

Meeting Minutes

Human Rights and Equity Commission

December 18, 2025, from 4:30 to 6 p.m.

Bend City Hall, Boardroom and online.

Chair Agatha Ventura, called the **Human Rights and Equity Commission** (HREC), December 18, 2025, meeting to order at 4:32 pm, in the Boardroom. Please watch the **watch livestream recording**.

1. Roll Call: Commissioners (B= Boardroom & Z= Zoom).

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| 1.1. Agatha Ventura, Chair - B | 1.8. Eli Loewenstern - Z |
| 1.2. Jackie Currie, Council Connector - B | 1.9. Fenix Van Tassel - A |
| 1.3. Scott Jones, Commissioner Connector - B | 1.10. Jenn Kovitz - A |
| 1.4. Brittany Ellenberg - B | 1.11. Mario Anguiano - Z |
| 1.5. Cameron Fischer - B | 1.12. Bet Hannon - B |
| 1.6. Carly Colgan - A | 1.13. Ruth Vernotico - B |
| 1.7. Cristina Morales Moyano - B | 1.14. Navi Hughes - A |
| | 1.15. Kinsey Martin (ex officio) - B |

City of Bend Staff:

- Kathi Barguil, She/Her | Ella, Community Relations Manager (Boardroom)
- Megan Perkins, She/Her, Councilor - Mayor Pro Tem, HREC Council Liaison (Boardroom)
- Ian Leitheiser, He/Him, City Attorney (Boardroom)
- Rene Mitchell, She/Her/Hers, Communications and Engagement Director. (Boardroom)
- Stephanie Betteridge, She/Her, Assistant City Manager & Chief Innovations Officer (Boardroom)
- Cassandra Kehoe, She/Her | Ella, Accessibility & Equity Manager, COBAAC Staff Liaison (Office)
- Lisa Larsen, She/Her Administrative Support Specialist (Boardroom)

Public Comment/Attendance:

- David Carlson, commented.
- Thomas Wrisley in attendance

2. City of Bend Land Acknowledgement Statement:

Kathi Barguil, She/Her, Community Relations Manager & HREC Staff Liaison read the statement aloud about the city currently developing a sovereignty acknowledgment and ways to support Warm Springs.

She also acknowledged our immigrant and migrant community members. Stating, today is a day without an immigrant and the local Latino Community Association (LCA) is celebrating and standing in solidarity.

3. HREC Business: Agatha Ventura, Chair.

a. **Minutes:** Approval of November 17, 2025, Draft Minutes

November 17, 2025, Draft meeting minutes approved by all voting commissioners attending today's meeting, held in the Boardroom (8) and via Zoom (2)

b. **Review of the HREC December 17, 2025, Agenda:**

The December agenda reviewed by all who attended today's meeting.

c. **Leadership Nomination Accepted and Voted on at the January 2026 Meeting:**

The following HREC Leadership roles reviewed and discussed with the Commissioners.

Commissioners interested in volunteering for any of the leadership positions can email HREC Staff Liaison Barguil before the January 13, 2026, HREC meeting.

- Chair | Vice Chair | Council Connector | Commissioner Connector.
- New Role: Community Connector needs defining and the suggestion of more than one person/ team for this role due to commissioners' capacity.
 - Chair Ventura, if there is a vacancy with minimal, is interested in the Community Connector role.
 - Commissioner Vernotico stated that if there was a vacancy that requires minimal time, they would be interested in that role. Their capacity to help is currently limited.

d. **New Topic – Non Agenda Item: Best Practices for Email Communications in reference to future public records requests regarding commissioners' personal emails accounts.**

City Attorney Leitheiser – Commissioners Responsibility: Commissioners considered public officials including public records and public records in Oregon.

- If someone submits a public record request, there are maintenance obligations that anybody has if you create, store, maintain, have, received things that are public record.
- Best practice for HREC and City Business: Create a separate email address, from your personal email address. Example: Name@gmail.com.

This is a thoughtful way to know when you are wearing your personal or community/commissioner hat and keeping information of public records in a certain place.

- When using your personal cell phone and trading texts about HREC and City business, this falls under public record, subject to retention and obligation.

Commissioners considering creating a separate email address from their personal, please send your updated email address to Lisa at llarsen@bendoregon.gov.

- **Leadership Positions | Current Volunteers at this meeting:** Interim HREC Liaison, Barguil
 - **Chair:** Commissioner Jones and Hannon,
 - **Community Commissioner:** Commissioner Ventura and Morales Moyano.

- Commissioner Vernotico stated that if there was a vacancy that requires minimal time, they would be interested in that role. Their capacity to help is currently limited.
- Commissioner Ellenberg is interested in a supportive role that is open.

Future training on public record best practices training.

4. HREC Council Liaison Update: Megan Perkins, She/Her, Mayor Pro Tem.

Council Highlights:

- Electrification: Most Council have decided to continue with the idea of a fee for new residential homes when deciding to use gas.
- Discussion about urban renewal strategy for out three urban renewal districts.
- The Latino Community Association will give an update to city council and talk their combined work with council. Making council aware and preparing for activity from ICE in our community and what can be doing as a city council and a city.
- We will hear from the Bend Central District Business Association, who are trying to create an EID (Economic Improvement District). Where they collect fees or taxes to use on in the specified area.
- January 14, 2026, where they will talk about complete communities. How do we make sure people in our community live near a doctor, grocery store, park, and things what can we do to create those complete communities? They will also talk about Juniper Ridge, temporary safe stay areas.
- January 21, 2026, council will hear from the legislative contingent to talk about what we want out of the legislature, starting in February, and what are things our regional legislators want from the short session.

