



CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, March 26, 2025
4:00 PM

MISSION STATEMENT

The Mission of the Grand Rapids Human Rights Commission is to promote a community of harmony and respect for the rights and dignity of all.

CALL TO ORDER: Pursuant to due notice and call thereof, the Human Rights Commission will hold a regular meeting on Wednesday, March 26, 2025, at 4:00pm in City Hall Council Chambers at 420 North Pokegama Avenue, Grand Rapids, Minnesota.

ROLL CALL:

PRESENT

Commissioner Angella Erickson
Commissioner Doug Learmont
Commissioner Amy Blomquist
Commissioner Ronald Grossman
Commissioner Katelyn Dokken
Commissioner Julee Jackson
Commissioner Stephanie Meittunen
Council Representative Molly MacGregor
City Liaison, City Attorney, Chad Sterle

ABSENT

Commissioner Jessi Bloom - Resigned

PUBLIC INPUT (if anyone wishes to address the Commission):

None

SETTING THE AGENDA: (This is an opportunity to approve the regular agenda as presented or add/delete an Agenda item by a majority vote of the Commission members present.)

Motion made by Commissioner Blomquist, Seconded by Commissioner Grossman to add speaker Karter Starling to the agenda under Presentations. Voting Yea: Commissioner Erickson, Commissioner Learmont, Commissioner Blomquist, Commissioner Grossman, Commissioner Dokken, Commissioner Jackson, Commissioner Meittunen, Council Representative MacGregor

PRESENTATION:

Karter Starling presented to the Commission the Economic Impact of the 2024 Pride Festival, of which he included their 2024 budget, impact statements from vendors, improvement feedback and a volunteer report. He also spoke about, what they learned from the 2024 Pride Event, their upcoming 2025 Pride

Event Budget and the possibility of having banners over the highways. At this time there is not an official ask to the Human Rights Commission, but it was brought up that there may be a possibility of requesting that they serve pancakes in the morning of the event.

APPROVE MINUTES:

1. Approve December 9th, 2025, Worksession Minutes

Motion made by Commissioner Learmont, Seconded by Commissioner Dokken to approve the December 9, 2025, Minutes. Voting Yea: Commissioner Erickson, Commissioner Learmont, Commissioner Blomquist, Commissioner Grossman, Commissioner Dokken, Commissioner Jackson, Commissioner Meittunen, Council Representative MacGregor

2. Approve January 29th, 2025, Meeting Minutes

Motion made by Commissioner Blomquist, Seconded by Council Representative MacGregor to approve the January 29th, 2025, Minutes with the added sentence under public input that the resident is concerned about poverty and homelessness in our community. Voting Yea: Commissioner Erickson, Commissioner Learmont, Commissioner Blomquist, Commissioner Grossman, Commissioner Dokken, Commissioner Jackson, Commissioner Meittunen, Council Representative MacGregor

FINANCIALS:

3. Approve March 2025 Financials

Motion made by Council Representative MacGregor, Seconded by Commissioner Grossman to approve the March 2025, Financials. Voting Yea: Commissioner Erickson, Commissioner Learmont, Commissioner Blomquist, Commissioner Grossman, Commissioner Dokken, Commissioner Jackson, Commissioner Meittunen, Council Representative MacGregor

BUSINESS:

4. Welcome New Commissioner & Introductions

The Commissioners introduced themselves to City Attorney Chad Sterle who has been appointed to be the City Liaison for the Human Rights Commission, taking Chery Pierzina's place.

5. Election of Officers

Motion made by Commissioner Blomquist, Seconded by Commissioner Grossman to approve the acceptance of the nomination from the floor for Amy Erickson to continue as the Chair and Amy Blomquist to continue as the Vice Chair. Voting Yea: Commissioner Learmont, Commissioner Blomquist, Commissioner Grossman, Commissioner Dokken, Commissioner Jackson, Commissioner Meittunen, Council Representative MacGregor. Voting Abstaining: Commissioner Erickson

6. Review Draft 2025 Workplan

The Commission reviewed and discussed the 2025 Draft Workplan. The Workplan is not wet in stone, but a guide that shows where the Commission would like to contribute throughout the year. Items in the Workplan discussed were:

- Indigenous People's Day - Work Group
- Collaboration with ISD318 - IPDay and StoryStitch
- Onboarding/Training
- Public Safety

Motion made by Council Representative MacGregor, Seconded by Commissioner Dokken that Commission Chair Erickson and Vice Chair Blomquist present the 2025 Workplan to the City Council at one of their April Worksessions. Voting Yea: Commissioner Erickson, Commissioner Learmont, Commissioner Blomquist, Commissioner Grossman, Commissioner Dokken, Commissioner Jackson, Commissioner Meittunen, Council Representative MacGregor

UPDATES:

7. Current Events

A group from the community would like to have a conversation regarding uncomfortable issues. It would be nice to have a dialogue at an informal setting to talk about their concerns, which could be helpful to identify either international or local issues. .

8. Community Education/Engagement Opportunity

Community engagement could be discussing with Dale Christy about partnering with ISD318, regarding a leadership training for the kids.

9. League of MN Cities Conference

Commissioner/Councilmember MacGregor will be in Duluth for training by the League of Minnesota Cities Conference and will be doing a session on the Human Rights Commission. City Attorney Chad Sterle will also be attending the June 27th, 2025, meeting. This item will be forwarded to the April 30th, 2025, Agenda to see if anyone wants to attend the conference, they would like to know by May 1st.

10. Work Groups

The Community Data Work Group did not have an update and the Juneteenth/IPDay Work Group will be meeting and Commissioners Jackson and Erickson will assist.

11. Volunteers

City Liaison, City Attorney Chad Sterle discussed that there is no volunteer policy and that there are also legal considerations. There would be a vetting process because they would become a city staff member. In this day and age, the city still needs to do its due diligence, and he hoped that's understandable.

CALLS/COMPLAINTS/INQUIRIES:

City Liaison, City Attorney Chad Sterle stated that there was a security concern that was raised for the April 28th, City Council Meeting, regarding someone who wanted to attend that meeting, and the concern was even up to this Human Rights Meeting. Law enforcement was aware and took the individual to Vet's Services.

There were questions on why the library is not open more accessible, mainly it's hours of service. City Attorney Sterle said it's a complex issue with the State statutes and Itasca County. If Itasca County assists more, the Library could be open more often. The Library Director, Will Richter is working on this.

SET AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING:

BUSINESS:

3. Welcome/Introductions for any New Commissioners
4. Approve the 2025 Workplan
5. Blandin Foundation Grant Discussion for 2026

UPDATES:

6. Current Events
7. Community Education/Engagement Opportunity
8. League of MN Cities Conference
9. Work Groups

ADJOURN:

Chair Erickson adjourned the meeting at 5:35pm.

Respectfully submitted by Cynthia Lyman