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# MEETING MINUTES

## Human Rights and Equity Commission

**Date:** May 12, 2026

**Start Time:** 4:30 p.m.

**Facilitator:** Scott Jones, Chair

**Livestream:** [May 2026, Recording](#)

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### Human Rights and Equity Commission (HREC)

#### 1. Call to order by roll call at 4:37 p.m. and from where they attended:

- 1) Scott Jones, Chair (Council Chambers)
- 2) Jen Kovitz, Vice Chair (Council Chambers)
- 3) Ruth Vernotico, Council Connector (Council Chambers)
- 4) Bet Hannon, Commissioner (Council Chambers)
- 5) Brittany Ellenberg, Community Connector (Absent)
- 6) Cristina Morales Moyano, Community Connector (Council Chambers)
- 7) Eli Loewenstern (Zoom)
- 8) Jackie Currie (Council Chambers)
- 9) Mario Anguiano (Absent)
- 10) Navi Hughes (Absent)
- 11) Kinsey Martin (ex officio) (Council Chambers) - 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. HREC Chair Business:** Scott Jones.

- a. Approve April 14, 2026, Draft Minutes: April 14, 2026, meeting minutes will be approved at the June 9, 2026, HREC meeting.
- b. Review May Agenda: The May 2026 Agenda was reviewed by all who attended today's meeting.
- c. Staff in Attendance: There were nine staff members including the staff mentioned in agenda item one. Councilor
- d. Recent Events Attended: Nothing noted from Chair Jones.
- e. Moment of appreciation to Agatha Ventura: Chair Jones and Liaison Kamanya shared their appreciation for her advocacy, membership, and hard work during her membership on HREC. Thank you for your service.

HREC Council Liaison mentioned that Agatha had done a lot of work during her two years on HREC, one of those years being HREC Chair.

Commissioner Kovitz looks forward to Agatha pushing HREC and the City to move forward with this work.

Commissioner Vernotico was honored to work a long side Agatha and lead by her during her role as chair and continued advocacy for change.

Commissioner Morales Moyano will miss Agatha's energy and light she brought to the group.

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

Updates:

- First youth summit with highschoolers from Bend. They were asked about what the future might be like, what changes they want, transportation, and climate change. They view the river as the gathering point for the community. They will look into collaborating with the school districts you council and future work.
- State of the City Summary at CityFest – Mayor Kebler **State of the City 2026**
- Electrification: Last they talked about when the fee would be implemented and possible exemptions to the fee. The majority of Council agreed there would be no exemptions. Largely due to most affordable housing is built all electric and dual fuel for your house and the carbon impact being less. This may be implemented in April of 2027, when building codes are updated.



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

- Outline scope of work with Ben Duncan, houg tran.
- Water tour survey update (Tues/Thurs afternoon, June)
- City committee applications - update
- Onboarding binders and homework
- Equity and Engagement positions – update from City leadership
  - Cate Schneider, Executive Policy Officer: Positions posted on April 17.
    - Equity & Inclusion Manager: Received 53 applications.
    - Community Engagement Manager: Received 216 applications.

They will review, identify, and identify qualified candidates. They have mapped out who receives a high level first round video call and then who advances to in-person city staff, community partners, Human Rights & Equity Commission, City of Bend Accessibility Advisory Committee, representative interviews. Final selection is made by hiring managers: René Mitchell and Cate Schneider in consultation with city leadership.

HREC’s Chair Jones and Vice Chair Kovitz were invited and met with the hiring managers to help create the hiring process and composition of the panel with ongoing feedback. HREC Chair and Vice Chair will be invited to some of these hiring panels.

- Fault Lines – gratitude, feedback, two received and read aloud. **Timestamp 33:10**

**5. Business:**

- a. **City of Bend 101 - Proclamations, Resolutions, Ordinances, and Code:** Ian Leitheiser, City Attorney

A review of the purpose, impact, and accountabilities with City proclamations, resolutions, ordinances, and code.

Slides:

- Proclamation
- Resolution: **Resolution No. 3467:** A resolution of the City Council supporting Bend’s immigrant communities and condemning the current federal government approach to immigration enforcement
- Ordinance / Code: **Ordinances No. NS-2547**

HREC Staff Liaison shared: People can initiate a proclamation online (**Proclamation Request - City of Bend**).



- b. **HREC Lens:** Mellissa Kamanya, Affordable Housing Coordinator and Lindsay Wengloski, She, They, Equity Management Analyst.

**Lindsay Wengloski, She, They, Equity Management Analyst:**

We revisited Water Rate 101's use of the AIM tool. Providing information on how committee feedback is currently tracked and incorporated into projects. HREC will discuss how a tool like the HREC lens could compliment the AIM tool to document feedback and increase accountability.

