

CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION MEETING AGENDA

Wednesday, June 24, 2026
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, June 24th, 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:

1. Daycare Discussion by Vicki Janae Sofner and Rebekah Zemansky Higginbotham

APPROVE MINUTES:

- [2.](#) Approve May 27th, 2026, Minutes

FINANCIALS:

BUSINESS:

3. New Election - Vice Chair
- [4.](#) 2026 Workplan

UPDATES:

5. Itasca Pride
6. Juneteenth
7. New Events:
 - 4 Directions Festival
 - ADA Pride Month - July
 - Dissolve the Divide

8. City & Council Updates

- GR Area Human Rights Fund Draft-Community Foundation

9. - Community Engagement/Education and/or Internal Collaboration: Commission Chair Miller and Council Representative MacGregor

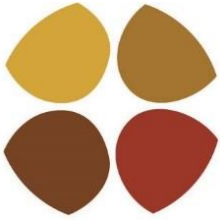
- Interfaith: Commissioner Grossman

- Indigenous People's Day: Commissioners Leone, Ducharme, Pope-Sears and Grossman

CALLS/COMPLAINTS/INQUIRIES:

SET AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING:

ADJOURN:



CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, May 27, 2026
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, May 27th, 2026, at 4:00pm in City Hall Council Chambers at 420 North Pokegama Avenue, Grand Rapids, Minnesota.

The meeting was called to order by Commission Chair Miller at 4pm.

ROLL CALL:

PRESENT: Commissioner Doug Learmont, Council Representative Molly MacGregor, Commissioner Janet Miller, Commissioner Stella Leone, Commissioner Renee Ducharme

ABSENT: Commissioner Ronald Grossman, Commissioner Brittany Pope-Sears

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.)

Motion made by Commissioner Learmont, Seconded by Commissioner Leone to accept the agenda as written. Voting Yea: Commissioner Learmont, Council Representative MacGregor, Commissioner Miller, Commissioner Leone, Commissioner Ducharme. Motion Passed.

PRESENTATION:

APPROVE MINUTES:

1. Approve April 29th 2026, Minutes

Motion made by Commissioner Learmont, Seconded by Council Representative MacGregor to approve the April 29th Minutes with one change to 2004 under the section with Barb Sanderson. Voting Yea: Commissioner Learmont, Council Representative MacGregor, Commissioner Miller, Commissioner Leone, Commissioner Ducharme. Motion Passed.

FINANCIALS:

None.

BUSINESS:

2. 2026 Workplan

The Commission discussed where they are at on the 2026 Workplan.

3. Grand Rapids Area Human Rights Fund Draft-Community Foundation

The Commission discussed that they were going to talk to the City Administrator and the Community Foundation. City Council Representative MacGregor will set something up so that the Commission can get clarification on a few items such as how the funds would move to the Human Rights Commission and the designation of an advisor.

4. New July Events

- 4 Directions Festival
- ADA Pride Month - July
- Dissolve the Divide

Commissioner Leone discussed the 4 Directions Festival and that she was hoping for a grant. She mentioned many people and connections that she has while working at various festivals and that the Indigenous People's Day could be a 4 Directions Festival.

Commissioner Pope-Sears was not present to talk about the ADA Pride Month therefore this was tabled until the next meeting.

Commissioner Leone also talked about the Dissolve the Divide, and how in the community where she was in Arizona they, the Police and Fire Departments, City and Mayor had an open forum about working together. Commissioner Ducharme mentioned the BridgeBuilder group and that they are getting people together and are having conversations with empathy.

5. Walk for Life-September

The Walk for Life is September 10th. The Commission Chair Miller said that the Keisler House next month is having a walk to raise awareness of suicide. There will be volunteer opportunities at both to give out water like she did for Stomp on Stigma.

UPDATES:

6. City Council Updates

There were no City Council Updates for the Human Rights Commission.

7. Stomp on Stigma

The Stomp on Stigma went well. Commission Chair Miller and Commissioner Ducharme gave out water and found out that there was another race, for ProLife that was actually running at the same time. Water was given to all racers of both races.

8. Itasca Pride

Itasca Pride is June 14th and Commission Chair Miller said that the volunteers would be helping make the breakfast the night before or would be giving out food that Sunday. A notice will be posted in case of a quorum.

