

## Human rights commission 03/09/21

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- Members present: Rita Mertens, Don Schild, Jordan Esbrook Also Present: Russ Behrens, Dan Agnew, Michael McClellan
- The minutes were passed
- The council greeted and welcomed Police Chief McClelland
- The new police chief introduced himself and stated his intentions to work with the human rights commission to meet the needs of the community.
- The chief is reaching out to community to see how the police force and the community can work together to better meet the communities mental health needs.
  - Is there a way to take advantage of the fact that we are located right in between Des Moines and Iowa city to set up a “mid way” point to meet needs?
- Tim Hammond acknowledged that we can often come up with solutions, but funding can be very hard.
- How can the human rights commission help you to get to know us?
  - Covid has made this harder of course.
  - Asked for input for how the police force can better connect with the community.
  - Working to connect to the community better and making an effort to include minorities.
  - Discussed the importance of race equality and addressing other issues like poverty.
  - Making an effort with implicit bias and training, acknowledged that there is a long way to go but the effort is there.

- CIT training, scenario based trainings focused on de-escalation.
- What was your reaction to the riots?
  - People have the right to protest
  - Small factions that were causing disruptions and coming from a place of violence.
  - Acknowledged that it came from a place of anger and frustration and doesn't change the root problem.
  - Discussed how his experience in Aurora he said that it has impacted how he wishes to proceed with training in Grinnell.
- Did racism play a part in how the police reacted to the events in the summer of 2020?
  - Chief McClelland acknowledged that systematic racism/white supremacy played a role in why the riots occurred.
  - Expressed a need to come together to work to create towards a more equal community.
- Asked about how ethical the arrest of Elijah that happened in 2020 was:
  - Stated he can't go too much into it due to a grand jury trail but that no, it was not done in an ethical manner.
  - Comes down to de-escalation training, implicit bias, and stressing the value of human life.
- Jordan Esbrook asked a hypothetical about how they would respond to someone wandering around late at night.
  - Conversation is the first step
  - Force is NOT a go to, it is a last resort.
  - If there is no reasonable suspicion or probably cause force cannot be used. McClelland

- Should the hold that was used with Elijah be used?
  - It is a force that is just below deadly force.
  - It is not a restraint that Chief McClelland endorses or uses.
- Did the protests change how you feel/ approach your profession?
  - The events of the last year have caused a lot of police officers to really think about how they do their job.
  - It caused Chief McClelland to examine his beliefs and biases.
  - He has the knowledge and drive to make sure the Grinnell police department is one that serves all citizens.
- Don Schild asked what surprised Chief McClelland the most about Grinnell?
  - How positive and supportive the community is.
  - There is a great base to start and build from.
- What kind of civic/charitable activities are you interested in?
  - Really believes in community policing and really helping to lead from a place of prevention VS reaction.
- Expressed an interest in being involved and working with the commission as much as possible.
- Invited members to reach out as needed. The chief welcomes interaction and conversation.
- The member moved to make Rita Mertens the chair of the board.
- Working towards getting the mayor's pledge going.
- Curb cuts on the south side of Grinnell
  - The south side is the most populated AND low income but the curb cuts are not high on the city's agenda.

- How is the city prioritizing the curb cuts, does the poverty and race play apart?
- How do we want to reach out to the City of Grinnell to address these issues?
  - Tim expressed interest in having a more public forum and said he is willing to reach out and email.
- On the subject of election- sending an email to get the conversation going so we are ready for the next meeting.