



MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING **APPROVED**

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**HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION**

**DATE:** Tuesday, February 17, 2026  
**TIME:** 5:30 p.m.  
**PLACE:** Urbana City Council Chambers  
Urbana City Hall  
400 South Vine Street  
Urbana, Illinois 61801

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**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:** Ann Panthen, Chair; Shalini Smith, Vice Chair; Peter Resnick; Adam Ruggieri

**COMMISSIONER ON PHONE:** Vahagn Chiflikyan

**COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:** Jerry Frye; Charles Davidson

**ALSO PRESENT:** Carla Boyd, Human Rights and Equity Officer;  
Tom Unzicker, Human Rights Specialist

**A. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL AND DECLARATION OF QUORUM**

Ann Panthen called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m. The Recording Secretary took the roll. A quorum was present.

**B. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Ms. Panthen asked for any additions to the agenda. There were none.

**C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**1. January 13, 2026**

Ms. Panthen called for a motion to approve the minutes of the January meeting. Shalini Smith moved for approval of the minutes. Peter Resnick seconded the motion. The motion carried on a voice vote.

**D. PUBLIC INPUT**

There was none.

**E. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**1. Discussion of HRC and Union Labor Expectations**

Mr. Resnick began the report on a meeting held between Adam Ruggieri, Carla Boyd, Tom Unzicker, and himself to discuss developing a process for reviewing unions doing business with the City:

- The current form will serve as a template to create one specific to unions
- Processes and procedures need development in conjunction with other City departments

Mr. Unzicker added that the form currently submitted by employers could see updates to gather additional information about the specifics of a contractor's union utilization.

In response to a question from Ms. Panthen about the various unions that work locally, Ms. Boyd relayed plans to develop a spreadsheet – with the information on unions already known. That would receive additions on an ongoing basis. Mr. Ruggieri, Ms. Boyd, and Ms. Panthen each stressed that the committee potentially has a considerable amount of work ahead of it.

## **F. NEW BUSINESS**

### **1. Discussion of the Surveillance Technology Ordinance**

Ms. Panthen explained that a proposed revision to a City ordinance could potentially give some oversight responsibilities concerning surveillance technology to both the HRC and the Civilian Police Review Board. She asked for viewpoints from commissioners about the proposed role of HRC, as well as the work involved.

Commissioners weighed in on several aspects of the topic.

- Changes to Commission workload
- Possible procedures
- Jurisdiction for cases
- Appropriate training
- Clear guidelines about what would reach HRC

As the discussion unfolded, the Commission concluded that the HRC does not need mentioning in the proposed revision to the ordinance. Possible case types contemplated as “new” would already come to this commission under the ordinance as written prior to the proposed amendment.

Ms. Panthen agreed to submit a statement to the City Council following the approval of the minutes of this meeting at the meeting scheduled for March 17, 2026.

### **2. Receipt of Automatic Two-Year EEO Certifications**

Ms. Smith announced the names of the companies receiving automatic approval this month:

- CoraMae Inc d/b/a Insurance Risk Managers
- Arch Equipment Group LLC
- Cloudpoint Geospatial

### **3. Consideration of EEO Workforce Statistics**

Ms. Panthen introduced consideration of the applications from companies needing approval by the commissioners for EEO Certification. Ms. Smith moved to certify the following six companies for specific terms of approval by the commission:

- Cogent, Inc. d/b/a Vandevanter Engineering 2 years
- Hoerr Construction, Inc. 2 years
- JP Excavating & Trucking Inc 2 years
- MGT Impact Solutions LLC 2 years

- Michels Construction, Inc. 2 years
- WMI Automotive d/b/a Champaign Ford City 1 year

Ms. Panthen had questions about two-year recommendation for Cogent, Inc. d/b/a Vandevanter Engineering. Ms. Boyd reviewed her rationale, including the available workforce and the type of work. Mr. Resnick pointed to the company's stronger demographics compared with Fenton, a suburb of St. Louis (although the county of St Louis does not include the City of St. Louis).

Following the discussion, the motion carried on a voice vote.

## H. OFFICER'S REPORT

Ms. Boyd shared her monthly report. Highlights included:

- Status of complaints and referrals made
- She presented the James R. Burgess, Jr./Susan Freiburg Humanitarian Award to Dr. Jeffrey Trask at the MLK Celebration event at Krannert Center
- She attended the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission (BPAC) meeting for the ADA Compliance Working Group on Tuesday, January 20, 2026. There was a robust discussion about those with mobility challenges being able to successfully navigate Urbana's sidewalks.
- She completed the ADA virtual conference, receiving 24 credits to maintain ADA Coordinator Certification. This year's conference focused a lot on Web accessibility.
- She attended the United Way's Women United Galentine event on Friday, February 6<sup>th</sup>.
- The DEI Committee group at Clark-Lindsey postponed the Friday, January presentation and rescheduled it for Tuesday, March 17, 2025 at 10:00 am. She and Chair Panthen will highlight general information about the Office of Human Rights and Equity, as well as the Human Rights Commission, but will promote vacancies for all boards and commissions.

Moments in Human Rights History included:

- February 17, 1913. The state of Oregon enacted a minimum age law. The law applied only to women and children. Women earned \$8.64 for a 48-hour week, or 18 cents per hour. Children could earn \$6.00 for the week, but could only work the 48-hour week before 6:00 p.m. The first nationwide minimum wage passed into law in 1938.
- February 17, 1960. Alabama authorities arrest Martin Luther King, Jr. on tax evasion. The arrest was just one of 29 of Dr. King that occurred throughout his Civil Rights Era activism. King responded to inquiries from reporters by stating that those struggling in the cause of freedom need to be prepared for harassment, arrests, and jailing.
- February 17, 1964. The U.S. Supreme Court decides "Wesberry v. Sanders", ruling congressional districts should be approximately equal in population. Prior to "Wesberry", one of three similar cases before the Court during the 1963-64 term, most states drew districts based on geographic size rather than population distribution. Rural districts typically had more influence than urban districts. The cases, including one about the apportionment of state legislatures, brought into focus the phrase, "One person; one vote".

After the ruling, 39 states needed to redraw their maps before the November 1964 General Election. When legislators in Springfield could not decide on a new map, the State Supreme Court declared one At-Large legislative district in effect for the entire state that November. So, each voter sorted through 236 candidates for 177 seats on the "bedsheet ballot"! In the aftermath of the chaos, Illinois

voters would adopt a new Constitution in 1970, at which time the City of Urbana gained its home-rule status.

- Today, February 17, 2026. The Reverend Jesse L. Jackson died this morning. Jackson, a protégé of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., became an iconic Civil Rights leader himself. The founder of the Rainbow PUSH Coalition, Jackson twice ran for president, in 1984 and 1988. He became the first African American candidate to win a presidential primary.

#### Commissioners' Follow Up

Ms. Panthen shared that Rev. Jackson prompted her to vote for the first time.

### **I. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

1. This commission has two openings.
2. Next HRC meeting: Tuesday, March 17, 2026, at 5:30 p.m.
3. Commissioners should expect a 2026 events calendar in their email. Please consider signing up for outreach activities.

### **J. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the Commission, Ms. Panthen adjourned the meeting at 6:21 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas D. Unzicker  
Recording Secretary