



MEETING MINUTES

Human Rights and Equity Commission

Date: 04/14/2026

Start Time: 4:30 p.m.

Livestream: **April 2026, Recording**

Facilitator: Scott Jones, Chair

Human Rights and Equity Commission

1. Call to order by roll call at 4:30 p.m. and from where they attended:

- 1) Scott Jones, Chair (Chambers)
- 2) Jenn Kovitz, Vice Chair (Zoom)
- 3) Ruth Vernotico, Council Connector (Chambers)
- 4) Bet Hannon, Commissioner Connector (Chambers)
- 5) Brittany Ellenberg, Community Connector (Chambers)
- 6) Cristina Morales Moyano, Community Connector (Chambers)
- 7) Agatha Ventura (Zoom)
- 8) Eli Loewenstern (Zoom)
- 9) Jackie Currie (Chambers)
- 10) Mario Anguiano (Chambers)
- 11) Navi Hughes (Absent)
- 12) Kinsey Martin (ex officio) (Zoom) (Left at 5:15 p.m.)

City Staff:

- Mellissa Kamanya, She/Her/Hers, Affordable Housing Coordinator, HREC Interim Staff Liaison, (Chambers)
- Megan Perkins, She/Her, Councilor / Mayor Pro Tem / HREC Council Liaison (Chambers)
- Ian Leitheiser, He/Him, City Attorney (Chambers)
- Stephanie Betteridge, She/Her, Assistant City Manager & Chief Innovations Officer (Chambers)
- René Mitchell, Communications & Engagement Officer, (Chambers)
- Cassandra Kehoe, She/Her/Ella, Accessibility & Equity Manager / COBAAC Staff Liaison (Zoom)
- Lisa Larsen, She/Her, Administrative Support Specialist (Chambers)



2. City of Bend Land Acknowledgement: Mellissa Kamanya, She, Her, Hers, Affordable Housing Coordinator, HREC Interim Staff Liaison.

Based on consultation with the Warm Springs Tribal Council, City Council has moved away from reading the land acknowledgement at every council meeting and will be migrating towards a Sovereignty Acknowledgement, which is currently being developed. We honor this request and commit to holding space in these meeting agendas for the Sovereignty Agreement when it is ready.

3. HREC Chair-Business: Scott Jones, Chair

- a. Approval of March 10, 2026, Draft Minutes.

March 10, 2026, meeting minutes approved unanimously.

The voice vote passed 10-0.

Yes: Ventura, Ellenberg, Morales Moyonano, Loewenstern, Currie, Kovitz, Anguiano, Hannon, Vernotico, Jones.

No: None

- b. Review April Agenda: The April agenda was reviewed by all who attended today's meeting.
- c. Staff in audience / online: No staff volunteers to be acknowledged at the meeting.
- d. Chair attendance at recent events: Chair Jones attended the City of Bend Advisory Body Summit. There was representation from each of the Committee, Boards and Commissions. They shared experiences with each of their groups.

Chair Jones attended a Central Oregon NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) event. Highlighting their mission is to provide advocacy, education, support, and public awareness so that all individuals and families can build better lives.

He also participated with Bend LaPine Schools two-day workshop and was impressed with the curriculum and had an **EQUITY STANCE Bend-La Pine Schools**. Chair Jones thanked Kinsey Martin, HREC ex officio member, for the invitation.

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

- a. March 18: Council Liaison thanked the people that were able to attend the resolution of approval.
- b. April 8: The Electrification Roundtable has a diverse group of people from builders and building trades to energize the Bend Chamber of Commerce, with interesting opinions and thoughts on what they should be doing. The presentations from the utilities were facilitating. Pacific Power mentioned that Bend is the second highest growing city just after Redmond. Central Electric Cooperative will have double the members with all the new growth in the Southeast part of the city.



- c. Water Update later in this presentation. April 22, council’s work session will review what was discussed at the Electrification Roundtable.
- d. Mayor Pro Tem encouraged the commissioners to listen to the Supplier Diversity Program update that will be held on April 15.

