



Tulsa Women's Commission

Regular Meeting | May 2, 2025 | 12:00 – 1:00 pm

City Hall at One Technology Center | Room 411

Meeting Minutes

Commissioners Present: Dezeray Edwards, Ashleigh Frohrip, Betsy Jackson, Charisa Jacobs, Deidra Kirtley, Laura Latta, Janet Levit, Amy Mariska, Meg Myers Morgan, Maria Carlota Palacios

Commissioners Absent: Premadonna Braddick, Mary Quinn Cooper, Susan Crenshaw, Kate Neary

I. Call to Order

- a. Chairwoman Latta called the meeting to order at 12:02 pm. A quorum was not yet present.
- b. The commission introduced themselves.

II. Approval of Meeting Minutes

- a. Once a quorum was present, Chairwoman Latta entertained a motion to approve the April meeting minutes.
 - i. Commissioner Myers Morgan made a motion, Commissioner Mariska seconded.
 1. Aye: 9, Nay: 0, Abstain: 0
 - a. Commissioner Levit was not yet present in the meeting.
 - ii. Motion carried, April meeting minutes approved.

III. Roundtable Discussion: Commissioner Deidra Kirtley and Melissa Hoover

- a. Chairwoman Latta grounded the commission in the current term of inquiry, focused on women's mental health and trauma recovery. She then turned the meeting over to Commissioner Kirtley and Melissa Hoover.
- b. Commissioner Kirtley began with a visual aid to introduce different types of trauma, including acute trauma, chronic trauma, and complex trauma. Also introduced the many intersections of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), addiction, and justice system involvement.
- c. Commissioner Kirtley shared about several programs that the Resonance Center for Women in Tulsa manage to support justice-involved women and women who have experienced trauma.
- d. Melissa Hoover introduced herself and shared about her background and personal experience with trauma, addiction, and the justice system. She currently works as a Case Manager at Resonance.

- i. Research shows trauma links to addiction, addiction links to incarceration.
- ii. Need an overhaul of the prison system, easily creates a cycle of incarceration.
- e. Commission Discussion
 - i. Commissioner Myers Morgan: Can you share more about the link from trauma to addiction?
 - 1. Melissa: Individuals are seeking out relief, substance use disorder is a mental health condition. Wanting to distract or numb from the trauma.
 - 2. Commissioner Kirtley: Also physical health concerns, increased suicide rates, and other challenges linked to high ACE scores.
 - ii. Chairwoman Latta: What are easy to identify barriers to safe and stable housing and employment that can be eliminated?
 - 1. Melissa: ban the box, increase second chance landlords who will rent to justice-involved individuals.
 - 2. Commissioner Kirtley: Some landlords who take advantage of justice-involved individuals who have trouble finding housing because they know the renter has limited options.
 - iii. Commissioner Myers Morgan: Can you speak more about the influence of men in the treatment process?
 - 1. Melissa: Resonance has a zero contact with men policy for the first nine months of being in the program. Teach women how to have boundaries and build healthy relationship habits. Have seen many women become incarcerated again because they leave the program for a man and it leads to poor decisions. More women leave for men than leave for drugs. For a long time, Oklahoma incarcerated more women than anywhere else in the world.
 - 2. Commissioner Kirtley: Women who have experienced high levels of trauma want someone to love them.
 - 3. Commissioner Myers Morgan: So much of recovery is focused on women, when men are perpetrating. How do we address that?
 - 4. Melissa: Must teach women to define their own identity, find self-love.
 - iv. Commissioner Jacobs reflected on a student whose parent is incarcerated, and she sees the student breaking the cycle.
 - 1. Melissa: Best thing to do to support children of incarcerated parents is to give the caretakers tools to create a safe home environment.
 - 2. Commissioner Edwards: There are great programs to teach parents how to meet their children's needs.



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- v. Commissioner Levit: We as a society do not recognize substance use as a mental illness, something to be treated. What can be done through public policy, socially, or other influential institutions to educate folks on substance use disorder.
 - 1. Melissa: Similar to the need to address stigma of mental illness and treatment (including medication) as a whole.
 - 2. Commissioner Kirtley: Come a long way with drug court. More are realizing that if individuals do not go through treatment, they will continue to be addicted.
 - 3. Melissa: Younger generations are more in tune with the idea that mental illness and substance use are real and need treatment. More these conversations happen, the more stigma is reduced.
 - 4. Commissioner Kirtley: Saw this improve while at Resonance in conversations with funders. Big shift in mindset.
 - 5. Melissa: Important role of She Brews and Take 2 Cafe—humanizing mental illness to the community.
- vi. Commissioner Jackson: What is considered a high ACE score?
 - 1. Commissioner Kirtley: 64% of people will have at least one ACE.
 - 2. Melissa: Anything over four significantly increases an individual's likelihood to experience mental illness.
- vii. Commissioner Edwards: Is there anything the community can do to support Resonance?
 - 1. Commissioner Kirtley: Financial mentorship program through She Brews.
 - 2. Melissa: Partner with Stand in the Gap on programming, annual fundraiser.

IV. Chair / Vice Chair Report

- a. Chairwoman Latta shouted out that TWC had a table at Leadership Tulsa's Women's Leadership Summit. Commissioners Frohrip and Braddick attended.

V. Old Business

- a. Chairwoman Latta shared a legislative update, including an update on the childcare centers closing in the face of changes in the state accreditation process.
 - i. Commissioner Carlota Palacios: DHS gave many childcare centers five stars to centers that are not truly acting as five-star centers. Now, to keep five stars, need to go through rigorous and expensive process to keep five-star status by September 1. Has caused a lot of stress in the childcare system. DHS funding is a challenge and have to pay centers more per child to five-star centers.



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- ii. Commissioner Jackson raised the question of why the five star rating is so crucial. Commissioner Palacios affirmed that four-star centers can be high quality, but the five star rating ties to funding.
- iii. Chairwoman Latta called attention to the proposed elimination of Head Start funding, which would be devastating.

VI. New Business – no new business

VII. Announcements / Public Comments – no announcements or public comments

VIII. Adjournment

- a. Chairwoman Latta entertained a motion to adjourn.
 - i. Commissioner Edwards made a motion, Commissioner Myers Morgan seconded.
 - 1. Aye: 10, Nay: 0
 - ii. Motion carried, meeting adjourned at 1:02 pm.