

: OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS :**: OF THE CITY OF PEORIA, ILLINOIS :**

A Special Joint Meeting of the Peoria City Council and the Peoria County Board, both of Illinois, was held October 29, 2020, at 6:00 P.M., by electronic means through Microsoft Teams with Mayor Ardis presiding, and with proper notice having been posted.

COMMENTS ON BEHALF OF THE PEORIA COUNTY CHAIR

Peoria County Chair Andrew Rand said the purpose of the Special Joint Meeting was to formalize an Intergovernmental Charter, which would empower the community's citizen leaders to find solutions and pathways towards a better community for all. He said the citizen leaders would help teach and remind community leaders of the change needed and to hold them accountable.

ROLL CALL

Roll Call showed the following Council Members were electronically present: Ali, Cyr, Grayeb, Jensen, Kelly, Montelongo, Moore, Riggenbach, Ruckriegel, Mayor Ardis - 10.
Absent: Oyler - 1.

Peoria County Clerk Rachael Parker conducted roll of the Peoria County Board noting a quorum of the Board was present.

INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Jim Ardis requested a moment of silent prayer or silent reflection and then he led the pledge of allegiance.

COVID-19 PUBLIC NOTICE

In accordance with Governor JB Pritzker's Executive Order 2020-43 which continues to limit any gatherings of more than 50 people, and Executive Orders 2020-07, 33, 44, and 59 which suspends the requirement for in person public meetings but requires public bodies to take steps to provide video, audio or telephonic access to public meetings, and the CDC recommendation of social distancing of at least 6 feet between persons, the City of Peoria and Peoria County are conducting the Special Joint Meeting of the Peoria City Council and Peoria County Board via Microsoft Teams while complying with the spirit of the Open Meetings Act.

Members of the public and media are invited to watch through the City of Peoria's YouTube page, Television Channel 22 or through Peoria County's Facebook page. Submissions for public comment were received through the Peoria City Clerk's Office and through the Peoria County Clerk's Office and will be read at the meeting by each respective body. The agenda, minutes and video podcast of the meeting will be available online through the City website.

CITIZENS' OPPORTUNITY TO ADDRESS THE CITY COUNCIL

Hearing no objection, Mayor Ardis asked City Clerk Beth Ball to read the citizen comments into the record as follows:

Russell Kirkpatrick, a citizen of Peoria, said he was opposed to the formulation of a Joint Commission on Racial Justice and Equity, stating the most prevalent factor in the success of any child, regardless of race, was to have a two-parent household. He expressed a concern such a Commission would be a waste of tax dollars.

Peoria County Clerk Rachael Parker read citizen comments into the record for the Peoria County Board.

PETITIONS, REMONSTRANCES & COMMUNICATIONS – CITY OF PEORIA**(20-273) Communication from the Mayor and Corporation Counsel with a Request to APPROVE the DECLARATION OF LOCAL STATE OF EMERGENCY.**

Council Member Ruckriegel moved to approve the Declaration of Local State of Emergency; seconded by Council Member Ali.

Approved by roll call vote.

Yeas: Ali, Cyr, Grayeb, Jensen, Kelly, Moore, Riggerbach, Ruckriegel, Mayor Ardis - 9;

Nays: Montelongo - 1.

Peoria County Board voted to suspend their rules so a meeting via Microsoft Teams could be held, which passed unanimously by roll call vote.

(20-216) Communication from the City Manager with a Request to ADOPT the CHARTER of the JOINT COMMISSION on RACIAL JUSTICE with the County of Peoria.

Council Member Ali moved to adopt the Charter of the Joint Commission on Racial Justice with the County of Peoria; seconded by Council Member Riggerbach.

Peoria County Chair Andrew Rand recognized Peoria County State's Attorney Jodi Hoos and Chief of the Civil Division Jennie Cordis Boswell, who were electronically present.

Mayor Ardis recognized the City's Corporation Counsel Chrissie Peterson, who was electronically present.

City Manager Patrick Urich and County Administrator Scott Sorrell provided a presentation regarding the Joint Commission on Racial Justice and Equity. Explanations of inequality, equality, justice, and equity were provided with examples. An overview was provided regarding the Coalition for Racial Justice and Equity, which met during the months of June and July 2020, and the participation of various organizations were recognized. The goals, vision, and mission, for the Commission on Racial Justice were presented as were the Commission's responsibilities. The City and County responsibilities were outlined as it related to training, administrative support, clerical support, and legal support. Commission membership was reviewed and how each entity would provide for such membership. The Commission would form several Committees to review various aspects of the community. In conclusion, it was

noted applications for the Commission would be accepted through the Peoria County's website at www.peoriacounty.org and search for "Joint Commission on Racial Justice."

Council Member Ali expressed her appreciation for the efforts of those involved in order to formulate the Charter of the Joint Commission on Racial Justice. She expressed her appreciation to Mayor Ardis for bringing the Coalition together, and she thanked Mayor Ardis and Chairman Rand for their leadership and support for bringing this Charter before both the City and the County. She commented on the needs within the community, stating surveys and data were conducted by both the Big Table, sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce, and the United Way. She said the training provided for the Commissioners and the City and County Staff would not cost anything, stating it would be grant-funded. She said this was a historic day for the City and the County to come together on an importance issue.