9. Workgroups:

- Community Engagement/Education and/or Internal Collaboration: Commission Chair Miller and Council Representative MacGregor
- Interfaith: Commissioner Grossman
- Indigenous People;s Day: Commissioners Leone, Ducharme, Pope-Sears and Grossman

Community Engagement/Education and/or Internal Collaboration Workgroup: Commission Chair Miller said that giving out the water at the Stomp on Stigma was one way to build connections within the Community.

Interfaith Workgroup: Commissioner Grossman was absent to give an update.

Indigenous People's Day Workgroup: Discussion on the event on October 12th, this year. Commissioner Leone has many contacts and 30 years of creating/working on Festivals. We, the Commission, need to have direction as to what we want to do. Stated earlier, this could be a 4 Directions Festival (N, S, E & W) to bring the people here and anyone who wants to be involved, she welcomes ideas and input. Also, they want to get the Youth more involved and possibly honor former Councilmember Barb Sanderson and others in the celebration.

CALLS/COMPLAINTS/INQUIRIES:

None.

SET AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING:

BUSINESS:

2. New Election - Vice Chair
3. 2026 Workplan

UPDATES:

4. Itasca Pride
5. Juneteenth
6. New Events
 - 4 Directions Festival
 - ADA Pride Month July
 - Dissolve the Divide
7. City & Council Updates
 - GR Area Human Rights Fund Draft-Community Foundation

ADJOURN:

The meeting was adjourned at 4:51pm.

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 (refer to goal or activity description page for more detail)	ORDINANCE	ACTION TAKEN	EST. COST (See Notes)
Q1 Jan – March <i>Possible events/recognitions:</i> International Women's Day – Black History Month	Ordinance Review Review and clarify HRC role and alignment with city ordinances	2-303 (F)	Updated draft sent to Commissioners for review	\$0
	Fair Housing Act 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
	Presentation to Outside Organization Community awareness, education/outreach, listen to community	2-303 (B, C)		\$0
	Quarterly Workplan & Budget Review Review progress on workplan activities and budget expenditures	Article 10 2-303 (G)		\$0
Q2 April – June <i>Possible events/recognitions:</i> Stomp the Stigma – Mental Health Awareness Month – Asian Pacific Islander Heritage Month – LGBTQ+ Pride Month	Story Stitch Event 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
	Volunteer at Stomp on Stigma Community awareness and collaboration at established community event	2-303 (B, C) Article 10 (2, 3, 4, 5)		\$5,000
	Volunteer at Pride Event Community awareness and collaboration at established community event	2-303 (B, C) Article 10 (2, 3, 4, 5)		\$7,000
	Presentation to Outside Organization Community awareness, education/outreach, listen to community	2-303 (B, C)		\$0
	Quarterly Workplan & Budget Review Review progress on workplan activities and budget expenditures	Article 10 2-303 (G)		\$0
Q3 July – Sept	Braver Angels Event	Article 10 (1, 2, 3)		\$2,500

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

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:

Protected Classes	Protected Area
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

PUBLIC ASSISTANCE	Employment, housing, public services, education, credit
AGE	Employment and education
SEXUAL ORIENTATION	Employment, housing, public accommodations, public services, education, credit, and business
FAMILIAL STATUS	Employment, Housing
LOCAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION ACTIVITY	Employment

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



**Agreement to Establish the
Grand Rapids Area Human Rights Fund**
within the
Grand Rapids Area Community Foundation

THIS AGREEMENT, dated this ____ day of _____, 2026 is made to establish the Grand Rapids Area Human Rights Fund (the “Fund”) within the Grand Rapids Area Community Foundation (the “Foundation”). **At the time of this agreement, the Grand Rapids Human Rights Commission (the “Donor” or the “Commission”) as the founding donor** makes an irrevocable gift of \$1.00 to The Grand Rapids Area Community Foundation (the “Foundation”), a 501(c)(3) organization authorized to receive and hold charitable funds in accordance with its charter and bylaws. This is to be used to establish a fund at the Foundation to be known as the Grand Rapids Area Human Rights Fund (“the Fund”). The purpose of the Fund is to support organizations, initiatives, **events**, and community-led efforts that uphold human rights and promote dignity and respect for individuals and families in the Grand Rapids, Minnesota area, with a **focus on human rights oriented education, awareness, and constructive community engagement that are consistent with the goals and objectives that are defined in city code and Grand Rapids Human Rights Commission Bylaws and as advised by the Grand Rapids Human Rights Commission**

