

HUMBOLDT COUNTY HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION



Regular Meeting Minutes

February 6, 2024, 5:30 pm – 7:17 pm.

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Community members made explicit comments once the Zoom link was active and the meeting began. Community members were asked to hold comments till public comment and community members were muted on Zoom.

I. CALL TO ORDER: (5 min)

II. ROLL CALL:

DISTRICT 1

Jim Glover (Chair) ~ present

Carol Larsen ~ excused

Byrd Loctie ~ present

DISTRICT 2

Larry Miller ~ present

Peter Pennekamp ~ excused

DISTRICT 3

Guy Aronoff ~ present

Jamie Jensen ~ present

Ellen Murphy (secretary)~ present

DISTRICT 4

Richard Botzler ~ present

DISTRICT 5

Lisa Sundberg ~ on Zoom

Present: eight (8) members were present for a quorum during the roll call.

Chair Glover read the Wiyot land acknowledgment statement as follows:

"As we gather today, we acknowledge that Eureka, California, is the ancestral territory of the Wiyot people. We also honor all Indigenous people, territories, and Sovereign governments that share governance within Humboldt County, California. We gather with respect and gratitude to these Indigenous People. We thank and honor the Indigenous Caretakers of this land who continue to cherish and protect it. Their elders have instructed the young to consider the seven generations ahead as they continue to protect the rights of the land and all people who live on it. We encourage all to align and follow the lead of local Indigenous communities as they steward the land and protect its natural resources."

A moment of silence was held.

A reminder of our function: to aid in the eradication of discrimination in housing, employment, education, public accommodation, race, religious creed, color, national origin, ancestry, physical disability, mental disability, marital status, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, civic interest, or other factors. Ours is an advisory commission whose primary purpose is to recommend actions to the Board of Supervisors that may address issues related to human rights in our county.

III. Agenda Adjustments: (1 min)

The agenda of the February 6th meeting was unanimously accepted.

IV. Approval of Meeting Minutes: (1 min)

The minutes for November 7, 2024, were accepted with minor edits.

V. Treasurer's Report: (1 min)

Chair Glover reported that the regular account balance was \$614.92, and the county balance remained the same.

VI. Guest Speaker(s):

Tina Taylor (United Indian Health)

Topic: 988 Tribal Response Advocacy

- 988 is a national crisis and suicide prevention hotline.
- Originally established as a ten-digit number in 2001 and shortened to 988 in 2022.
- Offers services in 247 languages, including specific options for veterans, Spanish speakers, and LGBTQ+ individuals.
- Some states have tribal-specific support lines (e.g., Washington's Strongheart Line), but California does not yet have this option. Efforts are underway to implement a tribal-specific response in California.

- 988 calls from Humboldt County are currently routed to Sacramento-based centers
- Key challenges include limited rural access, historical distrust in outside resources, and a general lack of public awareness about 988.
- Discussion and Questions for Guest Speaker
- Geo Routing Implementation: Calls are now routed based on the caller's location rather than their phone number area code.
- Community Outreach: Efforts are ongoing to increase awareness, including outreach at clinics, community events, and discussions with local leaders.
- Funding: Funded primarily through federal grants, including SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration). However, funding is currently uncertain.

VII. Commission Communications

- a) Chair notes- Immigration concerns and the BOS meeting
- b) Emails, Regular Mail
- c) Commissioner announcements

VIII. Public Comment: (15 min)- comment read by Chair Glover

"The Public is invited to speak regarding matters not on the agenda. Comments are limited to three minutes (two minutes if there are numerous commenters). Pursuant to the Ralph M. Brown Act, the Commission may not act on an item not appearing on the agenda. The Chair will present comments received by email. In the event of hateful, threatening, or unnecessarily negative comments, the Chair will admonish one or all commenters that they may be muted if they persist in such actions. The purpose of the Commission is to heal wounds and create solutions, not be a platform for those who may have another agenda. If a public member speaks and requests assistance on a non-agenda subject, the Commission may not take any action or propose any solutions. Still, the citizen(s) may be given a resource card for contact information relevant to their issue, and the citizen(s) may be given a complaint intake form to add to a future agenda of the next regular HRC meeting. Finally, an individual commissioner may speak to the citizen(s) apart from the meeting and recommend steps they might take."

