

PENNSYLVANIA HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

M I N U T E S

TIME: 3:00 P.M.

Monthly Meeting

Held at

PHRC Philadelphia Regional Office

110 N. 8th Street, Suite 501

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 19107

and

VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

April 27, 2026

Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission
Monthly Meeting
April 27, 2026

COMMISSIONERS:

Curtis Jones, Interim Chair
Mayur Patel, Esquire, Secretary
Dr. Rad Agrawal
Michael Hardiman, Esquire
Aleena Sorathia, Esquire - Absent

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Chad Dion Lassiter, MSW

CHIEF COUNSEL

Stephanie Chapman, Esquire, Interim Chief Counsel

COMMISSION COUNSEL

Melissa Lovett, Esquire - Absent

STAFF PRESENT:

Amanda Brothman Jumper, Director of Communications
Alana Burman, Director of Policy, Intergovernmental
Affairs and Mediation
Desiree Chang, Deputy Director for Enforcement,
Policy and Compliance
Caroline Griffin, Director of Rural and Civic
Engagement
Adrian Garcia, Deputy director for Regional
Operations and Housing
Amber Harris, Regional Office Director, Philadelphia
- Absent
Darlene Martin, Esquire, Hearing Examiner
Sheryl Meck, Director, Civil Rights Division
La Dawn Robinson, Regional Office Director,
Pittsburgh
Heather Roth, Regional Office Director, Harrisburg
Tamara Shehadeh-Cope, Esquire, Hearing Examiner
Debbie Walters, Administrative Officer
Sherwood Goodenough, Director of Enforcement

1 Fatim Byrd, Director of Education

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Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission

6

Monthly Meeting

7

April 27, 2026

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10 STAFF PRESENT (cont.):

11

12 Zulay Rojas, Chief of Staff

13 Frederick Fischer, Special Assistant to Executive

14 Director

15 Airrion Bethea, Civil Rights Investigator,

16 Philadelphia Regional Office

17 Asha Nettles, Civil Rights Investigator, Philadelphia

18 Regional Office

19 Todd Schwartz, Supervisor Intake Unit, Philadelphia

20 Regional Office

21 Joshua Nix, Supervisor Bridge Team, Philadelphia

22 Regional Office

23 Moira Crowe, Compliance Supervisor, Philadelphia

24 Regional Office

25 Lauren Cifoni, Civil Right Investigator, Philadelphia

26 Regional Office

27 Tiffany Briscoe, Philadelphia Regional Office

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29 ALSO PRESENT:

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31 Whitney Downard, Reporter, Pennsylvania Capital-Star

32 Emma Edwards, Sargent's Court Reporting Service, Inc.

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2 Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission

3 April 27, 2026

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5 MEETING CALL TO ORDER AND OPENING STATEMENT

6 Curtis Jones, Interim Chair of the Pennsylvania
7 Human Relations Commission, welcomed everyone to the
8 monthly meeting of the Pennsylvania Human Relations
9 Commission.

10 Debbie Walters, Administrative Officer, stated
11 this public meeting was advertised in accordance with
12 the provisions of the Sunshine Act. Prior to the
13 meeting and keeping with the confidentiality
14 requirements of the Sunshine Act, a closed session
15 was held to discuss compliance matters, management
16 updates, and adjudicative case deliberations.

17 After concluding with the business portion of
18 the meeting, guests will be invited to introduce
19 themselves and any organizations they represent.
20 Guests will have an opportunity briefly to address
21 the Commission. Public comments are welcomed about
22 equal opportunity and Civil Rights issues or problems

1 of discrimination. Any statements expressed during
2 the Public Session by members of the public represent
3 the opinions and beliefs of that speaker alone and
4 not the opinions and beliefs of the Commission.

5 The Commission values the public partnership in
6 promoting equal opportunity and would love to hear
7 about the work of any organizations represented. The
8 Commission cannot hear specifics of any open
9 investigations or cases that it may have to rule on
10 in the future.

11 She noted the presence of a quorum and called
12 the meeting to order.

13 ***

14 ADOPTION OF AGENDA

15 INTERIM CHAIR JONES:

16 I call for a motion to adopt the
17 Agenda.

18 COMMISSIONER HARDIMAN:

19 So moved.

20 INTERIM CHAIR JONES:

21 Is there a second?

22 COMMISSIONER PATEL:

1 Second.

2 INTERIM CHAIR JONES:

3 All those in favor say aye. Those
4 opposed?

5 [The motion carried unanimously.]

