

# CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION MEETING AGENDA

**Wednesday, January 28, 2026  
4:00 PM**

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## **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.*

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**CALL TO ORDER:** Pursuant to due notice and call thereof, the Human Rights Commission will hold a regular meeting on Wednesday, January 28th, 2026, at 4:00pm in City Hall Council Chambers at 420 North Pokegama Avenue, Grand Rapids, Minnesota.

**ROLL CALL:**

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

**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.)

**PRESENTATION:**

**APPROVE MINUTES:**

1. Approve December 17th, 2025, Minutes

**FINANCIALS:** None.

**BUSINESS:**

2. 2026 Workplan
3. Ordinance Review/Approval

**UPDATES:**

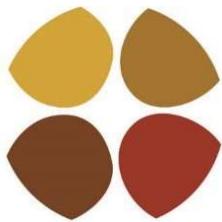
4. Housing
5. City Council Updates
6. Community Engagement/Education and/or Internal Collaboration
7. Community Foundation
8. ADA Compliance WG: Commissioners Learmont & Erickson  
Interfaith WG: Commissioner Grossman

Community Engagement/Education WG: City Council Representative MacGregor,  
Commissioners Miller & Erickson

CALLS/COMPLAINTS/INQUIRIES:

SET AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING:

ADJOURN:



# CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS

## HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

### MEETING MINUTES

**Wednesday, December 17, 2025**  
**4:00 PM**

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#### **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.*

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**CALL TO ORDER:** Pursuant to due notice and call thereof, the Human Rights Commission will hold a regular meeting on Wednesday, December 17, 2025, at 4:00pm in City Hall Council Chambers at 420 North Pokegama Avenue, Grand Rapids, Minnesota.

Commission Chair Erickson called the meeting to order at 4:02pm.

**ROLL CALL:**

**PRESENT**

Commissioner Angella Erickson  
 Commissioner Doug Learmont  
 Commissioner Amy Blomquist  
 Commissioner Ronald Grossman  
 Council Representative Molly MacGregor  
 Commissioner Janet Miller  
 City Liaison, City Attorney, Chad Sterle

**ABSENT**

Commissioner Stephanie Meittunen  
 Commissioner Julee Jackson

**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 Council Representative MacGregor to add, Review Commissioner Terms under Business on the Agenda. Voting Yea: Commissioner Erickson, Commissioner Learmont, Commissioner Blomquist, Commissioner Grossman, Council Representative MacGregor, Commissioner Miller**

**PRESENTATION:**

None.

**APPROVE MINUTES:**

1. Approve the November 19th, 2025, Minutes

**Motion made by Commissioner Miller, Seconded by Commissioner Learmont to approve the November 19th, 2025, Minutes. Voting Yea: Commissioner Erickson, Commissioner Learmont, Commissioner Blomquist, Commissioner Grossman, Council Representative MacGregor, Commissioner Miller**

**FINANCIALS:**

2. Review Financials for December 2025

The Commission reviewed the financials and discussed that there is no rollover of any funds.

**BUSINESS:**

3. 2026 Workplan

The Commission discussed the elimination of the Human Rights Commission Budget by the City. One of the Commissioners suggested that a column be added to the Workplan in order to estimate and plan future budget costs.

4. Ordinance Review

City Liaison, City Attorney Chad Sterle stated that the wording for the City Ordinance comes right from the Minnesota State Statutes. He mentions a couple changes such as changing quarterly to monthly and taking out the word general. He asked that the Commission bring any of their edits to the January Human Rights Commission meeting so it can be approved and he can then bring it to the City Council Meeting for their approval.

5. Library as a Resource

Commissioner Jackson is absent to discuss any findings on this item, but it was said that due to budget cuts, the Library has limited hours of service and is not in a position to staff it as a shelter. Commissioner Erickson will try to get a panel together to discuss the City policy on homelessness and how PD and other entities work together. Commissioner Grossman would also like to follow up on how other facilities such as churches were able to be used as a shelter.

5A. Review Commissioner Terms. Both Commissioners Erickson and Miller's terms are up for renewal on March 31, 2026. As of today, Commissioner Katelyn Dokken has resigned and that will leave the Commission with an opening. If anyone has someone that would like to become a commissioner, please send them a link for the application.

**UPDATES:**

6. City Council Update
7. Community Engagement/Education and/or Internal Collaboration

The Commission formed a new work group of Commissioners Miller, Erickson and City Council Representative MacGregor for this agenda item.

8. ADA Compliance WG: Commissioners Learmont & Erickson  
City Staff/Volunteer Survey WG: Commissioners Erickson & Jackson  
Interfaith WG: Commissioner Grossman

The ADA Compliance WG will continue.

