

Owatonna Human Rights Commission
Minutes – December 9, 2025

The Owatonna Human Rights Commission (OHRC) met on Tuesday, December 9, 2025, in the Meeting Room of the Charles S. Crandall Center at City Hall. Chairman Bjore called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. Present were Commissioners Bjore, Seykora, Esquivel, and Ismael; City Administrator Tuma; and Administrative Coordinator Clawson. Commissioner Hult was attending remotely, and Commissioners Hill and Hansen were unable to attend.

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, Chairman Bjore welcomed everyone to the meeting. Commissioner Bjore made a motion to approve the Meeting Agenda as presented, Commissioner Seykora seconded the motion, all members present voted aye in approval. After a quick review of the draft of Minutes of the November 12th OHRC Meeting, Commissioner Bjore made a motion to approve as presented, Commissioner Ismael seconded the motion, and all members participating voted aye in approval.

COMMISSION MEMBER UPDATE/COMMENTS

Commissioner Hult commented that his daughter Harper is doing well in NIC Unit in Rochester and is now just over four pounds.

Commissioner Bjore commented that Commissioner Hill is on the mend and plans to participate in future group sessions and the January OHRC Meeting.

City Administrator Tuma commented that a Letter of Resignation from the OHRC was received from Commissioner Hansen. This will be an item on the next City Council Meeting Agenda, December 16, 2025, for Council to accept.

Commissioner Seykora commented that she invited Ibrahim Hussein to the meeting and welcomed him to comment on current concerns of Samali residents. Ibrahim, a previous member of the Owatonna Human Rights Commission owns several businesses within Owatonna. Ibrahim advised the Samali community has been shut down as most are afraid to leave their homes. Yesterday a mosque in Prior Lake was severely damage in an early morning fire and an investigation is in process to determine if the fire was an accident or set intentionally. Last week, Mayor Jessop made a statement of support for the Samali community on social media; this was greatly appreciated and additional messages have been received. One concern is safety at their mosque; they do have security onsite and someone will be in the parking lot watching the building entrance during their daily prayer sessions. Not sure how many members will come for prayers and no other gatherings are planned. Commissioners Seykora, Bjore and Ismael will form a subcommittee to consider additional support opportunities. Ibrahim thanked the OHRC members for offering their support and appreciate any assistance to alleviate current stress within the community.

ITEMS OF DISCUSSION

2026 Pride in the Park - An Event Permit Application was received from Rainbowatonna. Changes in the event's Safety Plan are currently under review with city's Code of Ordinances.

A meeting is planned with the applicants to review their application, City Administrator Tuma will confirm plans for this meeting. When the event details are clarified, the application will go to council for approval.

Commission President Bjore commented she met with the manager at Wells Fargo Bank regarding Commissioner Esquivel bank visit when he was overlooked while standing in line for service. They had a good conversation; she notified her boss and staff of the incident. She acknowledged she hadn't handled the situation well and appreciated the reminder to provide good customer service. She doesn't tolerate racist actions, and her overlooking Commissioner Esquivel was not because of his ethnic origin. The gentleman behind him had made eye contact with her when she left her office, so she helped him, the woman in front of him then made a directed comment which she responded to while Commissioner Esquivel was left waiting. Commissioner Esquivel thanked Commissioner Bjore for following up on his lack of service comment.

2026 MLK Jr. Day Event – Plans in process for this noon event on Monday, January 17, 2026. There will not be a featured speaker, but a multi-member panel responding to questions regarding current concerns. Setup will begin at the Steele County Historical Society at 11:00 a.m. for doors to open at 11:30 a.m. Plan to set round tables to accommodate 120 attending and Plaza Morena will set up a buffet style taco bar as last year. Commissioner Seykora and Bjore will meet to discuss promotions and preparation of panelist information.

OHRC Member Long Sleeve Shirts – Commissioner Bjore presented quotes for various styles of long sleeve shirts. Commissioner Bjore made a motion to purchase a quarter zip fleece from Oak Glenn Gear with cost not to exceed \$500.00. Commissioner Seykora seconded the motion, all members present voted aye in approval.

OHRC Promotional Video – Commissioner Bjore presented two options for promotional video. One from Lori Bugler, Communications Manager at ISD #761 and the other from Aaron Guzman Photography. The video will be shown on the city's website promoting who and what the commission is. During review of the plans, the commissioners discussed Aaron's plan would promote both the community and the commission. He quoted a two-minute video, but Commission President Bjore will ask him to provide shorter segments to cover OHRC activities during the year. Commissioner Seykora made a motion to accept bid from Aaron Guzman Photography of \$1,700 for video services, Commissioner Ismael seconded the motion, all members present voted aye in approval.

T-shirt – 2026 Soccer on the Field – Welcome Week Activity. Commissioner Seykora presented a \$400 quote for game t-shirts from Fischer Specialty Sport and Apparel. The shirts will be like those prepared for the 2025 game. Commissioner Seykora made a motion to purchase these t-shirts, Commissioner Bjore seconded the motion, all members voted aye in approval.

Training Opportunity – During previous discussion, Commissioner Bjore asked consideration be given to ask Gloria Martinez to present Taking Back the Girls. Her speaker fee is \$4,000 and she met with Superintendent Kath to ask if the high school would co-host

this presentation. Unfortunately, the schedule for high school presentation is set and they are unable to offer to students. He offered use of the high school for a community event but it is doubtful if the desired audience would attend. Commissioner Seykora commented this event should be sidestepped and other activities planned given more attention. City Administrator Tuma commented the OHRC 2026 Budget was reduced by \$1,000 to \$5,000.

Commissioner Ismael commented he and Commissioner Esquivel met with David Campana, the Legislative and Policy Director of the Minnesota Council on Latino Affairs at the end of October. This was a good opportunity to hold a face-to-face meeting for introduction and discuss ways to connect with the community. Future meeting with Mayor Jessop will be planned to offer an event focusing on the diversity of our city's residents

ADJOURNMENT

At 6:53p.m., Commissioner Hult made a motion to adjourn, Commissioner Esquivel seconded the motion, and the meeting was adjourned. The next OHRC Meeting is planned for Tuesday, January 13th at 5:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Jeanette Clawson, Administrative Coordinator