6 ***

7 APPROVAL OF PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES

8 MS. WALTERS:

9 Next on the Agenda is our approval of
10 public meeting minutes. We need a
11 motion to approve those minutes of
12 February 23, 2026, and March 23, 2026.

13 INTERIM CHAIR JONES:

14 Is there a motion to approve the
15 minutes?

16 COMMISSIONER HARDIMAN:

17 So moved.

18 INTERIM CHAIR JONES:

19 Is there a second?

20 COMMISSIONER AGRAWAL:

21 Second.

22 INTERIM CHAIR JONES:

1 It has been moved and properly
2 seconded. All those in favor of
3 approving the minutes will signify by
4 saying aye. All those opposed?

5 [The motion carried unanimously.]

6 ***

7 REQUESTS FOR PRELIMINARY HEARINGS

8 MS. WALTERS:

9 We have 16 cases that the Commissioners
10 reviewed. You would need to call for a
11 motion to deny the requests for
12 preliminary hearings.

13 INTERIM CHAIR JONES:

14 Is there a motion?

15 COMMISSIONER AGRAWAL:

16 So moved.

17 INTERIM CHAIR JONES:

18 Commissioner, is there a second?

19 COMMISSIONER HARDIMAN:

20 Second.

21 INTERIM CHAIR JONES:

22 It has been moved and properly

1 seconded. All those in favor will
2 signify by saying aye. All those
3 opposed?

4 [The motion carried unanimously.]

5 ***

6 MANAGEMENT REPORTS - Executive Director

7 [Executive Director Lassiter reported PHRC continues
8 to solidify a strong relationship with the
9 Educational Law Center through high-level strategic
10 meetings. PHRC Civil Rights and Human Rights clubs
11 continue to have graduations, most recently in
12 Bartram. The annual report, as mandated by the
13 Pennsylvania Human Rights Act, has been submitted to
14 all leaders in the State Assembly.

15 Executive Director Lassiter stated PHRC is
16 continuing to work with the Ohio Civil Right
17 Commission who has asked PHRC to partner with them
18 and share how PHRC constructed a civil rights
19 division. In addition, PHRC is working with the
20 Maryland Commission on Civil Rights and will be
21 working with Maryland on civil rights initiatives.

22 Executive Director Lassiter shared PHRC

1 continues to do presentations, outreach, and grow
2 PHRC Advisory Councils. He stated Director Byrd
3 would be taking the lead on PHRC's Social Justice
4 Ambassador on college campuses, making sure college
5 campuses are friendly for the LGBTQ+ community,
6 Muslim community, Jewish community, and all
7 communities.

8 He shared PHRC had a series of upcoming
9 humanitarian awards. Awards would be given to Bishop
10 Felton of the Mount Airy Church of God in Christ and
11 Jeffrey Lurie, the owner of the Philadelphia Eagles.
12 The Homer Floyd Award would be given to Senator
13 Vincent Hughes. The Homer Floyd Award is in honor of
14 the longest standing Executive Director at PHRC.

15 Regarding social justice outreach, Executive
16 Director Lassiter reported meet and greets would be
17 moving over to the Hearing Examiners, who would also
18 be doing training around the Commonwealth. He also
19 noted PHRC is continuing their partnership with the
20 Jewish Federation of Philadelphia.

21 Executive Director Lassiter shared his recent
22 return from Springfield, Ohio, where he was on a

1 panel in preparation for Coretta Scott King's 99th
2 birthday. He noted Antioch College is the only
3 college with a Coretta Scott King Center and her
4 legacy permeates the area.

5 Interim Chair Jones questioned the number of
6 advisory councils established. Director Meck replied
7 there were 18 advisory councils.

8 Interim Chair Jones asked for a list of contact
9 information for the councils. He asked where
10 Director Meck would classify the councils in the
11 three PHRC regions. Director Meck stated the
12 majority of councils are in the western part of the
13 state.

14 Executive Director Lassiter commented 46 active
15 human relations commissions had been identified, with
16 many currently being formed. He noted there were
17 many advisory councils in the western part of
18 Pennsylvania due to growing anti-Semitism, growing
19 white nationalism, and growing white supremacy. He
20 noted PHRC gathers their data from various sources,
21 such as the Southern Poverty Law Center, Pennsylvania
22 State Police Heritage Unit, and the Anti-Defamation

1 League. He added the Anti-Defamation League has a
2 heat index map that identifies 74 active hate groups
3 in Pennsylvania.]

