

MINUTES OF MURRAY HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
February 11, 2013
5:00 P.M.

The Murray Human Rights Commission met in regular session on Monday, February 11, 2013, at 5 p.m. in City Hall's Council Chambers of City Hall with Mr. Jody Cofer presiding.

Members Present: Chair Jody Cofer, Dr. Brian Clardy, Linda Cherry, Connie Payne, Dr. Peggy Munke, and Jane Shoemaker.

Members Absent: Tung Dinh

Staff Present: Matt Mattingly and June Batts

Others in Attendance: Kenneth Bargo, Superintendent of Calloway County Schools; Bob Rogers, Superintendent and Eleanor Spry, Assistant Superintendent of Murray City Schools; Dr. Renae Duncan, Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education at Murray State University; Bill Marcum, Calloway County Sherriff; Karen McQuiston, Kentucky Center for School Safety; Susan and Morgan Guess, Guess Family Foundation, and Hawkins Teague, Murray Ledger and Times.

Jody Cofer welcomed members, introductions were made, and the meeting began at 5:05 p.m.

Old Business: Chair Cofer presented an overview of current activities including: marketing of the Bully Free Community Education Campaign and the Town Hall Meeting scheduled on March 11, 2013, 7:00 p.m. at the Murray Middle School Auditorium, Human Rights Commission Facebook Page, Dr. Beane's articles in the Murray Ledger and Times, public service announcements on the City of Murray's public access channels and local radio stations, showing of "Bully" at the local theater, possible MSU production of "Bang, Bang, You're Dead," and the Human Rights Commission city webpage. Chair Cofer distributed Bully Free Systems diskettes, donated by Dr. Beane to commission members.

Chair Cofer recognized Eleanor Spry who presented information on the Murray City Schools' policies and procedures relating to bullying as stated in the district codebook. Ms. Spry stated that the Murray Independent School District emphasis was on social skills, and instruction begins in pre-k. She gave an overview of school activities in place to prevent/discourage bullying behaviors, including: bullying boxes for reporting, anti-bullying curriculum (8th grade) and instruction (9th grade), and a writing contest, "Don't Laugh at Me." . She also said that teaching resiliency was an important element in the district's "check and connect" system in response to bullying. Chair Cofer asked if Dr. Beane's Bully Free System was currently used by MISD. Ms. Spry said that her district used the curriculum, as well as other curriculum. Chair Cofer asked if the district had a "No Tolerance" policy on bullying. Ms. Spry stated that although the district's policy was not a zero-tolerance policy, once bullying was noted, it was reported and a thorough follow-up including guidance and support was performed. Commission members asked Ms. Spry to comment regarding various specific bully-related policies in place at MISD.

Ms. Spry explained school policies, and issues regarding pledges, cyber bullying, interventions, safe-school websites, and other anti-bully strategies.

Chair Cofer recognized Kenneth Bargo, Superintendent of Calloway County Schools. Mr. Bargo stated that his district employed many of the programs, procedures, reporting, and curriculum used by MISD. He stated that bullying was also addressed through student handbooks and support groups. Mr. Bargo stated that definition was the challenge and necessitated caution.

Chair Cofer asked the status of resource officers in the schools. Mr. Bargo stated that Calloway County Schools employed two full and three part-time resource officers. Ms. Spry stated that Murray City Schools employed two resource officers for their three schools.

Chair Cofer recognized Karen McQuiston, KCSS Coordinator. Ms. McQuiston gave an overview of services provided by the KCSS through Murray State University. She distributed flyers and information regarding anti-bullying activities.

Chair Cofer recognized Dr. Renae Duncan, Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education at Murray State University with an academic background as a clinical psychologist. Dr. Duncan commented on the characteristics of victims, bullies and their families and the aspects that play into bullying. Dr. Duncan presented statistics regarding bullying, its impact on victims and bystanders, and the effectiveness of intervention. She emphasized the deliberateness of bullying, the necessity for an audience, and the sense of entitlement many bullies possess. She stated that teaching bullies to care and not be self-centered was the key to solving this problem.

Chair Cofer recognized Susan Guess. Ms. Guess stated that bullying was about choices and happens because it is allowed to happen. She discussed her personal experience with the bullying of her daughter and the actions they have taken to fight bullying in their community, including the showing of the movie "Bully." She presented two short video clips on bullying—one positive, one negative, and commented on the importance of standing up for oneself as well as others. She complimented the Murray Human Rights Commission's efforts, and was working with many groups in Kentucky for a statewide alliance. Ms. Guess discussed measureables, productivity levels, suicides, and other quality-of-life issues.

Chair Cofer thanked the guests and called for a motion to adjourn. Dr. Munke moved; seconded by Ms. Cherry.

The meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.