The City Staff/Volunteer Survey WG: Regarding the City Staff/City Volunteer Survey, its goal was to capture a broader sense of the demographic profile of the possible diversity of the City's Staff and its volunteers. The City Administrator, Tom Pagel said no a few months ago to sending out the survey. For now, this will be taken off the agenda.

The Interfaith WG: Commissioner Grossman said that the Pastor's Prayer and Fellowship Interfaith meeting will be talking about what they're doing at their January meeting, the first Thursday of the month. All are welcome to attend.

#### CALLS/COMPLAINTS/INQUIRIES:

City Liaison, City Attorney Chad Sterle said that there were none. He also thanked the Human Rights Commission for 2025 and that there was a strong possibility that he would be rotated to another Commission in 2026.

#### SET AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING:

##### BUSINESS:

3. 2026 Workplan
4. Ordinance Review/Approval

##### UPDATES:

5. Housing
6. City Council Updates
7. Community Engagement/Education and/or Internal Collaboration
8. Community Foundation
9. ADA Compliance WG: Commissioners Learmont & Erickson  
Interfaith WG: Commissioner Grossman  
Community Engagement/Education WG: City Council Representative MacGregor, Commissioners Miller & Erickson

#### ADJOURN:

Commission Chair Erickson adjourned the meeting at 5:35pm.

Respectfully submitted by Cynthia Lyman



## Grand Rapids Human Rights Commission Calendar Year 2026 Work Plan

Prepared in accordance with Establishing Ordinance and Commission By-Laws

All activities for 2026 are supported by our guiding vision themes of: Community Awareness; Education outreach and Communication; Our Role; Collaboration; and Listening to Community

| 2026 QUARTER  | GOAL OR ACTIVITY<br>(refer to goal or activity description page for more detail)   | ORDINANCE                               | ACTION TAKEN  | EST. COST<br>(See Notes) |
|---|--|---|---|--------------------------|
| <b>Q1</b><br><b>Jan – March</b><br><br><i>Possible events/recognitions:</i><br>International Women's Day – Black History Month  | <b>Ordinance Review</b><br>Review and clarify HRC role and alignment with city ordinances  | 2-303 (F)                               | Updated draft sent to Commissioners for review                      | \$0                      |
|   | <b>Fair Housing Act</b><br>Support development of work group to review possible panel / other community engagement opps within Itasca County | 2-303 (B, C, E, F)                      | Planning meeting set for 1/14 in partnership with Itasca County HRA | \$1,500                  |
|   | <b>Presentation to Outside Organization</b><br>Community awareness, education/outreach, listen to community                                  | 2-303 (B, C)                            |   | \$0                      |
|   | <b>Quarterly Workplan &amp; Budget Review</b><br>Review progress on workplan activities and budget expenditures                              | Article 10<br>2-303 (G)                 |   | \$0                      |
| <b>Q2</b><br><b>April – June</b><br><br><i>Possible events/recognitions:</i><br>Stomp the Stigma – Mental Health Awareness Month – Asian Pacific Islander Heritage Month – LGBTQ+ Pride Month | <b>Story Stitch Event</b><br>Host community event - either facilitating or bringing someone in. Education/outreach, listen to community      | Article 10 (1, 2, 3)                    | Commissioner McGregor attended training 11/22/2025                  | \$1,500                  |
|   | <b>Volunteer at Stomp on Stigma</b><br>Community awareness and collaboration at established community event                                  | 2-303 (B, C)<br>Article 10 (2, 3, 4, 5) |   | \$5,000                  |
|   | <b>Volunteer at Pride Event</b><br>Community awareness and collaboration at established community event                                      | 2-303 (B, C)<br>Article 10 (2, 3, 4, 5) |   | \$7,000                  |
|   | <b>Presentation to Outside Organization</b><br>Community awareness, education/outreach, listen to community                                  | 2-303 (B, C)                            |   | \$0                      |
|   | <b>Quarterly Workplan &amp; Budget Review</b><br>Review progress on workplan activities and budget expenditures                              | Article 10<br>2-303 (G)                 |   | \$0                      |
| <b>Q3</b><br><b>July – Sept</b>   | <b>Braver Angels Event</b>   | Article 10 (1, 2, 3)                    |   | \$2,500                  |

