



**CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION  
 CITY HALL, CONFERENCE ROOM 2B, 420 N. POKEGAMA AVE.  
 DATE: WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2015  
 TIME: 4:00 P.M.**

4:00 CALL TO ORDER:

CALL OF ROLL:

|                               | Present                  | Absent                   |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Commissioner LaPlant          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Commissioner Dowell           | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Commissioner Freeman, Chair   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Commissioner Hall, Vice Chair | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Commissioner Learmont         | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Commissioner Nichols          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Commissioner Sanderson        | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Commissioner Weidendorf       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Commissioner Noyce            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

MEETING PROTOCOL POLICY:

***Please be aware that the Council has adopted a Meeting Protocol Policy which informs attendees of the Council's desire to conduct meetings in an orderly manner which welcomes all civil input from citizens and interested parties. If you are unaware of the policy, copies (orange color) are available in the wall file by the Council entrance.***

SETTING OF REGULAR AGENDA:

This is an opportunity to approve the regular agenda as presented or add/delete an Agenda item by a majority vote of the Commission members present.

PRESENTATION:

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:                    January 28, 2015 Regular Meeting

FINANCIALS:

CORRESPONDENCE:

PUBLIC COMMENT:

CIRCLE OF HEALING UPDATE:

OLD BUSINESS:                    Goals and Plans 2015  
     Tracks in the Snow Update  
     David McDonald Presentations  
     Bukata Hayes Workshop  
     Working with the Grand Rapids Police Department – Human Rights Issues

NEW BUSINESS:                    “Anishinaabe Worldview Training”  
     Indigenous People’s Day Celebration  
     Commission Terms and Openings

REPORTS ON CALLS AND INQUIRIES:

PENDING COMPLAINTS:

OTHER:

ADJOURNMENT:



# THE LEAGUE OF MINNESOTA HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSIONS

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CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS

**Board of Directors:**

Andrea Bejarano-Robinson, New Hope  
Beth Burrows, New Ulm  
Carol Banister, Lake Elmo  
Crystal Johnson, Crystal  
David Singleton, Roseville  
Dee Otto, New Hope  
Gwen Willems, Falcon Heights  
Hassanen Mohamed, Brooklyn Park  
Larry (L.A) Jones, St Louis Park  
Linda Freeman, Brooklyn Park  
Nieeta Pringle, St Paul  
Sandra Harb, Crystal  
Wayne Groff, Roseville

**Member Commissions:**

Albert Lea  
Arden Hills  
Austin  
Bemidji  
Brooklyn Park  
Crystal  
Duluth  
Falcon Heights  
Fergus Falls  
Forest Lake  
Golden Valley  
Grand Rapids  
Hibbing  
Minneapolis  
Moorhead  
Morris  
New Ulm  
New Hope  
Owatonna  
Red Wing  
Robbinsdale  
St. Cloud  
St. Louis Park  
Virginia  
Waseca  
Winona  
and others in formation

February 2<sup>nd</sup> 2015

Dear City/County Human Rights Commissions,

The League of Minnesota Human Rights Commissions will be on its 44<sup>th</sup> year doing the great work of serving and connecting all commission members with resources this year. Since 1971, this coalition of local human rights commissions has fought to end discrimination and celebrate diversity in our state. The league is the only private, statewide organization concerned with advocating against all forms of illegal discrimination and with enhancing the rights of all groups of people defined by the Minnesota Human Rights Act (MS 363A).

To continue with the valuable work of our organization in connecting, building, advocating for human rights in our state, we would like to invite you to continue or become a member of our organization. Our membership fee for this year will again stay at \$100 for 2015 for each city/county commission. Please see the enclosed document for more information.

This year will bring many changes including visibility for our organization. To help us with reaching your commission, please confirm or register your contact information by emailing the information to [outreach@leagueofmnhumanrights.org](mailto:outreach@leagueofmnhumanrights.org). You can also register for our newsletter that is sent out periodically by going to our website at [www.leagueofmnhumanrights.org](http://www.leagueofmnhumanrights.org) and sign up for the newsletter at the home page. We can advertise your events on our newsletter, Facebook page etc. when needed.

Part of our goals this year will include creating value and connecting with each city/county commission members. We will be happy to send a board member to your meeting when invited.

The deadline to submit the essays to the league is February 28<sup>th</sup> 2015. The essay recognition event is planned tentatively to be on April 25<sup>th</sup> 2015. Please go to our website for more information.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your tireless work for human rights in your communities around the state. We value your partnership and hope we can continue the work we started 44 years ago.

Sincerely,

Hassanen Mohamed  
President  
League of Minnesota Human Rights Commissions

CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

**CALL TO ORDER:** Pursuant to due notice and call thereof a regular meeting of the Grand Rapids Human Rights Commission was held in Conference Room 2B of City Hall, Grand Rapids, Minnesota, on Wednesday, January 28, 2015 at 4:00 p.m.

**CALL OF ROLL:** On a Call of Roll, the following members were present:  
Commissioners: Becky LaPlant, Frieda Hall, Barb Sanderson, Doug Learmont, Jackie Dowell, Braidy Nichols and Melissa Weidendorf

Absent Commissioners: Darlene Freeman, Karen Noyce

Guest: Noreen Hautala

Staff Present: Scott Johnson, Police Chief, Steven Schaar, Assistant Chief and Michele Palkki, Administrative Assistant

**CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order 4:00 p.m.

**SETTING AGENDA**

No additions

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** December 31, 2014 Regular Meeting

**MOTION BY COMMISSIONER LAPLANT, SECOND BY COMMISSIONER DOWELL TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF DECEMBER 31, 2014. Motion passed unanimously.**

**FINANCIALS**

Nothing to report.