Mayor Pro Tem invited the City of Bend’s, Mike Gaffney, Senior Attorney, and Cyrus Mooney, Business Development Manager, to present and preview what they have been working on in reference to city procurements and contracts to make them more accessible to new local contracts.

They have established a relationship with the Professional Business Development Group, which is a nonprofit group, headquartered in Portland.

5. Staff Liaison Update: Mellissa Kamanya, She, Her, Hers, Affordable Housing Coordinator, HREC Interim Staff Liaison.

- a. April 28 Fault Lines event – attendance and tabling
- b. Open application period for committees. Applications opened on April 1, 2026, and are due on April 30, 2026, at 5:00 p.m.
- c. Resolution follow-up (next steps = language translation)
- d. Onboarding binders. (Passed out living binders to write and place handouts)

6. Business:

a. **City of Bend 101:** Mellissa Kamanya, interim staff liaison shared slides:

- **There are fifteen current committees, Boards, and Commissions.**
- Committee Applicability and Authority:
- Roles and Responsibilities:
- Additional Information:
- Ask for HREC:
 - Become familiar with the **Bend Municipal Code section 1.20.120 Human Rights and Equity Commission** for HREC.
 - Review other committee codes to review their roles and authorities.
 - Take notes each meeting – how does each topic presented to you connect to the roles specified in your code? What is working well, what is not working?

Commissioners talked about reviewing the Bend Municipal Code of section 1.20.120 for HREC and will meet later about any updates to the code that may be needed.

The full livestream of the City of Bend 101 Presentation Timestamp 40:42



- b. **AIM (Ask, Identify, Measure) Equity Tool:** Lindsay Wengloski, She/They, Equity Management Analyst.
- What is the AIM Equity Tool? (Ask, Identify, Measure) Is a way to help integrate equity into everyday decision-making.
It is a set of questions designed to be easy to use, repeatable, and adaptable. A way to help integrate equity into everyday decision making.
 - Focus: Offer an overview of the AIM Equity Tool. A purpose and intended use. How AIM will be supported and continuously improved to embed equity more consistently into Council-level decisions as well as daily work at the City.
 - Your feedback on the process as we continue rolling out.
 - Does this feel like a box to check?
 - Is it helpful to review this information ahead of staff presentations to HREC?
 - Do you feel like this resource is helping shape your conversations with staff that result in recommendations to Council?
 - Purpose:
 - Ensure equity is consistently considered in planning, budgeting, and policy development decisions.
 - Identify groups that may be underserved by City programs or services.
 - Work towards building trust with all communities.
 - Surface unintended consequences that could result from a future decision and proactively address them.
 - Identify and weigh the costs and benefits of a given decision.
 - Explain how staff arrive at decisions, minimize harm, and expand access.
 - When must we use staff? Initiatives going to council or an advisory body like HREC.
 - When is used encouraged? Smaller scale opportunities (e. daily use)
 - Timeline: Where we've been
 - **2023-24: Roots: GARE Equity Framework:** Pilot: Climate Friendly Areas
 - **2024-25: Adjusted to be nimbler:** Relaunch began Summer 2025
 - **Fall 2025: Paused to reflect and reset:** Braided in additional insights and recommendations.
 - **Late 2025 – Present: Refreshed and relaunching:** Pilot: Water Services | Expanded User Guide and updated project form | Trainings and Communities of Practice.



- **Future: Continuous Improvement:** Opportunities: Future Equity Leader; DEIA Liaisons
- What is next?
 - Meeting with department leadership and management teams
 - trainings and a community of practice
 - documenting and tracking aim use.
- In closing:
 - Your feedback on the process as we continue rolling out:
 - Does this feel like a box to check?
 - Is it helpful to review this information ahead of staff presentations to HREC?
 - Do you feel like this resource is helping shape your conversations with staff that result in recommendations to Council?
 - More Broadly:
 - Does everything that comes before HREC need to apply the AIM Equity Tool?
 - How do you want staff to share how they've applied the AIM Equity Tool to the topics they bring to HREC?