Background Information:

- Reference to Bend Muni Code 1.20.120: Provide input to the City Council on City goals and policies using a diversity, equity, and inclusion lens and perspective, including recommending effective strategies to increase engagement with historically marginalized and underrepresented communities.
- Reference to HREC Workplan: The Human Rights and Equity Commission (HREC) is developing a way to support applying the AIM lens to all presentations they review. This means the city departments that present to HREC will be asked to clearly identify assumptions, impacts, and measures related to equity before HREC can provide recommendations.

Task: Finalize and pilot the HREC Lens by Q1 2026 as a complement to the AIM Equity Tool.

Analyst Wengloski reviewed what AIM (Ask, Identify, Measure) stands for with a set of questions designed to be: Easy to use, Repeatable, and Adaptable. A way to help integrate equity into everyday decision making, and why we use an equity AIM tool.

**Gillian Ockner, Senior Management Analyst, And Dana Chenoweth, Utility Business Manager, both from Water Services:**

We revisited Water Rate 101's use of the AIM tool.

Analyst Ockner mentioned at the last meeting we talked about the importance of the Low-Income Assistance Program and how they applied the first phase of the AIM tool. Engaging the Commissioners to help consider other questions as they develop the scope of the review of the program itself to continually improve the program.

At the last meeting Ockner and Chenoweth asked for HREC's input:

- What outcomes matter most?
  - Fewer shut offs?
  - Greater stability or predictability of bill?
- Where can Water Services have an impact?



- What factors are within the City's control?
- Who has been engaged and who still needs to be?

How is the feedback collected and documented: Meeting minutes and commissioners sending feedback to HREC Liaison and forwarding to Water Services.

Water services go through an extensive process. They engage with various entities: established committees, stakeholders, who specifically impacted by proposed changes. They collect the data and report to City Council.

Liaison Kamanya talked about how to document the outcomes for gathering the lens as a complement to the AIM tool:

Option 1: Create addendum section for HREV's input.

Option 2 Create the addendum as a general tool for all committees and commissions to use.

This document will follow Water Services AIM tool for feedback following each staff presentation.

- Hannon: How often are you anticipating that we would need to do this with AIM tool questions? Every meeting, multiple times? Analyst Wengloski: It could depend on the HREC workplan or council policy priority projects.

Liaison Kamanya: What if have an option to provide feedback over the next month.

Analyst Ockner: The intended use of the AIM tool is to help us think our projects expand in a way in which we engage other viewpoints in our project process and when is that best to meet.

Liaison Kamanya circle-back: Hear the presentation, have an opportunity to document feedback and then come back next month to HREC's feedback compilation to decide what is documented using the AIM tool. Vice Chair Kovitz: She does not want to choose whose feedback we hear because she is not going to have the same feedback. The commission needs to think about the process more.

Liaison Kamanya will give the commissioners a week to provide feedback to respect the presenters' time. Next month HREC will revisit the AIM tool. Currie suggests that commissioners mention when they do not have feedback.

- c. **Hate and Discrimination updates:** Mellissa Kamanya, Affordable Housing Coordinator and houg tran, Mindful Healing.

Liaison Kamanya introduced houg tran. They the group and think about people carry after they experience hate and discrimination and what they bring with them when they may not know the outcome if they speak up. What do we do?



houng tran shared research they have done on hate and discrimination and focusing on capacity building and more clarity and pathways exist. How it breaks down, listening to people's needs are to feel safe to share. And how this compliments HREC's work and how to weave it into the city, with education and accountability.

**6. Public Comment:**

No public comment.

**7. Roundtable:** HREC Commissioners.

Vernotico: Addresses their frustration and not being able to move forward with integrity in regard to the recent resignation of a Latina commissioner. Vernotico also mentions the serious concerns mentioned in Agatha Ventura resignation letter that she shared.

Vice Chair: Aske the commissioners if there was interest in extending the meeting for a discussion about what Vernotico has raised.

Currie: Mentioned she did not want to have that discussion and added she is uncomfortable when she walks into Council Chambers. Some of it pertains to the not Zoom bombing Zoom bombing, not feeling safe to speak up, and the way it was managed.

Hannon: Mentioned commissioners needing time to process. It shouldn't be let go, just a nice statement and walk away, and that right now might not be the best time with people being engaged. Hannon wanted to plan for a full conversation on some of the points raised.

There is consensus that this should be discussed, hard to talk about in front of people, but have problems meeting as a group due to making it public to meet quorum guidelines.

City Attorney Leitheiser: If a member group has thoughts, concerns, ideas about how something happened and think it is relevant to talk to in this context. Meet with and talk with the chair or vice chair on your own. If any of you have ideas about how the group as a whole can talk about this, talk with Mellissa about what might happen at a future meeting. As for a quorum, a group of you to talk about this, it needs to be a public meeting.

Kovitz: Appreciates the legal perspective but agrees there needs to be a hard conversation and believes this group will find a way to do it respectfully.

You can reach out to Liaison Kamanya and book time to speak with her.

May members expressed different perspectives, feelings and how being on the committee and how Human Rights and Equity are emotional.

**8. Adjourn:** 6:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,



Lisa Larsen (she/her), Administrative Support Specialist, Accessibility & Equity

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