

Chairperson
Edward G. Robinson

Vice chairperson
Aaron Richman



**City of Worcester
Human Rights Commission**

Members:
Cara Berg Powers
Harry Danso
Kathleen Gervais
Robyn Kennedy
Shirley Konneh
Eduardo Rivera

Meeting Summary for January 5th, 2015
Worcester City Hall, Esther Howland Chamber

Members Present: Kathleen Gervais, Robyn Kennedy, Shirley Konneh, Aaron Richman, Edward G. Robinson, Cara Berg Powers, Harry Danso, and Eduardo Rivera

Staff: Jayna Turchek and Sundar Layalu

- 1. Call to order:** A quorum was established and the meeting was called to order at 6:38pm.
- 2. Introductions:** Introductions were made.
- 3. Approval of December 1st, 2014 Meeting Minutes:** Approved unanimously as written.
- 4. New Business:**

a) Conversation on upcoming police examination and recruitment of officers of color

Chairperson Robinson welcomed Sargent Miguel Lopez from the Worcester Police Department to the podium to speak on the upcoming civil service examination.

Every two years the department engages in a recruitment campaign in advance of the civil service examinations. In the last campaign they had 34% minority recruitment. The campaign outreach strategies include posting advertisements in minority owned businesses, outreach with the black and hispanic clergy alliances, outreach to colleges with criminal justice programs (QCC, Becker and Worcester State), and media advertising (Vocero, Banner and T&G, along with social media).

The civil service examination costs \$100 but a waiver is available based on income. Registration is open until March 9th and then a late registration (with a higher fee) is available until April 1st. The City of Worcester has a residency requirement (must live in city for at least 1 year prior to examination) and Worcester applicants must be 21 years old but no older than 32 years on the date of the exam.

Anyone that takes the civil service examination is eligible for the state police (35 years is the cutoff), MBTA, and can have up to 5 other civil service cities receive their score for consideration to their police departments. Veterans receive first preference and since 1988 the city has participated as part of a federal decree that minority applicants will get every 1st and 4th spot on the selection lists.

There are currently about 440 police officers and only 2 are African American women. Sgt. Lopez stated that in addition to the need to recruit more officers of color there was a need to recruit more women. One of the challenges is that 80% of the last round of applicants were lost because they could not pass the physical exam.

Commission members made suggestions on alternate payment methods for the exam, increasing the length of recruitment process, and participating in career panels for young children.

The conversation was followed by public comment by Mr. Chuck Jackson. He retired from the Worcester Police Department and has found that building relationships with the community is the best way to encourage people of color to join and was in favor of community policing where officers know the people in the neighborhoods and vice versa.

**b) Joint Meeting with the Advisory Committee on the Status of Women:
Tuesday January 13th, 5:30 pm**

The Director shared information about the upcoming meeting on January 13th, 2015. This joint meeting of the Human Rights Commission and Advisory Committee on the Status of Women will be a conversation with the Worcester Police Department regarding prostitution. Everyone's attendance is requested.

5. Old Business

a) Review Eleanor Hawley Award and Human Rights Day Celebration

The commissioners reviewed Eleanor Hawley Award and Human Rights Day Celebration program held on December 9th, 2014 and expressed thanks to everyone who helped to make the program a grand success.

b) Planning for 2015 Fair Housing Poster Contest

Commissioners discussed a venue for the poster display, methods of poster evaluation, and awards for winning posters. Additional details of the program will be discussed at future meetings. The Director shared the new date for the 3rd Annual Worcester Fair Housing Conference which will take place on April 18th, 2015.

6. Commissioners' Reports:

The Chairperson attended numerous holiday parties for nonprofits in the city.

7. Location of next monthly meeting (February 2nd, 2015): City Hall

8. Public Comment

A member of the public suggested that the WPD should create a program or orientation during the two years before the exam and not just wait until a few months before to do outreach.

9. Adjournment at 7:45pm