

**Minutes of the Cook County
Commission on Human Rights – Open Session
November 19, 2024 at 10:00 am**

Location: 69 W Washington Street, Chicago, IL 60602
22nd floor, Conference Room A

Attendance:

Present: Chair Sufyan Sohel, Commissioners Jack Block, Charles Isaacs, Rev. Richard Tolliver, Dr. Simone Griffin, Shobhana Verma and DHRE Staff

Absent: Vice Chair Gia Orr, Commissioners Amber Smock, Michael Lapinski, Hedy Ratner, and Pushkar Sharma

Open Session

A. Call to Order

- Chair Sohel called the meeting to order at 10:17 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, Rev. Richard Tolliver, Dr. Simone Griffin, Shobhana Verma
- Nays:** None
- Absent:** Vice Chair Gia Orr, Commissioners Amber Smock, Michael Lapinski, Hedy Ratner, and Pushkar Sharma

D. Approval of the August 28, 2024 Regular Meeting Open Minutes

- A motion to approve August 28, 2024, Regular Meeting Open Minutes was made and carried out by the following vote:

- Ayes:** Chair Sufyan Sohel, Commissioners Jack Block, Charles Isaacs, Rev. Richard Tolliver, Dr. Simone Griffin, Shobhana Verma
- Nays:** None
- Absent:** Vice Chair Gia Orr, Commissioners Amber Smock, Michael Lapinski, Hedy Ratner, and Pushkar Sharma

E. Commissioners' Updates

- Welcome Commissioners Hedy Ratner, Pushkar Sharma, and Shobana Verma
- Request to share the Department of Human Rights and Ethics Deputy Director listing with the Commissioners to share with their networks.

F. Welcome New DHRE Staff

- Associate Business Operations Specialist
- Outreach and Training Coordinators (2)

G. Review of Closed Meeting Minutes (May 2024 – July 2024) - Commission Review and Vote

- A motion to approve the May 2024 – July 2024, Regular Meeting Closed Minutes was made and carried by the following vote:

- **Ayes:** Chair Sufyan Sohel, Commissioners Jack Block, Charles Isaacs, Rev. Richard Tolliver, Dr. Simone Griffin, Shobhana Verma
- **Nays:** None
- **Absent:** Vice Chair Gia Orr, Commissioners Amber Smock, Michael Lapinski, Hedy Ratner, and Pushkar Sharma

H. Director's Report

- Director King noted the Department's Case Management System Launched September 3rd. We see an increase in the number of complaints and inquiries specifically related to Human Rights issues because of this. One of the Outreach and Training Coordinators hosted a training seminar on the new system that reached 43 participants with the recording available on the department website.
- Policy: On October 24th a proposed amendment to the Paid Leave Ordinance and Procedural Rules to exempt School and Park Districts was made. For the first time regarding procedural rules, from August to October, the Commission received 58 public comments through an online form regarding the Paid Leave Procedural Rules with most of the comments (56) requesting for schools and park districts to be permanently exempt. Secondly, on October 2nd the Commission launched its first formal research partnership with Roosevelt University's Policy Research Collaborative as part of the ongoing efforts in relation to the Cook County Equity Fund Recommendation 2.2, which is regarding fair housing and specifically the enforcement of the just housing amendment, source of income protection.
- Outreach: One of the Outreach and training coordinators provided updates on events and trainings attended to continue departmental efforts to spread awareness of Cook County Human Rights and Ethics ordinances and protections. Specifically training on Fair Housing and Equity Fund Recommendation 2.2. The Human Rights Newsletter has grown to 2,177 subscribers!

I. 2025 Proposed Commission Meeting Schedule – Commission Review and Vote

- A motion to approve the proposed 2025 Commission Meeting Schedule was made and carried out by the following vote:
 - **Ayes:** Chair Sufyan Sohel, Commissioners Jack Block, Charles Isaacs, Rev. Richard Tolliver, Dr. Simone Griffin, Shobhana Verma
 - **Nays:** None
 - **Absent:** Vice Chair Gia Orr, Commissioners Amber Smock, Michael Lapinski, Hedy Ratner, and Pushkar Sharma

J. Investigation Extension Request

- A motion to approve 11 Investigation Extension Requests was made and carried out by a unanimous vote:
 - **Ayes:** Chair Sufyan Sohel, Commissioners Jack Block, Charles Isaacs, Rev. Richard Tolliver, Dr. Simone Griffin, Shobhana Verma
 - **Nays:** None
 - **Absent:** Vice Chair Gia Orr, Commissioners Amber Smock, Michael Lapinski, Hedy Ratner, and Pushkar Sharma

K. 2024 JHA Report and Evaluation – Commission Review and Vote

- A motion to approve the 2024 JHA Report and Evaluation as amended was made and carried out by a unanimous vote:

- **Ayes:** Chair Sufyan Sohel, Commissioners Jack Block, Charles Isaacs, Rev. Richard Tolliver, Dr. Simone Griffin, Shobhana Verma
- **Nays:** None
- **Absent:** Vice Chair Gia Orr, Commissioners Amber Smock, Michael Lapinski, Hedy Ratner, and Pushkar Sharma

L. 2.2 Outreach Plan – FY 24 Accomplishments

M. Proposed Human Rights Ordinance Procedural Rules Amendment re Complaint Service Process – Commission Review and Vote

- A motion to approve the proposed amendment to the Human Rights Ordinance Procedural Rules re Complaint Service Process was made and carried out by the following vote:
 - **Ayes:** Chair Sufyan Sohel, Commissioners Jack Block, Charles Isaacs, Rev. Richard Tolliver, Dr. Simone Griffin, Shobhana Verma
 - **Nays:** None
 - **Absent:** Vice Chair Gia Orr, Commissioners Amber Smock, Michael Lapinski, Hedy Ratner, and Pushkar Sharma

N. Proposed Resolution Celebrating Human Rights Day – Commission Review and Vote

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

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 11:19 am.

Open Session

- At 11:40 am the Board reconvened to Open Session.

O. Voting Regarding Executive Session Items, if any

a. Approval of the August 28, 2024 Regular Meeting Closed Minutes

- A motion to approve the August 28, 2024, Regular Meeting Closed Minutes was made and carried out by the following vote:
 - **Ayes:** Chair Sufyan Sohel, Commissioners Jack Block, Charles Isaacs, Rev. Richard Tolliver, Dr. Simone Griffin, Shobhana Verma
 - **Nays:** None
 - **Absent:** Vice Chair Gia Orr, Commissioners Amber Smock, Michael Lapinski, Hedy Ratner, and Pushkar Sharma

b. Requests for Reconsideration – Commission Vote

- A motion to approve the request for reconsideration was made and carried out by the following vote:

- **Ayes:** Chair Sufyan Sohel, Commissioners Jack Block, Charles Isaacs, Rev. Richard Tolliver, Dr. Simone Griffin, Shobhana Verma
- **Nays:** None
- **Absent:** Vice Chair Gia Orr, Commissioners Amber Smock, Michael Lapinski, Hedy Ratner, and Pushkar Sharma

J. Adjourn

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

The meeting was adjourned at 11:43 am.

Minutes submitted by Board staff.