



CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, September 30, 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, September 30th, 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 4:00pm.

ROLL CALL:

PRESENT

Commissioner Doug Learmont, Commissioner Ronald Grossman, Council Representative Molly MacGregor, Commissioner Janet Miller, Commissioner Stella Leone, Commissioner Renee Ducharme

ABSENT

Commissioner Brittany Pope-Sears

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 Council Representative MacGregor, Seconded by Commissioner Ducharme to add Native American Heritage Month to the Agenda. Voting Yea: Commissioner Learmont, Commissioner Grossman, Council Representative MacGregor, Commissioner Miller, Commissioner Leone, Commissioner Ducharme. Motion passed.

PRESENTATION:

1. Grace House

Program Director Dustin Witkofsky, Outreach Coordinator Nicole DeJarlais and Treasurer Angie Tanner from Grace House came to speak to the Human Rights Commission. They shared information such as it being the only homeless shelter in Grand Rapids and it's a fundamental asset to Itasca County. Grace House provides a safe environment for the homeless and relies on volunteers.

They would not mind having a few extra volunteers to assist with their Annual Dinner at the Timberlake on the first Thursday of December. Anyone who is interested can go to info@gracehouse.org to sign up.

The Commissioners asked if Grace House had any data or information that could assist the Human Rights Commission in helping with possible discrimination of the 12 or so protective classes. They replied that they are working on a database where demographics/statistics are collected, from the ground up.

APPROVE MINUTES:

2. Approve July 29th, 2026, Minutes

Motion made by Commissioner Grossman, Seconded by Commissioner Leone to approve the July 29th, 2026, Minutes. Voting Yea: Commissioner Learmont, Commissioner Grossman, Council Representative MacGregor, Commissioner Miller, Commissioner Leone, Commissioner Ducharme. Motion passed.

BUSINESS:

3. 2026 Work Plan

The Commissioners discussed when the Soup on the Street would be and Council Representative MacGregor said she would ask about it and Commissioner Ducharme thought it was through Kootasca and it was sometime in November last year.

The Commissioners also decided that they would work on the 2027 Workplan at a Worksession prior to the Regular Meeting on October 28th, 2026. No motion needed.

4. Indigenous People's Day

Commissioner Leone showed the flier and spoke about the upcoming Indigenous People's Day on October 12th, 2026, being held at the MN North College, Chucker Auditorium. A notice of a possible quorum will be posted prior to the event. Council Representative MacGregor will talk to Barb Sanderson to see if she would like to make the introductions at the event.

4A. For Native American Heritage Month, there will be an event on November 9th, 2026, from 6-8pm at the MacRostie Art Center, called Native Stories in Mixed Media. The flier and public service announcement for the event will need to be approved. A notice will be posted for a possible quorum closer to the event date.

Motion made by Council Representative MacGregor, Seconded by Commissioner Learmont to approve both the Native American Heritage Month Event flier and the corresponding Public Service Announcement for the Event. Voting Yea: Commissioner Learmont, Commissioner Grossman, Council Representative MacGregor, Commissioner Miller, Commissioner Leone, Commissioner Ducharme. Motion passed.

5. MN Exhibits/Story Stitch

Council Representative MacGregor will have an update for the next meeting.

6. NAMI Walk for Mental Health-Oct 3rd, 2026

The NAMI Mental Health Walk for 2026 happened last weekend, but anyone who wishes to donate can still do so.

UPDATES:

7. 9th Annual Walk for Life

There were not as many in attendance as in the last couple of years, but those who attended carried signs, encouraged others and were very enthusiastic. The Kiesler Wellness Center was very appreciative of the water station.

8. Fire in the Village Potluck

The Fire in the Village cancelled with the Commission, but they usually hold their potlucks on Wednesdays and the Commission is always welcome to come.

9. City and County Updates - Community Foundation Grant

Commissioner Ducharme found out that the Community Foundation had grants available, so she brought it to the City Council and they approved that the Human Rights Commission could apply for a grant for \$5,000. She was able to get it in by the deadline and it was approved.

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

Interfaith: Commissioner Grossman

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

Community Engagement/Education and/or Internal Collaboration: Commissioner Ducharme attended the recent Bridge Builders Event and said it was a positive experience and she will go again. Council Representative MacGregor plans on volunteering at Grace House. Commissioner Grossman will be attending an Interfaith meeting tomorrow.

CALLS/COMPLAINTS/INQUIRIES:

None mentioned.

SET AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING:

WORKSESSION:

2027 Workplan

BUSINESS:

3) 2026 Workplan

4) Native American Heritage Month Event

5) MN Exhibits/Story Stitch

UPDATES:

- 5) Indigenous People's Day
- 6) City and County Updates
- 7) Work Groups

ADJOURN:

The meeting was adjourned at 5:30pm.
Respectfully submitted by Cynthia Lyman