| 2026 QUARTER   | GOAL OR ACTIVITY<br>(refer to goal or activity description page for more detail)                                | ORDINANCE                               | ACTION TAKEN | EST. C<br>(See Notes) |
|--|---|---|--------------|-----------------------|
| Possible events/recognitions:<br>Hispanic Heritage Month<br>Q3                         | Host community event - either facilitating or bringing someone in. Education/outreach, listen to community      |   |              |                       |
|  | <b>Presentation to Outside Organization</b><br>Community awareness, education/outreach, listen to community     | 2-303 (B, C)                            |              | \$0                   |
|  | <b>Quarterly Workplan &amp; Budget Review</b><br>Review progress on workplan activities and budget expenditures | Article 10<br>2-303 (G)                 |              | \$0                   |
| Q4<br>Oct – Dec<br><br>Possible events/recognitions:<br>Native American Heritage Month | <b>Soup on the Street</b><br>Community awareness and collaboration at established community event               | 2-303 (B, C)                            |              | \$2,000               |
|  | <b>Indigenous People's Day Support</b><br>Community awareness and collaboration at established community event  | 2-303 (B, C)<br>Article 10 (2, 3, 4, 5) |              | \$5,000               |
|  | <b>Presentation to Outside Organization</b><br>Community awareness, education/outreach, listen to community     | 2-303 (B, C)                            |              | \$0                   |
|  | <b>Quarterly Workplan &amp; Budget Review</b><br>Review progress on workplan activities and budget expenditures | Article 10<br>2-303 (G)                 |              | \$0                   |

**Notes:**

City Council eliminated a set budget for the Human Rights Commission in 2026. Estimated costs are ballpark for the entire event – not necessarily a direct contribution expected or anticipated from either the HRC or City of Grand Rapids.

## Summary Description of Goals and Activities

### ORDINANCE REVIEW

Item 2.

The Commission will conduct a comprehensive review of city ordinances related to human rights to clarify the HRC's role and ensure alignment with current city regulations. This review will help commissioners better understand their authority, responsibilities, and the scope of their work in protecting human rights within the community. The ordinance review will provide a framework for future decision-making and help define how the Commission can most effectively serve the community within its legal mandate.

## **FAIR HOUSING ACT SUPPORT**

The Commission will support the development of a work group to explore fair housing issues and possible panel discussions or other community engagement opportunities within Itasca County. This activity aims to increase awareness of fair housing rights, identify housing discrimination concerns, and provide education to community members about their rights and responsibilities under fair housing laws. The work group may partner with local housing authorities, advocacy organizations, and community stakeholders to create meaningful dialogue and resources around housing equity.

## **PRESENTATIONS TO OUTSIDE ORGANIZATIONS (QUARTERLY)**

The Commission will conduct quarterly presentations to outside organizations such as schools, service clubs (Rotary, Lions, etc.), faith communities, and civic groups. These presentations will raise community awareness about the HRC's role, educate audiences about human rights and protected classes, provide outreach to diverse community segments, and create opportunities to listen to community concerns. Each presentation will be tailored to the specific audience and may include information about discrimination prevention, the complaint process, and available resources. This activity supports the vision themes of Community Awareness, Education/Outreach, and Listening to Community.

## **STORY STITCH EVENT**

Story Stitch is a community dialogue facilitation methodology that creates safe spaces for people to share personal stories and build understanding across differences. The Commission will either facilitate a Story Stitch event directly or bring in trained facilitators to lead this community conversation. This event will provide an opportunity for community members to share their lived experiences related to identity, discrimination, belonging, and human rights. Through storytelling and guided dialogue, participants will build empathy, discover common ground, and strengthen community connections. This activity aligns with the vision themes of Education/Outreach, Our Role, and Listening to Community.

## **BRAVER ANGELS EVENT**

Braver Angels is a national organization dedicated to bridging political divides and fostering constructive dialogue across ideological differences. The Commission will either facilitate a Braver Angels workshop or bring in certified Braver Angels facilitators to lead a community event. This structured dialogue will help participants understand different perspectives, reduce contempt and hostility, and find common ground despite political or ideological differences. The event will contribute to building a more cohesive community where diverse viewpoints can coexist respectfully. This activity supports Education/Outreach, Our Role, and Listening to Community vision themes.

## **QUARTERLY WORKPLAN & BUDGET REVIEW**

The Commission will conduct quarterly reviews of its work plan progress and budget expenditures to ensure accountability, transparency, and effective use of resources. These reviews will allow commissioners to assess which activities are meeting their goals, identify any needed adjustments to priorities or approaches, track spending against the annual budget, and ensure alignment with the Commission's vision themes. Regular review creates opportunities for learning, course correction, and strategic planning. This activity reflects the Commission's commitment to responsible stewardship of public resources and effective governance as outlined in Article 10 of the Commission By-Laws.

