
CITY OF KALAMAZOO
Civil Rights Board
Wednesday, August 6, 2025 – 5:00 p.m. • City Commission Chambers

MEMBERS PRESENT: Madison Lukeman, Pamela Burpee, Eursla Moore-Doyle, Sandra Calderon, Willow Sipling, Joshua DeBoer and Cathy Phason

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

Ex-Officio Members: Tanya Hewitt-Smith and Commissioner Hoffman

CITY STAFF PRESENT: Marcia Jones (Assistant City Attorney), Lal Tluangi (Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Specialist).

The Civil Rights Board meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by Chair Phason.

Agenda: Director Burpee motioned to approve the agenda. Vice-Chair Lukeman seconded the motion. Motion approved by unanimous vote. Agenda adopted.

Minutes: Director Moore-Doyle motioned to approve minutes from June 4th, 2025 with the correction of her name, supported by Vice-Chair Lukeman. Motion approved by unanimous vote. June 4th, 2025, minutes approved.

Public Announcements and Communications: None. Chair Phason and DEI Director Hewitt-Smith welcomed new directors Joshua DeBoer and Willow Sipling to the board.

New Business:

Updates on Ordinance Edits – Chair Phason reported that the Ordinance Subcommittee has not made edits to the ordinance, as the current language is deemed enforceable. Mayor Anderson attended the most recent meeting, and the subcommittee will continue collaborating with the City Commission on enforcement strategies. Chair Phason also noted the ongoing search for a new City Manager and emphasized that resident feedback can be submitted through surveys, as ordinance enforcement is closely tied to the City Manager's role. Vice-Chair Lukeman added that the subcommittee is working on process mapping, including the establishment of a subcommittee to review complaints as they are received. The board also discussed the possibility of renaming itself to better align with the ordinance and avoid confusion, with "Human Rights Board" being a suggested name, as used by other municipalities.

Appointees to Subcommittees – Chair Phason inquired about Director Burpee's subcommittee preference, and Director Burpee expressed interest in both. With the board now at full capacity, Vice-Chair Lukeman stepped down from the Ordinance Review Subcommittee to focus on the Education Subcommittee. Chair Phason appointed Director Burpee to the Education Subcommittee and appointed Directors DeBoer and Sipling to the Ordinance Review Subcommittee following their interest.

Discussion around the Education Subcommittee – Vice-Chair Lukeman noted that tentative dates have been added to the agenda, but no final meeting date was required at this time. She expressed interest in involving community experts in the Education Subcommittee, and Director Calderon suggested including ISAAC in the subcommittee's efforts. Vice-Chair Lukeman will follow up with members via email to confirm a meeting date, while Chair Phason will reach out to ISAAC to explore their involvement. DEI Director Hewitt-Smith and Chair Phason emphasized the importance of involving DEI staff, maintaining consistent communication, and honoring meeting commitments.

Monthly Meeting Frequency Discussion – The board discussed the possibility of shifting from a bimonthly to a monthly meeting schedule but ultimately agreed to maintain the current bimonthly

frequency, with the option to hold special meetings as needed. Members emphasized the importance of progressing on subcommittee goals and revisiting the meeting frequency if necessary.

Update on Complaint Log – DEI Specialist Tluangi provided an update on the complaints received in 2025, including outcomes for those reviewed by the City Attorney’s Office. In response to board questions, Specialist Tluangi and Attorney Jones clarified that all complaints—regardless of whether they fall under the ordinance—are received by the DEI Office and reviewed by the City Attorney’s Office. Attorney Jones emphasized the importance of the Education Subcommittee’s role in community engagement to raise awareness about the civil rights complaint form and the scope of the ordinance.

Public Comments:

Maggie Adams – She expressed appreciation for the board’s transparency and the completion of its membership. She inquired whether the proposed subcommittee in the process mapping would be involved at the initial stage of complaint review and referenced Attorney Leal’s comment that such a subcommittee would require additional training. She also asked whether the board is considering that option. Additionally, she questioned the role of the Education Subcommittee in supporting individuals facing discrimination.

Tobi Hanna-Davies – She expressed support for the newly formed board subcommittees and thanked Chair Phason for emphasizing the importance of the City Manager search and promoting the citywide survey for resident input. They also shared that ISAAC is pleased with the executive search firm selected by the City Commission for the City Manager recruitment process.

Miscellaneous Board Comments: Director Moore-Doyle voiced support for renaming the board to the Human Rights Board to reduce confusion. Directors DeBoer and Sipling expressed gratitude to the nomination committee for the opportunity to serve. Director Burpee shared optimism about the board’s future and its potential to better serve the community with a full membership. Commissioner Hoffman celebrated the board’s diversity and encouraged community participation in the City Manager survey. DEI Director Hewitt-Smith expressed enthusiasm about the fully seated board and affirmed DEI staff’s commitment to supporting its initiatives. Chair Phason closed by celebrating the board’s progress and reaffirmed its mission to empower and educate the community, particularly around the complaint process.

Closing Comments: None

Next Meeting: October 1st, 2025, at 5:00 pm

ADJOURNMENT: 5:56 pm

Lal Tluangi, Recording Secretary
Tanya Hewitt-Smith, Staff Liaison
Stephanie Hoffman, City Commission Liaison
Cathy Phason, Chair