

**Minutes of the Cook County  
Commission on Human Rights – Open Session  
January 23, 2025 at 10:00 am**

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Location: 69 W Washington Street, Chicago, IL 60602  
22<sup>nd</sup> floor, Conference Room D

**Attendance:**

**Present:** Chair Sufyan Sohel, Commissioners Jack Block, Charles Isaacs, Amber Smock, Pushkar Sharma, Michael Lapinski, Vice Chair Orr (Commission approved to attend virtually), Hedy Ratner (Commission approved to attend virtually), Dr. Simone Griffin (Commission approved to attend virtually), ASL Interpreter, DHRE Staff.

**Absent:** Commissioners Shobana Verma and Rev. Richard Tolliver

***Open Session***

**A. Call to Order**

- Chair Sohel called the meeting to order at 10:20 am.

**B. Statements by the General Public**

- No statements by the general public.

**C. Agenda Approval**

- A motion to approve the agenda was made and carried out by the following vote:
  - **Ayes:** Chair Sufyan Sohel, Commissioners Jack Block, Charles Isaacs, Amber Smock, Pushkar Sharma, Michael Lapinski, Vice Chair Orr, Hedy Ratner, Dr. Simone Griffin
  - **Nays:** None
  - **Absent:** Commissioners Shobana Verma and Rev. Richard Tolliver

**D. Approval of the November 19, 2024 Regular Meeting Open Minutes**

- A motion to approve the November 19, 2024, Regular Meeting Open Minutes was made and carried out by the following vote:
  - **Ayes:** Chair Sufyan Sohel, Commissioners Jack Block, Charles Isaacs, Pushkar Sharma, Michael Lapinski, Vice Chair Orr, Hedy Ratner, Dr. Simone Griffin
  - **Nays:** None
  - **Absent:** Commissioners Shobana Verma and Rev. Richard Tolliver
  - **Abstain:** Commissioner Amber Smock

**E. Commissioners' Updates**

- Vice Chair Orr shared that the 104<sup>th</sup> General Assembly has started, and it ties into Human Rights work happening on the County level.
- Commissioner Amber Smock discussed the newly signed law barring subminimum wage for workers with disabilities.

**F. Director's Report**

- Director King noted number of cases pending all stages has increased from the end of the last fiscal year quarter. Number of inquiries has dropped off,

can be correlated to the issuance of more guidance regarding the Cook County Paid Leave Ordinance.

- Policy: In collaboration with the Office of the Cook County President Toni Preckwinkle, the Department of Human Rights and Ethics developed resources related to immigrants and refugees. The resources not only include a summary of protections and resources available at Cook County but also resources available via local and national organizations.
- Outreach: One of the Outreach and Training coordinators provided updates on events and training attended to continue departmental efforts to spread awareness of Cook County Human Rights and Ethics ordinances and protections. Including the collaborative research project with Roosevelt University regarding the impacts of the Cook County Just Housing Amendment for justice involved individuals currently looking for housing in Cook County. Human Rights newsletter increased to 2181 subscribers.

#### **G. 2025 Proposed Amendments to Paid Leave Procedural Rules – Commission Review and Vote**

- A motion was carried by a unanimous vote to approve the Proposed Amendments to the Paid Leave Procedural Rules.
  - **Ayes**: Chair Sufyan Sohel, Commissioners Jack Block, Charles Isaacs, Amber Smock, Pushkar Sharma, Michael Lapinski, Vice Chair Orr, Hedy Ratner, Dr. Simone Griffin
  - **Nays**: None
  - **Absent**: Commissioners Shobana Verma and Rev. Richard Tolliver

#### **H. Proposed DALE Resolution – Commission Review and Vote**

- Item deferred.

#### **I. Investigation Extension Request – Commission Review and Vote**

- A motion to approve 5 Investigation Extension Requests was made and carried out by a unanimous vote:
  - **Ayes**: Chair Sufyan Sohel, Commissioners Jack Block, Charles Isaacs, Amber Smock, Pushkar Sharma, Michael Lapinski, Vice Chair Orr, Hedy Ratner, Dr. Simone Griffin
  - **Nays**: None
  - **Absent**: Commissioners Shobana Verma and Rev. Richard Tolliver

#### ***Closed Session***

- A motion to move into the Executive Session for discussions as identified in the agenda was made and carried out by unanimous voice vote at 11:09 am.

#### ***Open Session***

- At 11:29 am the Board reconvened to Open Session.

#### **O. Voting Regarding Executive Session Items, if any**

**a. November 19, 2024 Regular Meeting Closed Minutes – Commission Vote**

- A motion to approve the November 19, 2024, Regular Meeting Closed Minutes was made and carried out by the following vote:
  - **Ayes:** Chair Sufyan Sohel, Commissioners Jack Block, Charles Isaacs, Pushkar Sharma, Michael Lapinski, Vice Chair Orr, Dr. Simone Griffin
  - **Nays:** None
  - **Absent:** Commissioners Shobana Verma and Rev. Richard Tolliver, Hedy Ratner
  - **Abstain:** Commissioner Amber Smock

**b. 2024E002 Request for Reconsideration – Commission Vote**

- A motion to approve the request for reconsideration with language changes as discussed was made and carried out by the following vote:
  - **Ayes:** Chair Sufyan Sohel, Commissioners Jack Block, Charles Isaacs, Pushkar Sharma, Michael Lapinski, Vice Chair Orr, Dr. Simone Griffin, Amber Smock
  - **Nays:** None
  - **Absent:** Commissioners Shobana Verma and Rev. Richard Tolliver, Hedy Ratner
- There was discussion on the complaint filing timelines between the State, Cook County and Chicago. The Commission is interested in reviewing their 180-day filing timeline for filing a complaint alleging claims under the Human Rights Ordinance.

**J. Adjourn**

A motion to adjourn was made and carried by unanimous voice vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:33 am.

Minutes submitted by Board staff.