## **COMMUNITY EVENT PARTICIPATION & VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT**

The Commission will actively participate in and volunteer at established community events throughout the year to increase HRC visibility, demonstrate collaboration with community partners, and engage directly with diverse community members. Target events include Stomp on Stigma (mental health awareness), Pride celebrations (LGBTQ+ support), Soup on the Street (food security and homelessness), Indigenous People's Day, and other community gatherings as opportunities arise. Through this hands-on engagement, commissioners will staff information tables, distribute educational materials about human rights protections, assist with event logistics, and engage in conversations with community members about discrimination and available resources. This visible presence helps vulnerable populations feel uplifted and supported while educating the broader community about human rights. The Commission remains open to participating in additional community events that align with its mission and vision themes. This activity supports Community Awareness, Collaboration, and Listening to Community vision themes.

### **COMMISSIONER TRAINING AND EDUCATION (ONGOING)**

Actions or decisions by the Grand Rapids Human Rights Commission to provide freedom from discrimination require knowledge about the types of prohibited discrimination and ways in which these types of discrimination may occur in employment, housing, real property, public accommodations, public services, education, and unfounded charges (City of Grand Rapids Rules, Division 6 Sec 2-301). The Commission plans to identify and support commissioner training opportunities and activities throughout the year. This may include approaches such as outside speakers, presentation or event sponsorship, community meetings, interviews, identifying and sharing of pertinent news articles or reports, and/or other methods. Commissioner training and education will be an ongoing objective and activity that strengthens the Commission's capacity to serve the community effectively.

#### **Notes:**

During the year, adjustments may be made to reflect changes in costs, changes in priorities, changes in format or delivery methods, or identification of human rights concerns that were not identified in compiling the preceding list but which the Commission feels need to be addressed. Examples include:

- a. Possible adjustments could occur due to identifying new or incidental human rights concerns related to protected groups and areas from the [Minnesota Human Rights](#) and other state statutes and regulations:

| <b>Protected Classes</b> | <b>Protected Area</b>  |
|--------------------------|--|
| RACE                     | Employment, housing, public accommodations, public services, education, credit, and business |
| COLOR                    | Employment, housing, public accommodations, public services, education, credit, and business |
| CREED                    | Employment, housing, public accommodations, public services, education, and credit           |
| RELIGION                 | Employment, housing, public accommodations, public services, education, and credit           |
| NATIONAL ORIGIN          | Employment, housing, public accommodations, public services, education, credit, and business |
| SEX                      | Employment, housing, public accommodations, public services, education, credit, and business |
| MARITAL STATUS           | Employment, housing, public accommodations, education, and credit                            |
| DISABILITY               | Employment, housing, public accommodations, public services, education, credit, and business |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>PUBLIC ASSISTANCE</b>                      | Employment, housing, public services, education, credit                                      |
| <b>AGE</b>                                    | Employment and education   |
| <b>SEXUAL ORIENTATION</b>                     | Employment, housing, public accommodations, public services, education, credit, and business |
| <b>FAMILIAL STATUS</b>                        | Employment, Housing  |
| <b>LOCAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION ACTIVITY</b> | Employment   |

b. Adjustments could occur as a result of use of alternative education/training delivery methods such as print, seminars, webinars, speeches, and others

Councilmember Driscoll introduced the following Ordinance and moved for its adoption:  
 ORDINANCE NO. 04- 05-09 AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS,  
 MINNESOTA, ESTABLISHING GRAND RAPIDS CITY CODE CHAPTER 10 AND A  
 HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION THE CITY COUNCIL OF GRAND RAPIDS,  
 MINNESOTA ORDAINS:

Section 1. Grand Rapids City Code is hereby created by adding the following Section 1 entitled 'Human Rights Commission':

**SEC. 1 HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION.**

Subd. 1. Establishment and Composition. A Human Rights Commission, composed of nine (9) members, is hereby established for the purpose of securing for all citizens freedom from discrimination ([MN STAT 363A.02](#)):

- (1) in employment because of one or more of the following: race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity, marital status, disability, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, familial status, and age;
- (2) in housing and real property because of one or more of the following: race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity, marital status, disability, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, and familial status;
- (3) in public accommodations because of one or more of the following: race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, and disability;
- (4) in public services because of one or more of the following: race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, and status with regard to public assistance; and
- (5) in education because of one or more of the following: race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity, marital status, disability, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, and age.

(b) Such discrimination threatens the rights and privileges of the inhabitants of this state and menaces the institutions and foundations of democracy. It is also the public policy of this state to protect all persons from wholly unfounded charges of discrimination. Nothing in this chapter shall be interpreted as restricting the implementation of positive action programs to combat discrimination.

