

Commission on Human Relations Meeting Minutes

Monday, January 5, 2026

Attendance: virtual meeting via Zoom.

Commissioners:

Teaira Collins (virtual)
Genevieve Rosselot (virtual)
Richard Morris (virtual)
Namita Dwarakanath (virtual)
Mary Jayne McCullough (virtual)
Alberto Benzaquen (virtual)

Staff:

Rachel Shepherd, Director
Christopher Sault, Deputy Director
Rita Turpin Porterfield, Senior Investigator (virtual)
Jeffrey Cameron, Senior Investigator (virtual)
Lauren Law, Senior Investigator (virtual)
David Ellwood, Senior Investigator
Kevin Carroll, Administrative Assistant (virtual)
Courtney Smith, Fiscal and Contracts Coordinator

- I. **CALL TO ORDER** - Chair Collins called the meeting to Order at approximately 3:15pm.
- II. **ADOPTION OF MINUTES** –
 1. Corrections: None.
 2. Motion to adopt minutes made by Commissioner Rosselot.
 3. Seconded by Commissioner Morris.
 4. Unanimous voice vote in favor
- III. **PUBLIC COMMENT:** None
- IV. **COMMITTEE AND STAFF REPORT**
 - A. **Committee Reports**
 1. **Community Relations Committee** – No update.
 2. **Finance Committee** – No update.
 3. **Personnel Committee** – No update.
 - B. **Director's Report** –
 1. Cases and Enforcement: As of 12/29/2025 there are:
 - a. 74 open investigations (+7 since December meeting)
 - b. 41 pending intakes (-15 since December meeting)
 - c. 16 cases awaiting a response and assignment (+3 since December meeting)
 - d. 4 pending mandatory conciliations (-2 since December meeting)
 - e. 5 cases in court (no change)
 - f. 3 cases on the public hearing track (-1 since December meeting)



CITY OF PITTSBURGH
COMMISSION ON HUMAN RELATIONS
RACHEL SHEPHERD, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Monthly Commission Meeting Agenda

January 5, 2026

1. CALL TO ORDER
2. MEETING MINUTES
 - a. December 1, 2025
3. PUBLIC COMMENTS
4. COMMITTEES
 - a. FINANCE
 - b. PERSONNEL
 - c. COMMUNITY RELATIONS
5. **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**
6. OLD BUSINESS
7. NEW BUSINESS
8. ADJOURNMENT

Commission on Human Relations Meeting Minutes

Monday, December 1, 2025

Attendance: In-person at the Commission's Offices or virtual via Zoom.

Commissioners:

Teaira Collins (virtual)
Richard Morris (virtual)
Genevieve Rosselot (virtual)
Namita Dwarakanath (virtual)
Mary Jayne McCullough (virtual)
Alberto Benzaquen (virtual)

Staff: Rachel Shepherd, Executive Director
Christopher Sout, Deputy Director
Rita Porterfield, Senior Investigator (virtual)
Lauren Law, Senior Investigator (virtual)
David Ellwood, Senior Investigator
Kevin Carroll, Administrative Assistant (virtual)
Courtney Smith, Fiscal and Contracts Coordinator

Guests: Pre-registered through Zoom

- Sara Barac

- I. **CALL TO ORDER** - Chair Collins called the meeting to Order at 3:35p.m.
- II. **ADOPTION OF MINUTES** –
 1. Corrections: None.
 2. Motion to adopt minutes, including any corrections noted above, made by Commissioner Dwarakanath
 3. Seconded by Commissioner Rosselot
 4. Unanimous voice vote in favor.
- III. **PUBLIC COMMENT:** None
- IV. **COMMITTEE AND STAFF REPORT**
 - **Director's Report** – Report given by Director Shepherd
 - o Personnel and Administration:
 - a. Fully staffed for one year
 - b. No administration updates yet, but budget hearing was held 11/14/2025
 - c. Code updates – including Disparate Impact and Civil Rights were passed finally on 11/10
 - d. Added a new pro bono mediator, Doug Baker
 - o Case and Enforcement:
 - o As of 11/23/2025 there are:

- 67 open investigations (-4 since November meeting);
 - 56 pending intakes (-3 since November);
 - 13 cases awaiting a response and assignment (+7 since November);
 - 6 pending mandatory conciliations (-2 since November meeting);
 - 5 cases in court (no change); and
 - 3 cases on the public hearing track (+1 since November meeting).
 - Compliance Review will see 7 determinations at the meeting today, including one settlement.
- Meetings and New Connections:
 - a. Met with Katherine Norton of Duquesne Law regarding law clinics and collaborations
 - b. Discussed efforts and the state of civil rights with the Human Rights Cities Alliance. They are planning to have their annual press conference on Tuesday, December 9, 2025 to highlight International Human Rights Day
 - c. Met with regional director and outreach coordinated from PA Human Relations Commission to discuss a joint housing training for landlords and other ways to collaborate.
 - d. Participated in quarterly IAOHRA Atlantic Regional Meeting – shared local
 - e. Dept. Dir. And Dir. Met with Anna from Chelsa Wagner’s chambers to discuss DV protections and how to best disseminate info to survivors. Similarly, Emilia (intern) coordinated with Judge Henry-Taylor's interns
- Outreach and Education:
 - a. DV Resources for Work and Home – CLE for attorneys in the Pittsburgh area on housing protections for survivors of DV
 - b. Deputy Director and Director tabled at the Open Doors Resource Fair hosted by Lindsay Powell
 - c. Sr. Investigator Porterfield and Ray Moore from FHP did a fair housing presentation to Pitt students and have been invited back annually.
 - d. Emilia conducted a fair housing training for Carlow’s school of social work students
 - e. Director submitted a workshop proposal for the Pittsburgh Racial Justice Summit which seeks to educate people on their civil rights in Pittsburgh and how the Commission can be of service.
 - f. Thanksgiving Distribution by the Urban League – annual tradition! Deputy Director, Senior Investigators Porterfield and Ellwood, and Cmr. McCullough joined Director for tabling and gave away almost 1,000 hats and info on the Commission.
 - g. Director Shepherd did a Know Your Rights presentation for the staff at Hugh Lane Wellness Center
- Special Projects:
 - a. Protection updates:
 - i. Housing Status – Passed finally on 9/30
 - ii. Disparate Impact/Civil Rights – passed finally on 11/10
 - b. Strategic Planning will be finished by the end of 2025
- Upcoming Events:
 - a. Public Hearing 12/10/2025
 - b. FHP landlord training – last of the year 12/12 in Southside Co-Hatch space.

