



City of Albuquerque - Office of Civil Rights  
1 Civic Plaza, Albuquerque, NM 87102  
Phone- 505-768-4595, TTY 711  
[civilrights@cabq.gov](mailto:civilrights@cabq.gov)

## City of Albuquerque Human Rights Board Minutes

Date/Time: Thursday, February 16, 2023 starting at 5:00 pm (MST)  
Location: Zoom  
Contact: Crystal Velarde, 505-768-4544

### **Board Members Present:**

Leticia Galvez-Trujillo, Chair  
Beverly McMillan, Vice-Chair  
Samia Assed  
Larry Hinojos Jr.  
Mario Del Ángel Guevara

### **City Staff Present**

Beckham Rivera, Office of Civil Rights Director  
Antonia Romero, Board Attorney  
Lucia Moran, Assistant City Attorney, Office of Civil Rights  
Crystal Velarde, Program Coordinator Office of Civil Rights  
Michelle Melendez, Office of Equity and Inclusion Director

### **Guest Speakers**

Michael McGuire, Senior Citizens' Law Office

### **Members of the Public**

William Bendaw, Big Brothers/Big Sisters

- I. Call to Order**
  - a. The meeting was called to order by Chair Galvez-Trujillo at 5:07 pm.
- II. Introductions**
  - a. All who were present introduced themselves.
- III. Approval of Agenda**
  - a. Member Assed moved to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded by Member Hinojos Jr. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.
- IV. Approval of Minutes from January 19, 2023**
  - a. Vice Chair McMillian moved to approve the January 19, 2023, minutes. The motion was seconded by Member Assed. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.
- V. Public Comment**
  - a. William Bendaw with Big Brothers Big Sisters informed the Board about the organization. Mr. Bendaw is part of the mentor 2.0 program that works with high school students at Amy Biehl and in the South Valley. Part of his job is to pair incoming freshmen with mentors, in hopes they develop a friendship as well as professional relationships.
- VI. Presentation from Senior Citizens' Law Office with Michael McGuire**
  - a. Senior Citizens' Law Office (SCLO) is a non-profit civil law firm that serves seniors over 60 years of age. They practice in Bernalillo, Sandoval, Valencia and Torrance county. They

do have a cap of 200% of the Federal poverty level in all counties except Bernalillo. Bernalillo county does not have a cap.

- b. Services SCLO provides free council for include:
  - i. Housing issues like: evictions, foreclosures, assisting tenants receive effective housing from their landlords, and preserving public housing benefits.
  - ii. Consumer protection issues like: defending against creditors or debt collectors, and when companies are practicing unfair trade practices that rip off their clients.
  - iii. Assist with public benefits like social security, Medicare, veterans' benefits, SNAP.
  - iv. Assist in creating legal documents like Power of Attorney.
- c. Services SCLO provides assistance with for a fee include:
  - i. Wills and transfer on death deeds for seniors who own their homes.
- d. The SCLO does not provide council for personal injury cases, bankruptcy, criminal defense, medical malpractice, real estate, probate or family law. However, they do have an extensive referral list.
- e. SCLO would like to work with the Board regarding housing and disability issues. They mostly see a lack of reasonable accommodations being meet by the landlord. Where landlords are charging a fee for service animals. Tenants have to personally deliver their rent and are unable to walk to the office. Or the tenant pays with their social security check and due dates for rent are not being moved, requiring them to pay late fees. Mr. McGuire believes they will see more source of income discrimination matters in the near future.
- f. The SCLO goes out to the senior centers once a month and assists groups of seniors with power of attorney forms.
- g. They also provide presentations on:
  - i. How to avoid scams and identity theft
  - ii. How to deal with debt collectors
  - iii. How to avoid high pressure sales tactics
  - iv. How to obtain Medicaid to help pay for nursing home care
  - v. Landlord tenant law
- h. Contact information for SCLO.
  - i. Website: <http://sclonm.org/>
  - ii. Phone number: 505-265-2300
  - iii. Address: 4317 Lead Ave., SE, Suite A, Albuquerque, NM 87108.