Public members will each be allowed to speak on agenda items once during discussion, at the end of commissioner comments, and before any action or vote by the Commission. In the event of hateful, threatening, or unnecessarily negative comments, the Chair will mute and admonish one or all commenters that they may be further muted if they persist in such actions. Time to speak will be closely monitored (3 minutes per person).

No public comment

VII. Commission Communications

d) Correctional Facilities Liaison Report (5 min)

Commissioner Miller reported that phone communication with inmates has become unreliable due to critical staffing concerns at the jail. A meeting with jail administration on Monday is scheduled to discuss reinstating communication processes. Many inmates face issues accessing legal support, but the committee's role is limited to listening and providing community referrals. He also acknowledged the systemic justice concerns affecting inmates, particularly delays in legal proceedings. Finally, updating the flyer with communication limitations was discussed.

Agenda Adjustment

The Youth Commission made and approved a motion to adjust the agenda to accommodate guest presentations. It was unanimously approved.

Ad hoc Committee Report

YOUTH HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION- Committee ending date 7-31-25

Purpose: To explore and possibly establish high school-level and college-level participation in the subject of human rights throughout the county.

CURRENT ISSUE: Exploring the options and mechanics of such a project.

Committee Members: [Jensen, Lochtie, Murphy]

Commissioner Jensen and Rowan Esplin, a senior Academy of Redlands student representative, reported that the Youth Human Rights Commission has regularly met with a solid group of five to six members. A steady meeting time and location have been established, with a Zoom link available for remote participation. The focus has been structuring the Commission, including bylaws, meeting procedures, and outreach strategies. Members have secured a \$1,500 Humboldt County Youth Leadership Fund grant to support activities. The Youth Commission has a listening session scheduled at the Teen Center in Eureka on the third Thursday of April. The Commission is working on recruiting new members to ensure continuity as current members graduate. Applications will be shared via social media, county websites, and local organizations.

e) Message Line Report

Commissioner Larsen was not present to present her phone line report for that latter part of January

Chair Glover reported that the phone line had been relatively quiet, although two individuals made frequent calls. He noted that these calls were somewhat disruptive, as the callers would continue talking until the phone disconnected and would then call

back. On February 6th, nine calls were made regarding a billboard posted south of Arcata. The billboard, which was perceived as controversial due to its pro-Zionist message, sparked strong reactions from callers. Glover suggested that individuals offended by the message contact the sign company or the city to ensure the sign adhered to proper codes. Unfortunately, there was no clear course of action, as it appeared to be within county jurisdiction, but it was ultimately a matter of free speech. Finally, one caller also mentioned a flag displayed on the fourth floor of the courthouse, which Glover noted was a topic discussed back in August. He will follow up with the District Attorney's office to clarify any policies regarding flag or poster displays.

February 16-28- Lochtie

March 1-15- Miller

March 16-30- Jensen

IX. Standing Committee Reports: (1 min)

SANCTUARY ORDINANCE

Committee Members: [Aronoff, Glover]

Discussion / Possible Action

Discussion of Sanctuary Statement?

(no activity)

RAPID RESPONSE-

Purpose: Improve responses to volatile community issues. **CURRENT ISSUE:** Integrate the use of Neutral Observers into the Rapid Response protocol we currently have in place. Committee Members: (Miller, Glover, Jensen)

Commissioner Anoff raised concerns about the local government's relationship with federal authorities, particularly ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement). He acknowledged the constitutional rights of individuals but stressed the importance of addressing the community's concerns about people who might be living here illegally. Commissioner Lochtie mentioned that the League of Women Voters supported the Board of Supervisors' statement on the Sanctuary Ordinance. She proposed that the Human Rights Commission should consider endorsing the statement and encouraging the community to support it as well. This could be done through a rapid response or other means of public outreach.