It is also the purpose of the Human Rights Commission to protect all persons from wholly unfounded charges of discrimination. Nothing in this section shall be interpreted as restricting the implementation of positive action programs to combat discrimination.

It is also the purpose of the Human Rights Commission to secure for all citizens full participation in the affairs of the City by assisting the Minnesota Department of Human Rights in implementing State laws against discrimination and by advising the Council in long-range programs to improve community relations in the City of Grand Rapids.

Members shall be appointed by the Grand Rapids City Council for indefinite terms. An

Administrative Assistant who is a permanent City staff person shall, and the City Attorney may, function as ex officio members of the Commission. It is desirable that Commission members be representative of the broad spectrum of the citizens of the City. Commission members should be willing to attend training sessions for the purpose of facilitating the discharge of their duties. Members shall serve without compensation.

**Subd. 2. Meetings.**

Regular meetings shall be scheduled on a quarterly basis to handle regular Commission business and further efforts of information dissemination. Special meetings shall be held at the call of the Chairperson. Such business meetings shall be open for public attendance.

Minutes shall be kept of all Commission proceedings. The Administrative Assistant shall be responsible for all minute and record-keeping duties. The Commission shall adopt its own bylaws after approval by the City Council.

**Subd. 3. Quorum.**

No meeting shall be conducted by the Commission without a quorum, being a majority of all members, being present. The concurring vote of a majority of the Commissioners present shall be necessary for any action.

**Subd. 4. Purpose and Duties of the Commission.** The Human Rights Commission shall have the following purpose and duties:

**A. Monitoring and Advising.**

To review community information, public feedback, and emerging issues related to human rights, and to advise City staff and the City Council on notable trends or concerns affecting residents.

**B. Community Resource and Referral.**

To serve as a point of contact for residents seeking information on human rights issues and to refer individuals to the Minnesota Department of Human Rights or other appropriate agencies for investigation or assistance. The Human Rights Commission will not participate in the investigation, nor opinion rendering of human rights violation complaints. They will simply refer such matters to the Minnesota Department of Human Service.

**C. Public Education and Awareness.**

To support the City's efforts to promote nondiscrimination by participating in or co-sponsoring public information activities, community events, and awareness initiatives when feasible.

**D. Collaboration with Community Partners.**

To maintain communication and foster cooperative relationships with local organizations, schools, tribal governments, advocacy groups, and other entities engaged in human rights work.

**E. Policy and Ordinance Review.**

To provide feedback to City staff and the City Council on selected City policies, ordinances, and practices, offering recommendations to promote accessibility, inclusion, fairness, and equitable impact.

**F. Input on City Initiatives.**

To advise the City on human rights considerations within City plans, programs, and communications, including accessibility and equity implications, upon request or when opportunities arise.

**G. Reporting and Transparency.**

To prepare and submit an annual report summarizing the Commission's activities, community insights, and recommendations for improving equity and inclusion within the City.

**Subd. 5 Duties of Commission Personnel.****A. Duties of the Chair.** The duties of the elected Commission Chair shall be:

- a. Organizing meetings, meeting with outside community organizations or persons, and providing overall leadership for the Commission;
- b. To act as the authorized liaison representative of the Commission, both with complainants and the public in general;
- c. Appoint Commissioners to task-focused committees;
- d. Delegate duties to the Vice Chair and/or other Commissioners as appropriate.

**B. Duties of Vice Chair.** The duties of the elected Commission Vice Chair shall be:

- a. Performing the duties of the chair in the absence or at the request of the chair;
- b. Assist the chair in planning, administering, and conducting Commission business.

**C. Duties of the Administrative Assistant.** The duties of the City staff person designated as Administrative Assistant to the Commission by the Mayor shall be:

- a. To take minutes and keep official records of all Commission proceedings, and to function as correspondent for such communications with Federal and State agencies as are directed by the Commission.

**Subd. 6 Budget.** The Human Rights Commission must establish a yearly budget for Grand Rapids City Council's consideration and approval. This budget must be submitted in accordance with the regular Grand Rapids City budgeting process on a yearly basis and it is to cover all expenses including but not limited to legal services, staffing, and all expenses related to publication or promotion of the commissions activities.

Section 2. After adoption, signing and attestation, this ordinance shall be published once in the official newspaper of the City and shall be in effect on and after the date following such publication.

Adopted by the City Council of Grand Rapids, Minnesota, this 24 day of May 2004.

FOR ADOPTION: Driscoll, Erkkila, Drake, Zeige

AGAINST ADOPTION: Schlauderaff

Susan Zeige, Mayor

ATTEST:

E ward Trela, - City Administrator/Clerk

Published in the Grand Rapids Herald Review on May 30, 2004