## **VII. Director's Report**

- a. **Office of Civil Rights (OCR)**
  - i. A report was sent out prior to the meeting for the members to review. It included statistics for the period of January 13, 2023, to February 13, 2023, as well as events planned by the office.
  - ii. OCR has handled 37 new matters since our last meeting. The types of discrimination are as follows:
    - 1. Public accommodation – 8 matters
    - 2. Employment – 4 matters
    - 3. Housing – 16 matters
    - 4. Other – 9 matters
  - iii. OCR provided updates on proactive enforcement methods as well as recently closed matters and pending matters.



iv. Outreach included:

1. Ongoing - Attending bi-monthly Albuquerque Affordable Housing Coalition meetings to provide input on discriminatory housing practices.
2. Ongoing – Member of the International Municipal Attorneys Association Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee.
3. Attending International Municipal Lawyers Association Homelessness working group call
4. Attending monthly Pro Bono meeting.
5. Attending State Bar Committee on Diversity in the Legal Profession meetings.
6. OCR will start attending the bi-weekly Indigenous Housing Justice Task Force meetings.

v. Upcoming

1. 2/15/23: SOI training to resolve matter 23-001.
2. 2/17/23: Meeting with Family and Community to resolve a matter at a local community center.
3. 2/20/23: Bi-weekly Indigenous Housing Justice Task Force meeting.
4. 2/22/23: SOI training for the NM Eviction Prevention and Diversion program.
5. End of February/Early March: SOI training to resolve matter 23-002.
6. 4/11/23: SOI training for UNM School of Law students and attendees.
7. 4/15/23: ABQ Housing Fair.

b. **Office of Equity & Inclusion (OEI)**

- i. The Office of Black Community Engagement, Office of Native American Affairs and the Office of Immigrant & Refugee Affairs are all working on a housing fair scheduled for April. They will work to bring in presenters and provide information on services that are available. OEI also received two grants. Both will assist in closing the racial wealth gap of home ownership. One will be to build a housing development with Black and Native perspective home buyers in mind. The second will focus on financial literacy and credit repair.
- ii. OEI is providing trainings to city employees. These trainings include Transgender Cultural Fluency, Language Access, an Afghan community listening session. The listening session will be in partnership with the Department of Justice (DOJ). The DOJ will also be holding a workshop in March called Protecting Places of Worship.
  1. Office of Black Community Engagement
    - a. Co-sponsored with the State Economic Development Office, a Black Business Summit.
      - i. This was a two-day summit, that was well attended. It also received some media attention.

**VIII. Outreach Subcommittee**

- a. Sub-committees the Board would like to create include financial literacy with a focus in housing, mental health, and accessibility for culturally and linguistically diverse populations. The Board also discussed getting volunteers to assist with the sub-committees and working with OEI.


- i. Vice-Chair McMillan moved to approve the financial literacy with a focus in housing sub-committee. The motion was seconded by Member Assed. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.
- ii. Member Assed moved to approve the mental health subcommittee. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chair McMillan. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.
- iii. Vice-Chair McMillan moved to approve the accessibility for culturally and linguistically diverse populations. Member Hinojos Jr. seconded the motion. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

**IX. Announcements**

- a. Chair Galvez-Trujillo was awarded the Walking the Talk Leadership award.
- b. The Chicano Studies program at the University of New Mexico (UNM), now has a master's as well as a PhD program. One of just a few in the country. Chicano Studies has also taken on the traditional medicine program. June 12<sup>th</sup> through the 23<sup>rd</sup> UNM will host a big event on campus at the Anthropology Auditorium. They will bring in curanderos, traditional healers from all over the world. They will also have local resources there like Centro Sávilá and La Plazita Institute.
- c. The Greater Albuquerque Association of Realtors is currently hosting a fundraiser for Laundry of Love. Another fundraiser will be held in July. These fundraisers assist in the keeping the program available. It costs about \$8,500 per year depending on how many people attend. Vice-Chair McMillan would like the Board to continue to share information regarding the program. They are also working on other locations such as the northwest quadrant of Albuquerque and in Rio Rancho.
- d. Chair Galvez-Trujillo will not be at the March meeting. She will be at the airport boarding a flight at our scheduled time. Vice-Chair McMillan will run the March meeting in her place.

**X. Adjournment**

- a. Meeting was called adjourned by Chair Galvez-Trujillo at 6:32 p.m.

  
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Beverly McMillan, Vice Chair

Leticia G. Trujillo  
HRB Chair

4/20/23.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date