**CIRCLE OF HEALING UPDATE**

Commissioner LaPlant gave a report on what is happening with Circle of Healing. The next meeting will be February 20, 2015. Topic will be identifying what is the unique need; Barb Sanderson will be speaking. Why Treaties Matter dedication ceremony for the exhibit at Grand Rapids High School is February 4<sup>th</sup>.

**OLD BUSINESS**

Nothing to report

**NEW BUSINESS**

Introductions were made.

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Grand Rapids Police Department: Chief Johnson and Assistant Chief Schaar are present to speak on different topics of interest to the Commission

Chief Johnson began by giving the Commission background information from his start of his career as a police officer to the present. Chief Johnson worked in many levels of law enforcement and in several communities including Lakeville, Mendota Heights and Apple Valley. He currently resides in Cohasset.

Assistant Chief Schaar was born and raised in Grand Rapids. He has been in law enforcement for 25 years.

Chief Johnson gave a brief report on the Police Department. The department has a Chief, Assistant Chief, Administrative Sergeant, 2 Patrol Sergeants, 2 Investigators, 10 Officers, Officer and K-9, 2 School Liaison Officers, Community Assistant Officer and 2 Administrative Assistants/Records.

The following are just some of the observations Chief Johnson noted since he came to Grand Rapids.

- There is not a lot of crime, or speeding on residential streets. There are few accidents and few burglaries.
- The Police Department working with the schools to promote safe driving
- There are a lot of domestic so working with different agencies on this
- Drug activity here is very high, use of Meth and Spice are just a few
- Alcohol abuse
- Mental Health issues (the department receives no training whatsoever right now). Chief Johnson would like to either take a group of officers down to the Cities or have the model come here and train all the officers. Funding is currently being sought out for this to come to a reality.
- On the positive side, today, the Department just received 8 hours of First Aid Training by Meds I at no charge.

Chief Johnson reported that he would like to see the Grand Rapids Police Department and the Itasca County Sheriff's Department have more training together. We work side by side with each other and it only makes sense to do training the same way.

- Diversity: Chief Johnson responded that diversity is changing and that it will mean different things to different people. There needs to be a dialogue with ethnic groups alongside the Police Department and other people in the community. If nobody is having the conversations with each other, it is not going to change.

- Treatment of Native American's by Officers. Chief Johnson does not believe that Native American's are sought out and pulled over or treated differently than anyone else. The majority of individuals who are pulled over the Officer do not know the race. Officer Schaar briefly spoke about this and stated that what he has seen between Native American, Mexican, or Asian is that they never throw the race card out. In cases involving the African Americans they believe they are sought out on purpose which he does not believe has happened. One solution to help this situation would be to invite those of other race and come and talk, have a conversation across the table in a non-threatening location.
- Minorities: Commissioner LaPlant stated that the expectations and reality to the minority's is how can they come to the table and be heard, to be authentic, build relationships, observations and/or perceptions, expectations, hear what they have to really say.

Chief Johnson reported that perception is reality and that each of us has a different perception. If we do not try to get the relationships building, the cause will continue to be there and not change. Commissioner Sanderson stated that there needs to be a better understanding of each other and that maybe one thing that could be done is to swap with each other. In other words, the Police Department swaps with the Tribal Officers so they can see and experience first-hand. Chief Johnson was not opposed to this idea.

- Community policing and how can the Human Rights Commission help accomplish; Chief Johnson stated there are three items that make up Community Policing.
  - 1) Relationships – officers working toward getting to know the community, in their businesses, on the streets, at events.
  - 2) Problem Solving
  - 3) Ownership

Chief Johnson reported that he sees the Commission as a bridge of using each other's contacts, connections and working together and dialogue. This will take time and will not happen overnight but has to start somewhere.

- Recruitment – Chief Johnson reported that the ways to communicate offerings is via the Web, Local News Papers, Publishing, etc. It is Chief's impression is to interview perspective Officers and not just rely on written tests. When interviewing individuals you can dialogue with them. To purposely not hire women, African American, Asian or Native American is not the norm. Individuals of different race are not selected out they are given the same opportunity as any.

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- Police Advisory Board – the Police Department just went to Council January 26 with a proposal to develop the Board of possibly 7 members to include a high school student, each quadrant of the City. This board's main purpose would be to work with the Police Department on issues on an advisory capacity. They would not be involved in discipline/hiring/firing. Is still in the first stages of being developed.

Final notes; Chief Johnson shared that Mary Corwin has for many years had an artificial Christmas tree in the lobby as you enter City Hall that is decorated in blue lights (to signify Police) and that ornaments are made with the names of officers killed while on active and that the ornament is sent to that individuals family stating they are thought of and prayed for along with a letter from Chief Johnson. Chief Johnson stated that he received a letter in the mail today from the Commissioner of New York City thanking the department for doing this.

The new vehicles are now lettered that the Police Department has been in existence since 1890. Chief Johnson would like to put pictures up around the community that are taken with police officers. There has been one business already that heard about this and wants a picture to hang in their business.

Chief Johnson and Officer Schaar thanked the Commission for inviting them and would like to continue the conversations and bring people together.

**MOTION BY COMMISSIONER SANDERSON, SECOND BY COMMISSIONER DOWELL TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 5:45 PM.**

Respectfully submitted, Michele Palkki, Administrative Assistant