

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
September 9, 2025

DATE: Tuesday, September 9, 2025

TIME: 4:30 PM

LOCATION: Multicultural Family Center, 1157 Central Avenue, Dubuque, IA 52001

The meeting was called to order at 4:36 pm.

Commissioners Present: Jake Kurczek, Matthew Zanger, Michaela Freiburger, Traci Phillipson, Nikki Nutter, DeLano Cain Watson

Commissioners Excused: Rick Baumhover, David Heiar

Commissioners Absent: Luzelena Bravo,

Staff Present: Ann Marie Jannette, Human Rights Specialist

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve the minutes as submitted from the August 12, 2025, meeting. Motioned by Freiburger, seconded by Zanger, all in favor.

Motion to approve the minutes as submitted from the August 29, 2025, subcommittee meeting regarding the recommendation of the Dubuque Area Land and Water Legacy Project. Motioned by Zanger, seconded by Freiburger, all in favor.

Motion to approve the minutes as submitted from the September 4, 2025, subcommittee meeting regarding updates to the Human Rights Commission handbook. Motioned by Phillipson, seconded by Zanger, all in favor.

Public Input

No members of the public were in attendance.

Reports

Caseload Report

- Complaints filed – number of complaints that were signed during the month
 - August amount: 0
- Active investigations – investigations that are currently active but in various stages (active, administrative review, initiated, on hold, etc.)
 - August amount: 15
- Incidents in mediation – complaints currently in mediation
 - August amount: 0
- Incidents in full hearing – complaints in full hearing process
 - August amount: 0

- Inquiries – calls/inquiries that don't result in an official complaint being filed (including outreach events)
 - August amount: 7
- Complaints closed during the month – signed complaints that were closed during the month (doesn't include inquiries or complaints that were never filed)
 - August amount: 0
- Total inquiries and complaints FY26 – signed complaints filed in FY26
 - August amount: 21

Director's Report

Aitken-Shadle was out of the office. The report was given by Jannette. She reported that the department is currently working on the FY27 budget and setting goals for the department. Jannette provided an update on the IOCR statement on their complaint form regarding gender identity stating that if discrimination occurred before July 1, 2025, the complainant has 300 days to file a complaint. If the discrimination occurred after July 1, 2025, they cannot file a complaint at the state level because it is no longer a protected class in the state of Iowa. However, it is still a protected class at the City level so they can file a complaint with the City of Dubuque Office of Human Rights.

Jannette reported that they are updating the marketing materials and that they are currently with the City Attorney's office for approval. New pens and pencils have been ordered that show the new name of the department. These items will be handed out at outreach events. Jannette reported that the department is working on an internal training session regarding Belonging in the Workplace. She also conveyed that the Civil Rights Specialist position was eliminated and Shante Weston was laid off.

Jannette conveyed several upcoming events for which the commission could attend. These included the Latinx Fiesta on October 11, the Senior Expo on September 18, BBQ in DBQ on September 20, and the Boards and Commission picnic happening that evening on September 9.

Chairperson's Report

Nothing to report.

Old Business:

Jannette conveyed that going forward, if a regularly scheduled commission meeting could not be held due to no quorum, that the Chief of Human Rights or the Chair would attempt to reschedule the meeting. Also, if an event arose that required a special meeting, the Chief or Chair would attempt to schedule one.

New Business:

Followup policy/procedure from City Council – no update

Internal commission handbook update – Per Phillipson, the entire handbook was reviewed. Changes were made and the subcommittee is meeting September 16 to review the changes.

Resolution for City Council – Freiburger motioned to create a resolution for City Council affirming that everyone belongs here and recognizing human dignity and safety as human rights. The motion was seconded by Zanger with all in favor. Freiburger will create a draft

resolution. A special meeting will be held on September 16 to review and vote on approval for submission to City Council.

Dubuque Area Land Water Legacy recommendations – Motion to approve the resolution drafted by the subcommittee was made by Phillipson. Motion seconded by Zanger with all in favor.

Commission description/purpose on Human Rights website – no comments from commissioners. The description/purpose was approved and no changes were suggested.

Upcoming Outreach Events

Senior Expo on September 18, 2025, and Latinx Fiesta on October 11, 2025.

Upcoming Cultural Events

None.

Reflections and Updates

Zanger is going to send out the list of partner organizations to the commissioners. Freiburger noted that the Dubuque Community Foundation was holding its Data Walk on September 10. Envision 2030 is expected to unveil their top ideas and create planning committees on October 16 and a suggestion was made for commissioner to volunteer or attend the meeting.

A request was made to invite FY25 grant recipients to the October or November commission meeting to give a report on the benefits of receiving the Equity Grant.

Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn by Zanger, seconded by Cain-Watson. All in favor. The meeting ended at 5:29 p.m.

The next regularly scheduled meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 14, 2025, at 4:30 p.m., at the Multicultural Family Center.

Minutes approved as submitted: _____

Minutes approved as corrected:  _____