4 ***

5 MANAGEMENT REPORTS - Chief Counsel - No Report

6 ***

7 MANAGMENT REPORTS - Hearing Examiners

8 [Darlene Martin, Esquire, Hearing Examiner, reported
9 on an upcoming public hearing on June 4, 2026, in
10 Upper Cornell Township. Information about the
11 hearing is available on the website.]

12 ***

13 MANAGEMENT REPORTS - Pittsburgh Regional Office -

14 No Report

15 ***

16 MANAGEMENT REPORTS - Harrisburg Regional Office

17 [Heather Roth, Regional Office Director, Harrisburg,
18 reported her office continues to recruit staff,
19 particularly a clerical assistant and three civil
20 right investigators. She noted a job posting would
21 be going up soon and encouraged interested parties to
22 go to the civil service website.

1 Executive Director Lassiter stated PHRC also has
2 a LinkedIn page for prospective employees.]

3 ***

4 MANAGEMENT REPORTS - Philadelphia Regional Office -
5 No Report

6 ***

7 MANAGEMENT REPORTS - Communications

8 [Amanda Brothman Jumper, Director of Communications,
9 encouraged everyone from the public to follow PHRC's
10 social media accounts and website for upcoming public
11 events. She shared upcoming events on April 29,
12 2026, and May 4, 2026.]

13 ***

14 MANAGEMENT REPORTS - Education

15 [Fatim Byrd, Director of Education, reported youth
16 advocacy programs were running throughout multiple
17 schools in the Commonwealth and programming continued
18 for the programs.

19 Executive Director Lassiter asked Director Byrd
20 to briefly explain the civil and human rights clubs.

21 Director Byrd explained the clubs are ten-week
22 programs that teach youth about advocacy, civil

1 rights, and discrimination. Students learn about the
2 history of civil rights. At the end of the program,
3 students are given a civil rights certificate of
4 completion and get to enjoy a graduation ceremony.
5 He noted the programs are in collaboration with the
6 Civil Rights Outreach Division led by Director Meck.]

7 ***

8 MANAGEMENT REPORTS - Policy & Intergovernmental
9 Affairs

10 [Alana Burman, Director of Policy, Intergovernmental
11 Affairs and Mediation, reported the mediation team
12 closed eight EEOC cases in March. Regarding Policy
13 and Intergovernmental Affairs, she noted tracking and
14 working with some of the housing bills to make sure
15 fair housing interests are represented.]

16 ***

17 MANAGEMENT REPORTS - Fair Housing and Commercial
18 Property

19 [Executive Director Lassiter reported the goal of
20 Director Mellinger was to go back to the PHRC Speaks
21 Fair Housing in the 21st Century, originally hosted
22 by himself. He added the show would be important as

1 PHRC goes into the space of showing the
2 intersectionality of challenges happening in rural
3 areas against the backdrop of Governor Shapiro's \$1
4 billion affordable housing initiative. He also
5 encouraged the Philadelphia staff to look at PHRC's
6 second rendition of the White Paper.]

7 ***

8 MANAGEMENT REPORTS - Rural and Civic Engagement
9 [Caroline Griffin, Director of Rural and Civic
10 Engagement, reported, in March 2026, her division was
11 rolled out in the Capital Rotunda. Deputy Secretary
12 Heidi Secord from the Department of Agriculture and
13 Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn from DCNR were present.
14 She added her division is working on upcoming
15 projects with DCNR.]

16 ***

17 MANAGEMENT REPORTS - Enforcement and Compliance -
18 No Report

19 ***

20 MANAGEMENT REPORTS - Civil Rights and Outreach
21 [Sheryl Meck, Director, Civil Rights Division,
22 highlighted trainings specifically available to the

1 public under the Civil Rights Division on the
2 website. Current trainings were titled *Pa*
3 *Discrimination and Hate Trends; Communication Skills*
4 *for Challenged Communities; and Civil Rights Outreach*
5 *Coordinators (CROC) Overview*. Interested parties can
6 complete a training request on the website.]

7 ***

8 INTRODUCTIONS

9 [Executive Director Lassiter asked everyone to
10 introduce themselves and share what drives them.