Council Liaison Perkins answered questions from the commissioners. **Timestamp 37:18 (13 minutes)**

5. Business:

- HREC Staff Liaison Updates:** Kathi Barguil, She/Her, Community Relations Manager & HREC Staff Liaison.

January

- Ben Duncan, Kearns & West will:
 - Provide a process and project update, including key themes from interviews and HREC considerations.
 - Summarize HREC feedback on approaches for future supports and structures, specifically the commission's insights into what needs we should be considering, as options considered.
- Water Rates 101 to provide a foundational understanding of policies and objectives that govern the rate modernization process.

February

- HREC Lens Workshop I
- Defining Water Affordability and describing the City's Assistance Program in partnership with Neighbor Impact

March

- HREC Lens Workshop II
- Implementation of the HREC lens to assess application of aim tool to water rate structure modernization.

Commissioner Fischer asked what community partners met with Ben Duncan from Kearns & West, in reference to future equity work. HREC Interim Liaison shared that she gave a list of names to Ben: Asian Pacific Islander Collective, NeighborImpact, Latino Community Association, COCC, Afrocentric club program coordinator and Kolovita Bend for Ukraine group.

Community Group Events mentioned:

- Kolovita
- Season for Nonviolence.
- Filipino American Association of the High Desert

6. Public Comment:

- David Carlson, pronouns – They/Them: Campaign manager for OPEN (Organization for Polyamory and Ethical Non-monogamy) policy. Working to bring non-discrimination protection to people across the country and specifically here in Oregon, they have five campaigns open at the municipal level, to create a new legal class called family and relationship structure. Currently, Portland is about to pass this policy. This policy attaches to existing civil rights ordinances, using the current methods of enforcement, costing the city almost nothing to implement.
- Thomas Wrisley: In attendance only

7. Roundtable of HREC Commissioners:

- **From the HREC inbox:**
 - **Letter of Support - English2Spanish:** Central Oregon's local translation and interpretation service provider: PacificSource Community Solutions (PSCS) recently notified English 2 Spanish (E2S) that they will not renew our contract for 2026. At the same time, they have chosen an out-of-region company to take over language services for PacificSource members in Central Oregon. They are asking for individual support letters.
- HREC Staff Liaison Barguil has proposed to ask for a support letter on behalf of English2Spanish to PacificSource of the individual commissioner or the opportunity as a body.

Liaison Barguil: City council, the language access coordinator Lindsay Wengloski, and council coordinator Clair Conklin are workshopping a letter in partnership with city council to send.

City Attorney Leitheiser: Council decided and delegated a couple council members to collaborate with staff on this letter.

Motion: Commissioner Vernotico made a motion in support of and to reflect in council letter to PacificSource to support English2Spanish. Commissioner Jones seconded. Commissioner in attendance at today's meeting approved.

- **Santa Express Community Event:** Concerns about the routes chosen, not being equitable and the three chosen areas. Only the NW, SE, and SW quadrants visited, not the historically low-income quadrant of the NE. The community members feel discriminated against because of his identity as a homeowner in the NE quadrant for not having a higher income. Angered because his seven-year-old child will not be able to participate.

Liaison Barguil: The Bend Fire Department does not function as a distribution hub. The Salvation Army manages that aspect of the event. Sent express, organized by the Bend Firefighter's Union and supported by Bend Fire and Rescue who participate as volunteers on their own time. The department provides the engine for events; the crew does not participate.

Liaison Barguil will provide a follow-up email to this community member with this information and ways to submit a request for next year's event.

Commissioners discussed and made suggestions for future events.

- **Renter's Rights Commissioner Vernotico:** There are minimal resources for renters in Bend or recourse. Commissioner Vernotico explained their situation before moving into the apartment site unseen, trusting pictures given. The pictures did not resemble the apartment represented in the pictures shared. They are currently experiencing no heat because the radiators are not working, and electricity grounding issues, and the basement is locked with no access to breakers. Where does someone go to help with remediate rental issues?

Suggestions and information mentioned for advocacy: Oregon residential landlord tenant act This is a body of state law that governs tendencies, habitability, landlord obligation, tenant rights, preempt local law. Bureau of Labor Industries has a civil rights department that investigates fair housing claims. Legal Aid Services of Oregon (LASO). Advocacy group - Community Alliance of Tenants (CAT). Resolutions Northwest.

- **New Topic – Non-Agenda Item: Chair Ventura read message she wrote about a safe and welcoming environment in Bend - Timestamp 1:38:32.**

Commissioners shared their feelings about the resignation and the investigation report about the Bend's Equity and Inclusion Director. They also wanted to know about how they can access a copy of the investigation report.

City Attorney Leitheiser stated that it is available by submitting public records request. The City Attorney will talk to HREC Staff Liaison what works best for getting this investigation report to the Commissioner.

8. Adjourn: 6:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Lisa Larsen, She/Her, Administrative Support Specialist, Accessibility and Equity



Language Assistance Services & Accommodation Information for People with Disabilities

You can obtain this information in alternate formats such as Braille, electronic format, etc. Free language assistance services are also available. Please email us at hrec@bendoregon.gov. Relay Users Dial 7-1 1.



Servicios de asistencia lingüística e información sobre alojamiento para personas con discapacidad

Puede obtener esta información en formatos alternativos como Braille, formato electrónico, etc. También disponemos de servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Póngase en contacto con Gestor del proyecto o creador del documento HREC Staff Liaison en correo electrónico hrec@bendoregon.gov. Los usuarios del servicio de retransmisión deben marcar el 7-1-1.