

DATE: July 14, 2014

TO: Legal and Finance Committee

FROM: Melbert Siyo – Chairman, Human Relations Commission

SUBJECT: Semi-Annual Report

The Human Relations Commission's (HRC) authorizing Ordinance at Section 2.64.120, provides That HRC make a report to the Rapid City Common Council every six months.

Find below a summary of HRC activities since last report to the Rapid City Common Council.

1. **Discrimination complaint processing.** The HRC has received two complaints of discrimination. One was based upon race against housing and public service. This complaint was dismissed as HRC has no jurisdiction in Housing and Urban Development (HUD). This complaint was referred to HUD. The second complaint was over 180 days old and was dismissed by HRC.
2. **Community outreach.** The members of HRC continued to meet with Mayor and President of Rapid City Council to discuss revisions to Ordinance No. 5964. The second reading of HRC Ordinance No. 5964 was sent to Legal and Finance Committee on February 26, 2014. Legal and Finance Committee sent the Ordinance to Rapid City Council for a vote on March 17, 2014. Ordinance No. 5964 was approved by vote of 7-3. The Ordinance became effective April 11, 2014. Several members of HRC attended a Regional Hearing by National Commission on Voting Rights on May 1, 2014 at Journey Museum. Presenters discussed voting discrimination, long lines, ballots, machine breakdowns, redistricting, and voter registration. HRC spoke positively about voting in Rapid City. The Mayor established a voting site at Lakota Homes - Oyate Center.
3. **Revision of Ordinance No. 5964.** The Rapid City Council voted to conduct background checks, credit checks, and require that a member of business community be appointed to HRC. Also, new appointees shall be sworn into office. The Rapid City Council allowed the HRC subpoena power, and enforcement power. The HRC is not allowed to award monetary damages.
4. **Work in progress.** The Human Relations Commission (HRC) is working with City Attorney to develop a handbook for HRC members. HRC continues to train with City Attorney's office in areas of investigation. HRC roles have changed and we are engaged in presentations and educating the public about discrimination. We lost one commissioner to resignation and gained another to fill empty slot.