Commissioners talked about various aspects of the AIM Equity Tool and asked about future training.

Analyst Wengloski will be invited back to answer questions and gather feedback from HREC members.

The full AIM Livestream Presentation, Timestamp 54:45

- c. **Water Rates 101:** Gillian Ockner, Senior Management Analyst and Dana Chenoweth, Utility Business Manager.

Staff will give an overview of the City of Bend’s Water Services Department and its Low-Income Assistance Program and will explain how they piloted the AIM tool to review and assess the program. HREC will review the initial AIM tool considerations and provide recommendations for additional questions.

Slides:

- Water Services
 - Water Services Department Overview
 - Low Income Assistance Program
 - AIM (Ask, Identify, Measure) Tool Pilot Step 1: ASK



Using the AIM tool, what questions should the City be asking to address affordability and support continuous improvement of the program?

- Water Services Department (Philosophy: all water is connected and all water has value):

Delivering three separate utilities: Water, Sewer, and Stormwater

- Water Quality and Compliance, Capital Planning and Asset Management:
 - 121 Full Time Employees
 - Two Treatment Facilities and Water Quality Laboratory
- Bend’s Dual Source Drinking Water System
 - Intake for surface water on Bridge Creek
 - Outback Facility: Water Filtration, Water Storage, Ground Water Wells
- How Water is delivered
- Factors Affecting Affordability: **Water affordability:** The ability of households to pay for essential water and wastewater services without financial hardship.
Customer Assistance Programs: Servicing those experiencing financial hardships.
- Low-Income Assistance Program: What the Program Does | Who the Program Serves | What Bills Are Covered.
- Value of Discounts: Assistance Provided
- Changes in Water Services Shutoffs
- Next Step: Educating Staff | Application of tool | Program review scoping | Engagement of process design.

Using the aim tool, what questions should the city be asking to address affordability and support continuous improvement of the program?

- Exercise: Ask for HREC Input:
 - What counts as a financial hardship?
 - Is the low-income Assistance Program accessible to all who need it?
 - What is the experience with the program?
 - What outcomes matter most?
 - Where can Water Services have an impact?

HREC members were given handout with the questions for input and asked to share them with HREC Liaison Kamanya. Commissioners’ inquiries were answered about the information in this presentation.

- **HREC Input and Questions Portion of this Presentation Timestamp 1:33:58**
- **The full Water Rates 101 Presentation, Timestamp 1:13:08**

7. **Public Comment:** No public comment.

8. **Roundtable:** HREC Commissioners.

- Anguiano: April is Fair Housing Month. The Fair Housing Act of 1968 was passed in April. The Education and Outreach team at the Fair Housing Council of Oregon conduct events in April. A Fair Housing event will be held at Tower Theatre on April 28. He will be attending/accepting the Fair Housing month proclamation at tomorrow's event.
- Vernotico: A reminder of the need for a Central Oregon renter to protect portal, which do exist in Eugene and Portland.
Vernotico heard there were death threats made to someone in the queer community. Wants to acknowledge and highlight the City's response. Which was exceptional. Mayor Kebler did an incredible swift job of discussing it with the person and asked for the resignation of someone on the Budget Committee, and they resigned.
- Currie: Wanted to recognize the struggle, it is to sit through conversations about water, knowing her native communities, friends and neighbors do not have access to clean water. Currie appreciates Analyst Ockner and Utility Manage Chenoweth that started this conversation and that water is connected, its life and sacred and defining essential water use. While understanding this is about drinking water within the City of Bend.

9. **Adjourned:** With no further HREC business, the meeting adjourned at 6:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted by,

Lisa Larsen, she, her, Administrative Specialist, Accessibility and Equity Program



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