



CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

**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.

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

ROLL CALL:

PRESENT: Commissioner Doug Learmont, Commissioner Janet Miller, Commissioner Stella Leone, Commissioner Renee Ducharme, Commissioner Ronald Grossman, Commissioner Brittany Pope-Sears

ABSENT: Council Representative Molly MacGregor

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 Leone, Seconded by Commissioner Pope-Sears to approve the agenda as written. Voting Yea: Commissioner Learmont, Commissioner Miller, Commissioner Leone, Commissioner Ducharme, Commissioner Pope-Sears, Commissioner Grossman, Motion Passed.

PRESENTATION:

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

The presentation will be moved to the meeting in July.

APPROVE MINUTES:

2. Approve May 27th, 2026, Minutes

Motion made by Commissioner Ducharme, Seconded by Commissioner Leone to approve the minutes from May 27th, 2026. Voting Yea: Commissioner Learmont, Commissioner Grossman, Commissioner Miller, Commissioner Leone, Commissioner Ducharme, Commissioner Pope-Sears. Motion Passed.

FINANCIALS:

None

BUSINESS:

3. New Election - Vice Chair

Motion made by Commissioner Leone, seconded by Commissioner Pope-Sears to elect Commissioner Ducharme to Vice Chair, taking the place of Commissioner Leone. Voting Yea: Commissioner Learmont, Commissioner Miller, Commissioner Leone, Commissioner Ducharme, Commissioner Grossman, Commissioner Pope-Sears. Motion Passed.

4. 2026 Workplan

Commission Chair Miller discussed that they are on schedule with the workplan. She needs to check with Commissioner MacGregor for the Braver Angels. She has also said that she has done two presentations so far and there were other groups such as the Rotary and ISD318 that the presentation could be shown. It was suggested to keep a record of the presentations given. It was also said that the Commission could revisit protective classes and that due to no budget, they should investigate the application process and deadlines of grants.

UPDATES:

5. Itasca Pride

The festival went well and many thanks to the Human Rights Commissioners who assisted with the pancake breakfast.

6. Juneteenth

Juneteenth banners were up, even though they were a little faded and Kootasca put on a walk.

7. New Events:

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

Commissioner Leone spoke to a variety of people regarding the 4 Directions Festival, Indigenous People's Day and received similar responses that most will not participate for free. Commissioners agreed that events work better when there are more partners involved, but funding will be an issue. If another group has something in mind for the Indigenous People's Day, the Human Rights Commission would support them. The workgroup may try to meet with Band members regarding the event but will have to have less than a quorum to meet, even at their location.

Commissioner Pope-Sears said that the ADA Pride Month was in July and at this time she would like to put it on the work plan for 2027.

Dissolve the Divide is going to be held off for a bit and maybe have a round table discussion about safety and creating a harmonious community and the perceptions about the community from others.

8. City & Council Updates
 - GR Area Human Rights Fund Draft-Community Foundation

Commissioner Learmont thought that everything about the Fund Draft with the Community Foundation was moving along and that it was very close. It was found via email that the city was not in favor of an account being set up for the Human Rights Commission through the Community Foundation. The Commission would like some clarification from Council Representative MacGregor regarding the discussion to stop moving forward with the Fund Draft.

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

A) Commission Chair Miller said earlier that she has done two presentations and will be doing another one sometime from July to September.

B) Commissioner Grossman said that even though one of the pastor's that he spoke with is committed to assisting vulnerable people, it is very slow going, but it will be worth it when things start to line up.

C) This work group is seriously considering speaking with the area Bands regarding Indigenous People's Day. They may meet with them but realize that they must go with a group that is less than a quorum and can't speak about any pertinent information.

CALLS/COMPLAINTS/INQUIRIES:

None

SET AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING:

BUSINESS:

3. 2026 Workplan

UPDATES:

4. Walk for Life
5. City and County Updates - GR Area Human Rights Fund Draft-Community Foundation Clarification
6. Work Groups:
 - 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 Grossman

ADJOURN:

The meeting was adjourned at 5:09pm.
Respectfully submitted by Cynthia Lyman