11 Todd Schwartz, Supervisor Intake Unit,
12 Philadelphia Regional Office, shared he had been with
13 PHRC for seven years. He is motivated by the
14 opportunity to improve the life of Pennsylvanians,
15 specifically in Philadelphia. He enjoys working with
16 housing complaints to ensure housing equality is
17 there for everyone.

18 Joshua Nix, Supervisor Bridge Team, Philadelphia
19 Regional Office, shared he has been with PHRC for two
20 years and started in the civil rights division. He
21 is driven by the pursuit of justice and having the
22 opportunity to work in something that brings justice

1 and improves the community.

2 Moirra Crowe, Compliance Supervisor, Philadelphia
3 Regional Office, shared she has been at PHRC for
4 about one year and is driven by her family and her
5 children. She stated what PHRC does every day helps
6 and makes a difference for the next generation.

7 Lauren Cifoni, Civil Right Investigator,
8 Philadelphia Regional Office, shared she has been
9 with PHRC for one year. She is driven by the
10 opportunity to be a representation of the leader of
11 justice.

12 Airrion Bethea, Civil Rights Investigator,
13 Philadelphia Regional Office, shared he has been with
14 PHRC for 25 years. He is driven by knowing that he
15 can be someone to try to assist the public when it
16 may feel like there is a lot of bureaucracy. He
17 added, through his work, he knows people are not
18 getting someone on the phone who is just answering
19 questions but are speaking to someone who wants to do
20 something helpful.

21 Tiffany Briscoe, Philadelphia Regional Office,
22 shared she has been with PHRC since December 2025.

1 She is driven by the fact that what PHRC does on a
2 daily basis impacts many people, changes lives, and
3 shapes the future. She added, as long as she can
4 come into PHRC and do the work to help people, she is
5 creating a lasting impact.

6 Asha Nettles, Civil Rights Investigator,
7 Philadelphia Regional Office, stated she has been
8 with PHRC for two years. She is driven by having the
9 opportunity to find justice for people.

10 Commissioner Hardiman has been a commissioner
11 for eight years and worked for the Commission for 33
12 years prior to his appointment. He added PHRC was
13 founded in 1955 and has been working hard ever since
14 to reduce the number of significant issues raised by
15 individuals who have been treated differently because
16 of protected class status.

17 Interim Chair Jones shared he is currently a
18 Councilman in Philadelphia. He was the prior
19 director of the Minority Business Enterprise Council
20 that was responsible for inclusion in contracting in
21 Philadelphia. He was proud of PHRC, especially a
22 recent response to a clan advertisement. He added

1 working at PHRC is not a job but is a calling. He
2 was proud to serve with everyone.

3 Commissioner Patel has been a commissioner for
4 ten years from the Harrisburg area. He is driven by
5 the mission of PHRC and the dedication and passion
6 shown by the staff through their work.

7 Commissioner Agarwal is a gastroenterologist in
8 Pittsburgh and has been a commissioner for about nine
9 years.

10 Regional Director Roth has been with PHRC a
11 little over 13 years. She is driven by the fact that
12 there are people in Pennsylvania being discriminated
13 against and denied opportunities that they deserve.
14 She noted seeing every day as an opportunity to
15 correct the discrimination.

16 Regional Director Robinson has served in her
17 position for three and a half years. She is driven
18 by knowing PHRC can be a voice for the voiceless.
19 She noted people often do not know who to turn to or
20 how to file complaints. She added PHRC can go into
21 communities and help be the voice of those people.

22 Deputy Director Chang has been with PHRC for six

1 and a half years. She is driven by filling the gap
2 with discrimination and making a difference for those
3 who either do not have a voice or whose voice has
4 been silenced.

5 Hearing Examiner Cope has been with PHRC for
6 three years. She is driven by inherent human rights
7 and being a part of a Commission that is always
8 promoting justice, equality, and dignity.

9 Director Griffin has been with the Commonwealth
10 for 18 years, specifically with PHRC for the past
11 four years. She is driven to empower people who are
12 underserved and have nowhere else to turn. She is
13 also driven to help people find justice.

14 Director Brothman has been with PHRC for three
15 years. She is driven by her ability to tell the
16 story of PHRC to the public.

17 Director Meck has been with PHRC for two years
18 and is driven by her children and all children. She
19 is grateful to be in a space where she can think
20 about those who came before her.