1. The Fund will be identified, as described above, by the Foundation in all relevant literature, reports, promotional material and public documents.
2. The Fund will be subject to the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws of the Foundation, as the **Foundation** may amend them from time to time.
3. The Fund is designated to meet **human rights related** charitable needs in the community and surrounding area of the **Grand Rapids , Minnesota** Area.
4. Distributions from the Fund shall be consistent with the exempt purposes of the Foundation. The Foundation board shall have the power to modify any restriction or condition on the distribution of funds for any specified charitable purposes or to specified organizations if in the sole judgment of the board, (without the approval of any trustee, custodian or agent),

Marked up draft for review and discussion

April 29, 2026

such restriction or condition becomes, in effect, unnecessary, incapable of fulfillment or inconsistent with the charitable needs of the community or area served.

5. It is the intent of the **founding** donor that the Fund be considered **non-endowed** and distributions from the Fund may be made in any amount not to exceed the balance of the Fund.
4. Gifts may be added to the Fund **at any time from both private or public sources. Funds from each source are to be commingled, treated as the same, and not segregated as to the source of the funds. For management purposes, the Foundation may commingle the assets of this Fund with the assets of other funds held by the Foundation, provided the separate identity and value of the Fund will be maintained and distinguishable and** distribution from the Fund will be clearly identified as such to the grantees.
5. It is intended that the Fund will be continued as long as the need for the Fund exists, and assets are held in the Fund **or anticipated to be donated to the fund** for its purposes.
6. The governing board of the Foundation shall have final authority and discretion as to the investment and reinvestment of the assets of the Fund as part of the Foundation Investment Portfolio.
7. The Foundation will provide all routine accounting, and reporting to the Minnesota Attorney General and Internal Revenue Service regarding the Fund. The Foundation shall be entitled to reasonable compensation for management of the Fund in accordance with their regular fee schedule. The administrative fee for a nonendowed fund is 2% annually (calculated .50% quarterly) with a minimum annual fee of \$250.
8. The Fund will be the property of the Foundation held by it in its corporate capacity and will not be deemed a trust fund held by it in a trustee capacity. It is intended the Fund will be a component fund of the Community Foundation and that nothing in the Agreement will affect the status of the Foundation as an organization described in Sections 509(a)(1) and 170(b)(1)(A)(vi) of the Internal Revenue Code. This Agreement will be interpreted in a manner consistent with the foregoing **stated** intention and to conform to any applicable requirements of the Internal Revenue Code and IRS Regulations.

Advisors

The Grand Rapids Human Rights Commission (the Commission) shall designate the Advisor(s) to this Fund **and the Commission may replace this designee. When and if the Commission does**

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not or is not able to designate an Advisor, then the following individuals may serve as Advisors to the Fund.

- 1. City of Grand Rapids Administrator
- 2. City of Grand Rapids Treasurer

Upon the death, incapacity, or other disqualification of the last of the Advisors named above, the following individual(s) may serve as successor Advisor(s) to the Fund.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

If at any time there is more than one Advisor to the Fund, the Advisors will appoint a designee and all communications to and from the Foundation will be through the designee. If there is no designee appointed by the Human Rights Commission, the designee will be the first Advisor listed above. All communications with the Advisor shall, if by post, shall be addressed to th Advisor through the Clerk, City of Grand Rapids, 420 Pokegama Avenue North, Grand Rapids, Minnesota 55744, or if by e-mail, through

At such time as the Fund ceases to have any Advisors, it will be used for general charitable purposes at the discretion of the Foundation’s Board without consideration of advice or recommendation from an Advisor.

Anonymity/Publicity

To recognize and honor the donors, the Foundation’s policy is to include donors’ names in publicity about the Foundation unless they wish to remain anonymous. The City of Grand Rapids and the Grand Rapids Human Rights Commission have no objection to the inclusion of their names in Foundation publicity

By: _____

Donor Signature	Printed Name	Date
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ACCEPTED:

By: _____

Foundation Signature	Printed Name	Title
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