

Owatonna Human Rights Commission Minutes – July 8, 2025

The Owatonna Human Rights Commission (OHRC) met on Tuesday, July 8, 2025, in the Meeting Room of the Charles S. Crandall Center. Chairman Bjore called the meeting to order at 5:36 p.m. Commissioner Mustafe took roll call. Present were Commissioners Bjore, Ismael, Hill, Seykora, Esquivel and Hansen; City Administrator Busse; Assistant City Administrator Tuma; City Council Member McCann; and Administrative Coordinator Clawson. Commissioner Hult was unable to attend.

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, Chairman Bjore welcomed everyone to the meeting. Commissioner Hansen made a motion to approve the Meeting Agenda as presented, Commissioner Hill seconded the motion, all members present voted aye in approval. Commissioner Seykora made a motion to approve the June OHRC Minutes, Commissioner Bjore seconded the motion, all members present voted aye in approval.

ITEMS OF DISCUSSION

- 1) Somali Cultural/Independence Day Event – July 6th in Central Park
OHRC Commissioners Mustafe and Bjore commented they attended this first-time event in Owatonna. There were approximately 100 people attending the event at which they walked around introducing themselves and handing out water and Jolly Ranchers.
- 2) AGE Juneteenth Event – June 21st at the Beer Garden at SCFF
OHRC Commissioners Hansen, Seykora, Bjore & Hill attended this event as did Mayor Jessop. It was a very hot/humid day, and attendance was lower than previous years. AGE recently hired a publicity staff member for promotion of future events. All present agreed it is important for OHRC to be visible during these types of cultural events.
- 3) Rainbowatonna 2025 Pride in the Park – Saturday, July 12th in Central Park
Assistant City Administrator Tuma will present the proclamation, Rainbowatonna Pride Day. The OHRC tent will be set up with a table for OHRC flyers and candy. City staff will drop off a six-foot table and two bag chairs. Commissioner Bjore commented she will be there from 1:30 – 7:30 and asked other commissioners to join her when they could.
- 4) OHRC Promotions:
 - a) OHRC Article – Commissioner Hill commented she recently spoke with Communications Manager Sheely to review the article she prepared about the OHRC. The article will be published in the city's electronic newsletter.
 - b) The Steele County Times will publish articles about the Welcome Week activities during the last week of August.
 - c) Commissioner Bjore will do a City Spot with Communications Manager Sheely.
 - d) Straight Talk – August 20th – Commissioner Chairman Bjore will meet with Karen Hale at 10:00 am to record a show which will play during the last week of August.

- e) Community Pathways – Commissioner Bjore commented Robin at Community Pathways has offered to post OHRC items to their Facebook account when shared. Community Pathways and United Way feature a non-profit group each day at their table during the fair and OHRC could be featured this year. They noticed the number of their Hispanic customers increased by 43% after additional of a Spanish speaking staff member; they believe the Somali Community would benefit if an employee was fluent in Somali and hoping to add to their staff.
- 5) Additional OHRC Activities this year, several months have no planned OHRC activity. One suggestion was a community potluck during November, December, or March as food tends to bring people together. OHRC members asked to bring additional suggestions during the next OHRC Meeting for further discussion.
- 6) Pending Purchases/Invoices
 - a) Administrative Coordinator Clawson confirmed balance due Plaza Morena for the balance owed for the 2025 MLK Day Event meal was paid.
 - b) Commissioner Bjore presented quote from Corporate Recognition of \$246 for an OHRC tablecloth. Commissioner Hansen made a motion to accept this quote and place an order, Commissioner Seykora seconded the motion, all members voted aye in approval.
- 7) Downtown Thursday (DTT) Event – September 4, 2025

Commissioners Bjore and Ismael plan to do a radio spot with Molly two days prior to this event. Commissioner Hansen commented she has sent first communication to potential subjects for the Human Library and encouraged everyone to help securing additional participants. She prepared a clear curtain with pockets to display books available during the event and is considering offering cookies to participants.
- 8) Meeting on the Fields – September 6, 2025

Commissioner Hansen filed an Event Permit for use of Daiken Field; the fields are reserved from 5:00 pm – 9:30 pm with games beginning at 6:30 pm. Commissioner Ismael commented he will contact the Owatonna Soccer Association for referees. The City's Rec on the Go trailer will be onsite at 5:30 pm with one staff member and request three OHRC also help during the event. Commissioner Seykora will follow-up with Steele Threads for 40 player T-shirts, Commissioner Esquivel requested his team receive large shirts and Commissioner Ismael his team receives both medium and large t-shirts. The T-shirts will be red and blue with white lettering and logo. Commissioner Seykora will ask for fruit donations, Commissioner Bjore will request water donation and Commissioner Hansen to provide a speaker system. All agreed the National Anthem would not be played and translators would not be provided.

City Council Member McCann thanked the OHRC Commissioners for their service to the community.

ADJOURNMENT

At 6:42 p.m., Commissioner Hansen made a motion to adjourn, Commissioner Bjore seconded the motion, and the meeting was adjourned. The next OHRC Meeting is planned for Tuesday, August 12th at 5:30 pm. A card was presented to City Administrator Busse thanking her for her assistance with the OHRC during the last 18 years. This is the last OHRC Meeting prior to Ms. Busse's retirement on August 7th.

Respectfully submitted,
Jeanette Clawson, Administrative Coordinator