



HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION MEETING
Tuesday, March 10, 2026 at 5:30 PM
Meeting Room in the Charles S. Crandall Center at City
Hall, 540 West Hills Circle
Commissioners: Jessica Bjore, Edgar Esquivel, Josiah
Hult, Sherry Hill, Julia Seykora, Sam Bendorf, and
Gretchen Zinsli

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Roll Call**
- 3. Pledge of Allegiance**
- 4. Approval of Agenda**
- 5. Approval of Last Meeting Minutes**
 - 5.1. OHRC Meeting Minutes - January 13, 2026
- 6. Commissioner's Comments**
- 7. Items of Discussion**
 - 7.1. 2026 MLK Jr. Day Event - January 19, 2026
 - 7.2. 2026 Activities
 - 7.3. Miscellaneous
- 8. Public Comments**
- 9. Adjournment**

Owatonna Human Rights Commission
Minutes – January 13, 2026 - DRAFT COPY

The Owatonna Human Rights Commission (OHRC) met on Tuesday, January 13, 2026, 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 Hill; City Administrator Tuma and Administrative Coordinator Clawson. Commissioner Hult was attending remotely. Also attending were Mayor Jessop, Sam Bendorf and Clark Gustafson.

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, Chairman Bjore welcomed everyone to the meeting. Commissioner Hill 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 December 9, 2025 OHRC Meeting Minutes, Commissioner Seykora made a motion to approve as presented, Commissioner Bjore seconded the motion, and all members participating voted aye in approval.

2026 MLK Jr. Day Event

Commissioner Bjore reviewed plans for the MLK Jr. Day OHRC Noon Event.

Venue - Steele County History Center, 1700 Austin Road. Set up begins at 11:00 am, three staff members will be there if needed. Jose plans to deliver food shortly after 11:00 am.

Reservations – Preregistration via Google.docs went live last week, planning for 100 to attend. Currently 23 have registered, this count is similar amount last year one week prior to the event.

Doors open at 11:30 a.m.

Lunch served at 12:00 noon – taco bar by Plaza Morena, similar to last year.

Advertisement – flyers delivered around town today at gas stations, churches, banks, schools, and various businesses. Facebook post last week, Newsflash on the City website tomorrow and another Facebook post. Julia will contact the ALC to ask if students plan to attend. Short article in last week's OPU and city newsletters. Tomorrow there will be another article in the Owatonna Update and the Steele County Times.

Video tape – Jessica contacted by Limberg Production, she will follow-up with Scott. City Administrator Busse to follow-up with city staff to film for video to play on the PEG Channel.

Mayor Jessop will make short statement during the event regarding the OHRC and MLK Jr's legacy and his work toward peaceful resistance. Commissioner Seykora asked if a police presence should be present, Commissioners Hult and Hill commented they would prefer. City Administrator Tuma will speak with Chief Mundale asking him to remind officers of this event. Commissioner Esquivel commented many residents are stressed about ICE activities and encouraged everyone to remain calm.

Panelist – panel of four will be asked for their response to various questions. Each OHRC Member prepared three to five questions for panel consideration. Commissioner Bjore shared several questions and others are to send theirs to her to organize. Panelists include Sarah Sanchez, Owatonna resident; Gospel Kordah, Workforce Coordinator at SteeleCoWorks, Martha Sykes, Public Health and current Vice Chair of the Alliance for Grater Equity and

Whitney Harvey, MN Chamber of Commerce Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.
Clean-up – all OHRC Members help clear the area and should be done before 2:00 pm.

2026 OHRC Video Promotion

Commissioners Bjore and Seykora discussed this project with Aaron Guzman of Guzman Photography. Plan to produce two thirty second videos with OHRC activities this year. Unfortunately, Aaron is not able to attend the MLK Jr. Day event. City Administrator Tuma asked them to include Communications Specialist Sheely to confirm brand compliance and also release authorization.

OHRC Membership

During this last month, Letters of Resignation were received from OHRC Commissioner Jennifer Hansen and Mustafe Ismael. Mayor Jessop will make a comment during the MLK Jr Event and at the City Council Meeting next week asking for applications. Commissioners were asked to encourage application for a variety of applicants. Commissioner Bjore made a motion to appoint Commissioner Esquivel as the current OHRC Secretary, Commissioner Seykora seconded the motion. Commissioner Esquivel commented his current term expires at the end of April, new members will be active OHRC Officers are elected annually. Commissioner Esquivel agreed to server as the Secretary over the next four months, all members voted aye in approval.

2026 Activities

Commissioner Bjore commented she spoke with Dom Korbel, Manager at Community Pathways and will pursue OHRC hosting a toilet paper drive this spring. City Administrator commented that the OHRC cannot use budgeted funds to purchase items for another group but can use funds collected for a designated purpose.

Commissioner Bjore commented that she will send out a list of 2026 OHRC activities for members to Save the Dates. There is an operational meeting for the 2026 Pride in the Park Event on January 29th, Commissioners Hult, Hill and Bjore plan to participate. Commissioner Bjore will contact former OHRC Commissioner Hansen regarding the OHRC Human Library sheet.

Public Comments

Sam Bendorf asked if the OHRC will hold an open discussion with opportunity for comments about recent ICE activities. Protester Renee Good was killed in Minneapolis last week and many are concerned. Commissioner Seykora commented OHRC has not made a comment, if contacted she has encouraged callers to review information on the AGE website. Clark Gustafson commented House Representative Finstad issued a statement backing the federal agent activities. Mayor Jessop commented he is preparing a statement similar to his statement supporting the local Somali community. Commissioner Hult commented he

preferred OHRC wait with a statement, that event wasn't local and is currently under investigation. Several commissioners and Mayor Jessop commented they have received calls but are not aware of any current activity within Owatonna. Gustafson commented these activities are getting close to Owatonna, ICE raids were done in Faribault last week and several taken into custody were housed at the Steele County Detention Center. Mayor Jessop reminded everyone to remain calm if similar situations happen.

Adjournment

At 6:40 p.m., Commissioner Bjore made a motion to adjourn, Commissioner Seykora seconded the motion, and the meeting was adjourned. The next OHRC Meeting is planned for Tuesday, February 10th at 5:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Jeanette Clawson, Administrative Coordinator