Deana Joy, NC Child Advocacy Center
Jasmine McGhee, NC Department of Justice
Caitlin Ryland, Legal Aid of North Carolina
Angelica Wind, NC Coalition Against Human Trafficking
Suzanne Mauney Smith, Gaston County Police (exited meeting at 10:20am)
Thomas Bernard, WakeMed
William M. Nichols, Ret. Major NC Highway Patrol
Pam Cashwell, NC Department of Public Safety (entered meeting at 10:20am)
William West Jr., District Attorney

Commission Staff Present by video or phone:

Christine Long, Executive Director
Dr. Nancy Hagan, Training Coordinator
Madelyne Huibregtse, Intern

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

Call to Order, Swearing in New Members, and Roll Call:

Judge Elliott conducted the swearing in of Tammy Harris and Deana Joy. Judge Elliott left the meeting.

The Chair called the meeting to order and 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.

The Chair read Commissioner Harris's and Commissioner Joy's evaluation letters from the Ethics Commission. Commissioners Harris and Joy introduced themselves and

shared their backgrounds. Chair Haigwood called the roll and each member introduced themselves.

Approval of the Minutes: February 27, 2020

Due to new public meeting requirements for virtual meetings during the pandemic, the motion to approve the February 27, 2020 meeting minutes was approved through a roll-call vote. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Chair Remarks:

Chair Haigwood welcomed new members Tammy Harris and Deana Joy. She publicly thanked Monica Johnson Hostler and Libby Coles for their previous time and work on the commission.

Chair Haigwood discussed the effects of COVID 19 on scheduled commission projects, training and meetings over the previous three months. Much was temporarily pushed to the back burner but committees will be starting again. Chair Haigwood announced that the Human Trafficking 101 Training that was canceled due to COVID is going to be rescheduled.

Committee Reports and Action Items:

Legislative Committee:

Committee Chair Brooks discussed House Bill 1095. HB1095 would ensure recurring funding which is necessary to run the commission. She has been in contact with both the House and Senate asking them to support the bill, however, it is currently still in the Appropriations Committee.

Madelyne Huibregtse was introduced as a student intern for the commission. Madelyne will be working with the NC Human Trafficking Commission on tracking court charges associated with human trafficking and a few other projects. Chair Brooks also introduced three Elon interns that will be helping the committee specifically. These students were Amy Grener, Jared Willis, and Barbara Spencer.

There will be a Legislative Committee meeting in July or early August via WebEx.

Public Safety Committee Report:

Committee Chair Nichols gave a summary of efforts the committee has been making. He discussed the desire to have human trafficking awareness signs at rest areas and other venues. The Texas Department of Public Safety training was canceled due to COVID 19, but there are hopes for rescheduling it. Many other committee training were canceled or rescheduled, but the committee plans to schedule a meeting soon. Digital

awareness signs are rotating at Raleigh / Durham airport for the year and Charlotte public transit ordered 500 posters for their buses a trains.

Public Health Committee:

Committee Chair Bernard reported that the committee is discussing from hospitals and associations for the trainings. Hospital budgets have been pinched due to COVID-19, which makes it hard to have access to training at the moment. The Committee is still looking at material and discussing the need to mandate training within the industry. There will be a committee meeting in the next one to two months.

Ad Hoc Committee on Standards:

Committee Chair Johnson Hostler sent a report, which Chair Haigwood read. The report stated that the committee conducted a substantial amount of research before creating the standards and has been compiling feedback since the standards were passed by the commission. Committee Chair Johnson Hostler recommended in the statement that the committee request feedback from grantees to inform the next iteration of the standards. Chair Haigwood mentioned that the commission needs to recruit a new committee chair for this committee. She asked that people touch base with her or Christine Long if they have interest.

Appropriations Committee:

Chair Haigwood reported that this committee has been dormant for the past few months. This Ad Hoc Committee was created a couple of years ago when the commission received money to issue grants and the committee has been dormant since grants were issued. One grantee has requested a significant change in the term and design of their grant. The committee has a meeting on Monday and will likely form a recommendation to bring to the full commission for consideration.

Presentation: Human Trafficking in the COVID 19 Pandemic

Margaret Henderson reviewed a power point about the potential overlap or impact of COVID 19 as related to human trafficking vulnerabilities. This included reference to a Polaris article regarding reporting during the pandemic and opened the floor for discussion among commissioners.

Commissioner McGhee explained a flyer the NC Department of Justice created in partnership with ShieldNC and the NC Coalition Against Human Trafficking.

Special Agent Carl Wall with the NC SBI discussed canceled training and operations due to COVID 19.

Director Long mentioned contacting many service providers directly after the shut-down. Similarities reported from those providers were moving meetings virtual with clients,

using telehealth for medical visits, decreasing the amount of people in shelters and utilizing hotels as temporary housing during the pandemic. Many providers continue to apply great solutions to the hurdles created by the crisis. In addition, Madelyne has been analyzing national hotline tip data and does not show a decrease in tips from the previous year.

Nancy Hagen and Commissioner Ryland spoke about how the state relies on farm workers, who are also affected by COVID 19. Just as hurricane season makes people highly vulnerable to being displaced, undocumented immigrants have even higher vulnerability because they are not eligible for COVID-specific benefits. Commissioner Ryland explained ways that her office and other groups are trying to help, and also shared interactions with state and federal agencies that have some jurisdictional authority over farmworker conditions.

Staff Report:

Executive Director Long introduced Nancy Hagen as the new training coordinator and asked members to be watching out for training opportunities from Nancy. Christine gave brief updates to the grant and mentioned contract opportunities would be coming to help cover projects over the next few months.

Commissioner Updates

Commissioner McGhee announced the Governor's Task Force For Racial Justice in Criminal Justice. The task force is looking at wide range of criminal justice issues and there may be opportunities for partnership.

Commissioner Ryland, at the request of Chair Haigwood, will draft a resolution for the commission to consider regarding law enforcement signatures on continued presence applications. This will be distributed to the commissioners for feedback prior to the next meeting and then discussed in meeting.

Other Commissioners provided updates on the work of their respective agencies.

Adjournment:

At 12 pm the meeting was adjourned by Chair Haigwood. The next meeting will be held on August 27th, 2020.