Council Member Grayeb thanked County Board Chair Rand and Council Member Ali for their leadership roles in bringing everyone together. He said education was a critical piece in pursuit of social equity for all, and he commented that a private education did not necessarily provide someone an extra advantage. He asked for discussions relating to education to be reframed to reflect the great educational opportunities provided by the Peoria Public Schools, and he said he looked forward to having further discussions as it related to education.

Council Member Jensen expressed her appreciation to County Board Chair Rand and Mayor Ardis for their leadership, stating social equity was an important issue for the community. She said it was her hope to see the Commission move forward, noting the commitment of the City and County working in a collaborative manner to solve racial inequity and systemic racism in Central Illinois.

Council Member Montelongo thanked those who participated in bringing the Commission forward. He inquired as to the diversity of the Commission, specifically asking for a definition for racial minority groups. He voiced a concern to ensure the Commission and its committees were comprised of all racial groups.

County Board Member Bryant thanked everyone involved for their effort on this matter, remarking on the importance of the Commission. She commented on the importance of hearing the voices of the community and to make a change that would last for years to come. She said she was in full support of this Commission.

Council Member Moore congratulated Council Member Ali on her efforts to bring the Commission to fruition, and she thanked Mayor Ardis for bringing this matter forward for approval. She inquired about the application process and whether individuals, who did not have access to the internet, would have other options to apply for the Commission. County Administrator Sorrell said interested parties could contact the Peoria County Board Office by calling 309-672-6056.

Council Member Ruckriegel expressed his appreciation for the effort on this item, noting it was a historic meeting between two governments to set a priority for the community. He said the issues the community valued should be issues both entities could collaboratively work towards together. He encouraged the public to be involved, make their voices heard and becoming active participants in the Commission and its Committees, stating that a more equitable community would be better for everyone.

Discussions were held regarding the Open Meetings Act and whether there would be an attendance requirement for commissioners, and it was stated the Commission would operate under the Open Meetings Act. Regarding an attendance requirement, City Manager Ulrich said it was not contemplated in the Charter but could be discussed as the Commission was formed.

Council Member Kelly expressed his appreciation for the effort of everyone involved on the proposed Charter. He remarked on the disparities between the poor and middle class population, commenting not all disparities were due to racial discrimination. He said there was some discrimination, but he commented on other factors that contributed to the poor community as well.

Council Member Riggerbach expressed his appreciation to those involved in bringing a Charter before the City and County for approval. He said he and his family had a strong commitment to public education. He remarked on a video entitled "*The Privilege Walk*" stating it was one of the most powerful videos he had seen, and he asked for it to be made available to the community on the City's web page. He said as discussions continued regarding equality, it was his hope the Commission would take the proposition seriously. He said everyone wanted equality, but he remarked on the importance of justice as well.

Peoria County Board Member Kate Pastucha expressed her appreciation for bringing the matter before both entities. She said she had grown up with great parents who instilled equality in her at a young age. She said she had seen the City become more segregated over the years, remarking that the public schools had become even more segregated. She said there were areas in the community that had become hypersensitive to minorities. She commented on the importance of measuring progress and attacking racial disparities from all sides. She said dealing with disparity issues up front would save the community a lot of money. Regarding the public comments read into the record, she said she was disappointed there were those who thought this Charter and Commission would be a waste of time.

Council Member Cyr lost his connection to the meeting.

County Board Chair Rand expressed his appreciation to those who attended the meeting virtually. He said the purpose of the meeting was straight forward. He remarked on the Civil Rights Act, which included using equality protection language at the Federal level, stating his dismay at the little progress made in some communities. He said the proposed Charter asked community citizen leaders to address particular issues and empowered others to change the outcomes. He said there was plenty of data the Health Department could provide from the Federal Government. In conclusion, he asked for a unanimous vote from the Board to adopt the Charter.

Mayor Ardis expressed his appreciation for the participation of those present. He said the conversation was started earlier in the year with the death of George Floyd. It was because of that event, he said, which had place everyone in their current position to provide a lot of input. He said the Commission would not be perfect from the onset, but was the beginning of working towards something perfected. He remarked on the importance of approving this item, and he said those who thought this Commission was not necessary or was irrelevant, should be included in the conversation as well. He expressed his appreciation for Chairman Rand's leadership and Council Member Ali's efforts for getting this Commission started.

At the conclusion of the comments, the Peoria County Board voted to adopt the Charter of the Joint Commission on Racial Justice with the City of Peoria. Peoria County Clerk Rachael Parker took the vote of each County Board Member present, and it was determined the motion was adopted by a unanimous vote.

The Peoria City Council voted on their previous motion as follows:

Motion to adopt the Charter of the Joint Commission on Racial Justice with the County of Peoria was adopted by roll call vote.

Yeas: Ali, Grayeb, Jensen, Kelly, Montelongo, Moore, Riggerbach, Ruckriegel,
Mayor Ardis - 9;

Nays: None.

ADJOURNMENT

Council Member Riggerbach moved to adjourn the Special Joint City Council and County Board Meeting; seconded by Council Member Moore.

Approved by roll call vote.

Yeas: Ali, Grayeb, Jensen, Kelly, Montelongo, Moore, Riggerbach, Ruckriegel,
Mayor Ardis - 9;

Nays: None.

The Joint Special City Council and County Board Meeting was adjourned at 7:29 P.M.



Beth Ball, MMC, City Clerk
City of Peoria, Illinois

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