- **Committee Reports**

- o **Community Relations Committee** – November meeting will be the last until January
- o **Finance Committee** – Budget Hearing is scheduled with City Council, November 14, 2025 at 10:00 a.m.
- o **Personnel Committee** – Commissioner Webster out of town; no updates other than to recognize we have been fully staffed for a whole year
- o **Public Hearing Section** - Hearing scheduled for December 10, 2025 in Commission offices.
- o **Executive Committee** – No updates at this time.

V. OLD BUSINESS –

a. 2026 Calendar

- i. 1/5/2026
- ii. 2/2/2026
- iii. 3/9/2026
- iv. 4/13/2026
- v. 5/4/2026
- vi. 6/1/2026
- vii. 7/6/2026
- viii. 8/17/2026
- ix. 10/5/2026
- x. 11/2/2026
- xi. 12/7/2026

- b. Motion to adopt schedule by Cmr. Morris, seconded by Cmr. Dwarakanath; unanimous voice vote in favor.

VII. NEW BUSINESS -

- a. Acknowledged passing of Paul O’Hanlon and his significant impact for disability and transportation rights in the Pittsburgh and surrounding areas.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT –

- a. Motion made by Commissioner Rosselot
- b. Seconded by Commissioner Morris
- c. Unanimous vote in favor at 3:55 p.m.



CITY OF PITTSBURGH
COMMISSION ON HUMAN RELATIONS
RACHEL SHEPHERD, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

January 5, 2026

CASES AND ENFORCEMENT

- As of 12/29/2025 there are:
 - 74 open investigations (+7 since December meeting);
 - 41 pending intakes (-15 since December meeting);
 - 16 cases awaiting a response and assignment (+3 since December meeting);
 - 4 pending mandatory conciliations (-2 since December meeting);
 - 5 cases in court (no change); and
 - 3 cases on the public hearing track (-1 since December meeting).
- Compliance Review will see 7 determinations at the meeting today, including three settlements.
- The public hearing for CR-2024-002A was held on December 10-11, 2025. We should have a final order sometime in March.
- PghCHR has received 429 inquiries as of 12/29. This is 147 more than in 2024.

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

- The final Fair Housing Training for Landlords was held on December 12th with 8 housing providers in attendance. We are looking at early February for our first training in 2026.
- Through our contract with Just Mediation Pittsburgh, 389 tenants were provided fair housing information last quarter.
- The 2025 annual report should be ready for distribution in the coming weeks.

UPCOMING EVENTS

January 5, 2026 from 6-8pm - No Hate in our State Town Hall: Addressing Antisemitism through a Multifaceted Lens

Our partners at the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission is hosting a virtual community town hall event. Register at the following link to attend:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/6LfvYWbrQ6udU69a2XFgcQ#/registration>

February 21, 2026 at 9am - Pittsburgh Racial Justice Summit

Save the date for the 28th Annual Pittsburgh Racial Justice Summit!

Doors open at 9:00AM, at the CCAC Allegheny Campus.

This year's theme: Building Community for Lasting Democracy and Racial Equity

For more information, visit <https://www.prjs.org>

No Hate in Our State Town Hall

Free & Open to the Public

Addressing Antisemitism from a Multifaceted Lens

Monday
January 5, 2026

 6:00-8:00 p.m.

 Platform: ZOOM

What is a “No Hate in Our State” Town Hall?

“No Hate in Our State” town halls bridge divides and foster understanding in our communities. It provides an open forum where residents, activists, and others can come together to voice their concerns, learn about their rights, and begin the healing process.

Panelists:



Alana Burman

Director of Policy, Intergovernmental Affairs, & Mediation, PHRC



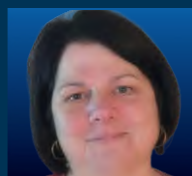
Adriel Resh

Director of Jewish Life and Culture, York JCC



Rachel Singer

Director of Jewish Life, F&M College



Deb Smith

External Program & Arts Coordinator, Hanover YWCA

Moderator:



Hector Luis Torres-Diaz

Civil Rights Outreach Coordinator, PHRC



SCAN ME

Register today!



Pennsylvania
Human Relations Commission

Questions? Contact Hector Luis
Torres-Diaz, htorresdia@pa.gov