

NORTH CAROLINA HUMAN TRAFFICKING COMMISSION Meeting Minutes
February 24, 2022, 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.
Meeting Conducted In-person and by WebEx* through the NC Judicial Center

Commission Members in Attendance In-person or by Video or Phone:

Caitlin Brooks, Public-at-Large
Amy Auth, Administrative Office of the Courts
Maggie Brewer, N.C. Department of Public Safety
Jennifer Haigwood, N.C. Department of Labor
Deana Joy, N.C. Child Advocacy Center (Joined 10:20am)
Jasmine McGhee, NC Department of Justice (Joined 11am)
Caitlin Ryland, Legal Aid of N.C.
Suzanne Mauney Smith, Assistant Police Chief, Gaston County Police Dept.
William “Billy” West, Cumberland County District Attorney
Angelica Wind, NC Coalition Against Human Trafficking (10:15 – 10:40am)
Marc Nichols, N.C. Sheriffs' Association and Major (Ret.) Highway Patrol

Commission Staff Present In-person or by Video:

Christine Long, Executive Director
Dr. Nancy Hagan, Commission Analyst

*Members of the public were invited to watch the meeting and access meeting materials through a stream provided on the website.

Call to Order:

The Chair called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

Roll Call:

The Chair read the following State Government Ethics Act reminder:

- In accordance with the State Government Ethics Act, it is the duty of every North Carolina Human Trafficking Commission (HTC) member to avoid conflicts of interest. If any HTC member has any known conflict of interest in respect to any matter coming in front of the HTC, they must identify the conflict and refrain from any participation in the particular matter involved.

Approval of the Minutes:

The minutes of the December 9, 2021 meeting were approved unanimously.

Committee Reports and Action Items:

Legislative Committee:

There was no report.

Public Safety Committee Report:

Commissioner Nichols discussed the success of the Texas DPS Interdiction for the Protection of Children, a highlight being a traffic stop occurring shortly after conclusion of training resulting in detainment of a potential trafficker and recovery of a potential victim-survivor. A new six-hour training course administered by the NC Justice Academy is set to start in May, with a certification process for law enforcement investigators potentially beginning in the fall. The implementation of an electronic means for commercial interstate trucking and cargo carriers to report observation of potential trafficking activity would be of benefit. The need exists for a method of data collection to assess the effectiveness of HTC-sponsored programs and initiatives.

Public Health Committee Report:

There was no report.

Appropriations Committee Report:

Commissioner Wind discussed her role as chair of the committee and importance of proper financial reporting and responsible management of Committee funds. Two meetings have already been held on January 24 and February 7. The next meeting of the committee will take place on February 28.

Staff Report:

Director Long and Commission Analyst Hagan discussed various happenings since the last HTC meeting, including the Judicial Order by Chief Justice Paul Newby in January, recording of podcasts and participation in an interview with news media. Training was completed with the National Guard, the Alpha Lambda chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., GAP Connections (a nonprofit ensuring the safety and rights of farm laborers). Upcoming training will be conducted with Campbell University, UNC Pembroke, the NCVAN Academy, as well as another with the National Guard.

Also discussed were various initiatives and partnerships with nonprofit organizations, a roundtable discussion with Sen. Ted Alexander and report cooperation with the NC SBI Behavioral Threat Assessment unit. The Committee continues to work with the TREC (Task Force for Racial Equity), as well as the Safe Shelter Collaborative, the Safe House Project and other housing certification initiatives.

Efforts are underway to coordinate and plan the 2022 Annual Conference, with the aim of holding the conference in September. There is also an opening for a temporary administrative secretary position within the HTC.

Chair Remarks:

Chair Haigwood discussed hosting the *All Things Judicial* podcast of the N.C. Judicial Branch, where she interviewed Cumberland County WORTH Court Coordinator Bengie Hair and former Cumberland County Assistant District Attorney Lindsey Lane. The podcast will also be the basis of an article for the N.C. State Bar Association. There is ongoing discussion among Committee members regarding strategic statewide planning. The committee also received a letter from Rep. Jeff McNeely recognizing the importance of the HTC and need for a statewide standard of care and housing certification.

Standards for Direct Service Providers:

The Standards were originally approved in 2019. Director Long presented a summary of the updated standards. Those updates include an improved layout, less duplication, wide applicability and the ability to build out to other specializations in the future. The Commission unanimously approved the revised standards, with the caveat that staff is permitted to make technical and grammatical adjustments.

Public Comment:

Several members of the public shared comments.

Adjournment:

At 11:40 a.m. the meeting was adjourned upon motion by Marc Nichols and seconded by Jennifer Haigwood. The next meeting will be held on April 28, 2022 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.