

# HUMBOLDT COUNTY HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION



## **Regular Meeting Minutes**

November 7, 2024, 5:30 pm – 6:41 pm.

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 ~ present on Zoom

Byrd Lochtie ~ present

DISTRICT 2

Larry Miller ~ present

Peter Pennekamp ~ present

DISTRICT 3

Guy Aronoff ~ absent

Jamie Jensen ~ present

Ellen Murphy (secretary)~ present on Zoom

DISTRICT 4

Richard Botzler ~ present

DISTRICT 5

Lisa Sundberg ~ absent

Present: six (6) members were present for a quorum during the roll call.

Note that commission members Nazanin Szanto and Wren Kaiser have both submitted their resignations.

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 November 7 was accepted.

IV. Approval of Meeting Minutes: (1 min)

The minutes for September 19, 2024, were accepted with minor edits.

The minutes for October 3, 2024, have yet to be accepted.

V. Treasurer's Report: (1 min)

Chair Glover reported that the commission's regular account had \$614.00, and the county account had \$3219.64.

VI. Guest Speaker(s):

None.

VII. 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."

Members of the public 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)

VIII. Commission Communications: (10 min)

a) Chair notes

Chair Glover reported that commissioners Szanto and Kaiser had resigned, citing feelings of unsafeness and discrimination based on gender. He expressed sincere regret that he and the commission had failed to protect the commissioners. He said that the commission was dedicated to "talking the talk and walking the walk." This was especially true given the election results. We will meet the current time in a smarter and better way; we must step up to the demands, and we are up to the challenge.

b) Emails, Regular Mail

None

c) Commissioner announcements

Commissioner Lochtie recommended reading the article below and considering recognizing Eureka City School's efforts.

<https://www.northcoastjournal.com/news/doing-its-part-31277144>

d) Correctional Facilities Liaison Report (5 min)

Commissioner Miller reported two calls from the jail; one has since been released, and the second decided he did not want to speak to the commission. Commission Murphy

noted that there was one call and that a return call had been delayed due to resources being diverted to voting by the inmates, but a call was scheduled.

e) Message Line Report

Oct 1-15 ~ Jensen has 19 messages from one community member. She reported the incident to APS for a welfare check but has not heard back. She also received a call from a community member living in a homeless shelter. Unfortunately, she has not been able to reach this person.

Oct 16-31~ Larson has three calls from the jail.

November 1-15 ~ Lochtie reported three jail calls to Miller and Murphy and received five calls from the same community member as Jensen in early October. She will make a second referral to APS.

Future Dates Assignments

November 16-03 ~ Lochtie

November 16-30- Glover

December 1-15- Botzler

December 16-31- Miller

IX. Standing Committee Reports: (1 min)

SANCTUARY ORDINANCE

[Aronoff, Glover]

Discussion / Possible Action

Discussion of Sanctuary Statement?

(no activity)

X. Ad hoc Committee Reports: (25 min)

CULTURAL AWARENESS-ending date 12-31-2024

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.

(no activity)

Ending date extended to 12/31/2025

TECHNOLOGY-COMMUNICATIONS-ending 2-31-2024 Purpose: To revitalize Commission presence in the community through the use of electronic/digital media.

CURRENT

ISSUE: FaceBook Committee Members:( Szanto, Glover) Discussion/Possible Action (no activity)

FREE SPEECH VS. HATE SPEECH ending date 12-31-2024

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.

The committee met the day before to discuss initial plans for a 40-person panel/forum that will focus on communication between parties on difficult topics. The plan is for a generalized presentation to be followed by small breakout groups.

Extended ending date to 6/30/2025

HOMELESSNESS / BEHAVIORAL HEALTH-ending date:12-31-2024

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:

Commissioner Aronoff shared key findings from the Congressional report on homelessness.

Aronoff not present (no report)

YOUTH HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION- Committee ending date 12-31-24

Youth Human Rights Commission-Committee ending date: 12-31-24

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]

Jensen reported that the youth commission meets twice a month. They have a five-member commission and members are active in creating a mission statement and by-laws and developing a timeline. The commission plans to have a representative report sent to the Humboldt County Human Rights Commission at the monthly meeting. They will host a community listening session and then develop properties and action plans.

The issue of college-level and high-school students' participation was considered.

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)

A long and involved continuing discussion was held about the committee's purpose, goals, and objectives and the community's needs, as well as the commission's mandate to respond to volatile community issues and instances.

The nuances of independent observers, legal observers, and nonviolent demonstration were examined.

Finally, the topic of other organizations filling this community role and establishing cooperative relationships with said groups was brought up.

RAPID RESPONSE- Committee ending date 12-31-2024

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)

A lengthy discussion was held about this committee's goals, purpose, and objectives. It remains an ongoing topic.

(no activity)

Extended ending date to 12/31/2025

XI. Unfinished Business:

None

XII. NEW BUSINESS:

The commission discussed the resignation of Commissioners Kaiser and Szanto. Chair Glover shared that Commissioners Kaiser and Szanto felt unsafe after the June meeting, where they felt personally attacked by community members on the Zoom platform. Following the meeting, protocols were adjusted to mitigate expressions of discriminatory language. However, this was insufficient as members felt unsafe, and pronoun usage was not fully respected.

Commission members expressed dismay and sadness at the news and expressed a wish to understand better how to ensure the safety of members, especially when it comes to gender identity.

Chair Glover has reached out to Queer Humboldt and Humboldt Area Foundation for guidance. Diversity equity and inclusion training may be an option for commission members.

Given Treasurer Kaiser's resignation, this position needed to be filled.  
Any vacancy occurring among any of the officers by reason of death, resignation, or removal of any officer shall be filled by a vote of the members of the Commission at the next regular meeting.

Commissioner Larsen volunteered to be the commission treasurer.  
Commissioner Lochte nominated Larsen to be the open treasurer position.  
Commissioner Botzler seconded this nomination.  
Chair Glover asked for discussion, but no discussion was needed, so he asked for a vote.

The vote was unanimous, with all present members (Glover, Lochtie, Miller, Pennekamp, Jensen, and Botzler) voting in favor of appointing Larsen as treasurer for a term of six months.

### XIII. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:

Proposed agenda items for December 5, 2024

December is Universal Human Rights Month. To celebrate, the commission is revising its proclamation. The new proclamation will be presented at the Humboldt Board of Supervisors on December 3 and with the City of Arcata on December 4. The City of Eureka has not been in touch.

Commissioner Botzler recommended that each commissioner come to next month's meeting with ideas about what they would like to see for the coming year and long-term goals or objectives.

### XIV. ADJOURNMENT:

Chair Glover called for adjournment at 6:41  
Minutes prepared by Commissioner Murphy