



MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING **APPROVED**

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**HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION**

**DATE:** Tuesday, December 9, 2025  
**TIME:** 5:30 p.m.  
**PLACE:** Urbana City Council Chambers  
Urbana City Building  
400 South Vine Street  
Urbana, Illinois 61801

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

**COMMISSIONER ON PHONE:** Vahagn Chiflikyan

**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 5:31 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. INTRODUCTION OF NEW COMMISSIONER**

Carla Boyd introduced new member Adam Ruggieri to the Commission. His appointment received approval by City Council the night before this meeting.

Mr. Ruggieri introduced himself as nearly a life-long resident of Urbana. He considers it a privilege to join the HRC. He also requested commissioners advise him as he wants to both learn as much as wants to serve.

**D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**1. October 21, 2025**

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

**E. PUBLIC INPUT**

There was none.

**F. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**1. Discussion of HRC Membership Modification – Guest: Darcy Sandefur, City Clerk**

Ms. Sandefur presented on the topic of “Open Meetings Act Refresher”. Highlights included:

- Each commissioner must complete the OMA training once per term within 90 days of the start of each term, and file a copy of the certificate with the Mayor or Clerk’s Office
- The Public Access Commission (PAC) governs enforcement of violations of the OMA
- Four constitutes a quorum for a meeting of HRC according to the governing ordinance
- She invited all commissioners to contact her whenever questions arise

During discussion following Ms. Sanderfur’s departure, no commissioner moved to change the current language of the ordinance regarding the definition of quorum for this body.

**G. NEW BUSINESS**

**1. Presentation by Shalini Smith: International Association of Official Human Rights Agencies (IAOHRA) Conference**

Ms. Smith presented on her attendance at the conference in Anchorage in October. Highlights included:

- The State of Illinois could fit inside Alaska 11 times
- Most housing discrimination complaints in Chicago involve Housing Choice Vouchers. Ordinances there, as well as in Urbana, ban discrimination based on income
- One conference attendee came from an area with 40 protected classes
- Visited several spots of historical and/or cultural importance
- Representatives from various Midwestern cities, including Champaign, met as a group and shared updates on their human rights organizations
- Human Rights Organizations continue to fight for their communities despite lack of funding, staff, and the current political landscape

During discussion both Ms. Boyd and Ms. Smith expressed appreciation for a conference keynote speaker, Tim Wise.

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

Ms. Smith reported two companies received automatic two-year approval as follows:

- Warehouse Direct, Inc. d/b/a Stock Furniture
- LuAva, Inc.

Mr. Ruggieri received an explanation of the automatic certification process. 20 or fewer employees receive automatic certification.

**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 11 companies for specific terms of approval by the commission:

- Birkey’s Farm Store 1 year
- BLD Services, LLC 2 years
- Cannon Cochran Management Services Inc. d/b/a CCMSI 2 years
- Electronic Data Collection Corporation 2 years

- Health Care Service Corporation  
d/b/a Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois 2 years
- Midwest Engineering and Testing, Inc. 1 year
- RH Wine d/b/a Insurance Program Managers Group, LLC 2 years
- Stark Excavation, Inc. 2 years
- Trees R Us 2 years
- Twin Lakes Fire Service 1 year
- Vogler Motor Company 1 year

Mr. Resnick seconded the motion. Ms. Panthen asked for any discussion.

Jerry Frye asked about the role of Birkey's Farm Store. It was unclear what equipment they might sell to the City. Mr. Frye expressed concern about their demographics and wondered about methods available to address his concern. He also expressed concerns about the demographic profiles of Vogler Motor Company and Twin Lakes Fire Service.

Ms. Boyd suggested commissioners submit questions to the office about any specific concerns so that a company might respond by adding greater detail to their application packet ahead of the meeting

Mr. Resnick described the option of not certifying an application for renewal, which has yet to occur during his tenure on the commission. He suggested the commission begin responding much more pointedly to concerns about a reapplicant's lack of progress.

Additional points during the discussion included:

- Companies certified many years ago, but lapsed, receive a review by the office as a "new applicant". Perhaps flag those applications and provide a more critical review despite the gap in time.
- Companies utilizing union labor submit information about their efforts made with each union toward supporting their diversification efforts
- A community's "available workforce" might impact an employer's hiring options
- Commissioners could determine that a reapplicant previously certified as "Provisional" did not demonstrate sufficient "good faith efforts" in their renewal application
- Some first-time applicants might well find the application paperwork process rather overwhelming.

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
- Attended the 2025 "NAACP Freedom Fund" event on Saturday, October 25, 2025. Chief Boone of the Urbana Police Department received special recognition
- Completed a webinar from the International City/County Management Association entitled, "How Local Governments Can Use Data for Effective Policymaking"
- Volunteered to ring the bell of the Salvation Army, and will do at the Urbana Walmart next Monday morning, December 15th
- Invited everyone to attend the annual Martin Luther King Jr Day celebration event at the Krannert Center on Sunday, January 18, 2026, at 5:00 p.m.

Moments in Human Rights History included:

- December 9, 1897: French activist Marguerite Durand founds the feminist daily newspaper “La Fronde”. Run exclusively by women, it advocated for women’s rights.
- December 9, 1965: Baseball’s Branch Rickey dies at the age of 83. He signed Jackie Robinson to the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1947. He also introduced the batting helmet into baseball.
- December 9, 1978: The first game of the Women’s Basketball League takes place in Milwaukee. The modern league, the WNBA, debuts in 1997.
- December 9, 1990: Lech Walesa elected President in Poland, the first person directly elected by the country’s voters. He previously received the Nobel Peace Prize for leadership of the Solidarity Movement, promoting the right to form trade unions, and for greater freedom of religious and political expression.
- December 9, 1998: The United Nations declares Anti-Semitism a form of Racism. The resolution also warned against new avenues for disseminating the “repugnant views” of racist organizations, and asked governments to monitor modern communications for misuse.
- December 9, 2017: Australia becomes the 26<sup>th</sup> country to legalize same-sex marriage.

**I. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

1. This Commission has two openings.
2. Next scheduled meeting: Tuesday, January 13, 2026, at 5:30 p.m. (Different week)

**J. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the Commission, Ms. Panthen adjourned the meeting at 6:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas D. Unzicker  
Recording Secretary