Chair Glover agreed with the idea of endorsing the statement and offered to prepare a rapid response message. They also shared their impression that the Board of Supervisors seemed more receptive to the Human Rights Commission's input and that they should continue to build this relationship.

X. Ad hoc Committee Reports: (25 min)

CULTURAL AWARENESS-ending date 12-31-2025

Purpose: Tracking of cultural awareness and activities in the county

CURRENT ISSUE: Open

Committee Members: [Larsen, Miller, Lochtie]

Discussion / Possible Action

This committee's purpose will be evaluated to help determine how the Commission will better serve our community, particularly communities whose primary language is Spanish. The Commission seeks to take a more active and influential role.

Discussion

Commissioner Jensen shared that she had been contacted by someone in the Spanish-speaking community who expressed appreciation for the recent sanctuary meeting. This individual offered to assist in identifying a new location for meetings and help with translation services for future meetings. Jensen proposed meeting with this individual to discuss or connect with them further. She also mentioned concerns about increased racism in the county's elementary schools, with multiple individuals reporting that children are not being held accountable for racist behavior, which might require further action from the Commission. Chair Glover encouraged her to communicate with the contact regarding translation services. They also shared that the Human Rights Commission had previously been connected with someone who could provide translation services for future meetings.

TECHNOLOGY-COMMUNICATIONS-ending 2-31-2025

Purpose: To revitalize the Commission's presence in the community through the use of electronic/digital media. CURRENT

ISSUE: FaceBook Committee Members:(Glover, Arnoff)

Discussion/Possible Action

Commissioner Arnoff provided an update on the Human Rights Commission's Facebook page, mentioning that the page now has around 180 followers. He highlighted the importance of sharing content to keep the page active and engaging. Arnoff mentioned that they started sharing informational content related to local events and speakers, including a Zoom event hosted by the college about constitutional rights regardless of citizenship status. He also added translations to the website using Google Translate in Spanish and Hmong to make the information accessible to a wider audience. Arnoff will update the website with useful information, including hotline numbers for various issues, such as human trafficking.

Arnoff concluded by mentioning that despite the significant investment in addressing homelessness, the situation has worsened, and finding new and effective solutions is crucial.

FREE SPEECH VS. HATE SPEECH ending date 12-31-2025

Purpose: Develop/plan a public event contrasting hate speech and free speech.

CURRENT ISSUE: Deteriorating level of civil discourse over essential community issues. Committee Members [Botzler, Lochtie, Miller, Larsen] Discussion/Possible Action.

Commissioner Botzler reported that the committee's last meeting was productive as they could outline workshops, including format, and discuss potential audiences. Commissioner Botzler provided an update on the upcoming Free Speech vs. Hate Crimes workshop, scheduled for April 26 at the Wharfinger Center. The workshop will feature Mary (last name) as the presenter, and funding is currently being sought to cover expenses. A list of potential invitees and facilitators is being developed, and the event is expected to host 32 participants from 16 different agencies. He mentioned that they would share a poster or flyer about the event once it is available for posting.

HOMELESSNESS / BEHAVIORAL HEALTH-ending date:12-31-2025

Purpose: To monitor actions and issues to improve residents' housing/shelter options and living situations. CURRENT ISSUE: Open Committee Members: [Aronoff, Larsen, Glover]

Discussion/Possible Action: (no activity)

NEUTRAL OBSERVERS-Committee ending date:12-31-2025

Purpose: Have neutral observers willing and ready to use in responding to volatile community issues

CURRENT ISSUE: Develop a program of knowledgeable, trained Neutral Observers who can be available to help defuse volatile situations.

Committee Members: (Miller, Glover, Jensen, Pennekamp)

Discussion/Possible Action: (no activity)

XI. Unfinished Business:

BOS letter urging adoption of the concept of a tribal liaison for the County.

XII. NEW BUSINESS:

Further steps are warranted to protect legal citizens from illegal actions regarding immigration.

XIII. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:
Bring ideas to help our community.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT:
Chair Glover called for adjournment at 7:17
Minutes prepared by Commissioner Murphy