21 Director Byrd has been at PHRC for two months
22 but added he has been in education for over 13 years.

1 He shared his core values are social justice and
2 love.

3 Director Goodenough has been with PHRC for three
4 months and is motivated by the desire to sharpen the
5 edge on the blade of justice.

6 Regional Director Harris has been with PHRC for
7 one year. She is driven by the belief that no one
8 should be penalized for being their authentic self.
9 She noted it takes courage to make the phone call
10 when you are being discriminated against and
11 potentially facing unemployment or facing losing
12 housing. She added the very least PHRC can do is
13 ensure if someone has the courage to make the phone
14 call, that they receive the best service possible.

15 Hearing Examiner Martin has been with PHRC for
16 four years and is driven to make the world a more
17 equitable, inclusive and accessible place for all.

18 Executive Director Lassiter has been with PHRC
19 for eight years. He is driven by the three pillars
20 of the civil rights movement; truth, love, and
21 kindness. He has enjoyed his time at PHRC and will
22 be moving to his next assignment on June 30, 2026.

1 He acknowledged the senior leadership team for
2 supporting him during the past two years as his
3 mother suffered from nine falls, two strokes and
4 almost died but is celebrating her 85th birthday on
5 May 1, 2026. He could not have done his work without
6 everyone at PHRC. He shared an African proverb that
7 says "I am because we are."

8 Interim Chief Counsel Chapman has been with PHRC
9 for about 27 years. She is driven by the mission of
10 the Commission. She added she is happy to work
11 towards eradicating discrimination every day.

12 Deputy Director Garcia has been with PHRC for
13 six years. He is driven by knowing he cannot get any
14 closer to Martin Luther King Jr.'s dream than by
15 doing his work at PHRC. He comes from the
16 investigative side and can relate to the experiences
17 of the investigators and intake staff.

18 Director Burman shared she is driven by the PHRC
19 mission and her ability to give folks like Director
20 Goodenough the blades, weapons, and polices they need
21 to bring justice.

22 Special Assistant Fisher has been with PHRC for

1 three months. He is driven by good governance and
2 knowing bureaucracy can work because of everyone
3 fighting from the top to the bottom. He noted PHRC
4 is the keystone at the center edge of what is
5 happening in the larger echelons of government down
6 to the neighbors in the community.

7 Administrative Officer Walters has been with the
8 commission for 15 and a half years. She is driven to
9 help people get justice, so others do not have to go
10 through the things she has.]

11 ***

12 OLD BUSINESS - NONE

13 ***

14 NEW BUSINESS - NONE

15 ***

16 PUBLIC COMMENT

17 MS. WALTERS:

18 We have three items to vote on and then
19 we can move on to public comments. The
20 first item that you have is the
21 Collaboration Letter Policy for the
22 Commissioners to vote on. We need to

1 call for a motion. It's for passage
2 and adoption.

3 INTERIM CHAIR JONES:

4 Is there a motion?

5 COMMISSIONER HARDIMAN:

6 Yes, there is a motion.

7 INTERIM CHAIR JONES:

8 Is there a second?

9 COMMISSIONER AGRAWAL:

10 Second.

11 INTERIM CHAIR JONES:

12 It has been moved and properly
13 seconded. All those in favor will
14 signify by saying aye. All those
15 opposed?

16 [The motion carried unanimously.]

17 ***

18 MS. WALTERS:

19 Next is the Commission Initiated
20 Complaints for passage and adoption.

21 INTERIM CHAIR JONES:

22 Is there a motion?

1 COMMISSIONER HARDIMAN:

2 So moved.

3 INTERIM CHAIR JONES:

4 Is there a second?

5 COMMISSIONER AGRAWAL:

6 Second.

7 INTERIM CHAIR JONES:

8 It has been moved and properly

9 seconded. All those in favor of will

10 signify by saying aye. All those

11 opposed?

12 [The motion carried unanimously.]

13 ***

14 MS. WALTERS:

15 The third item is Michael Law Guidance

16 for passage of second draft, adoption

17 and promulgation.

18 INTERIM CHAIR JONES:

19 Is there a motion to adopt?

20 COMMISSIONER HARDIMAN:

21 Motion to adopt.

22 COMMISSIONER AGRAWAL:

1 Second.

2 INTERIM CHAIR JONES:

3 It has been moved and properly
4 seconded. All those in favor of will
5 signify by saying aye. All those
6 opposed?

7 [The motion carried unanimously.]

8 ***

9 [Executive Director Lassiter acknowledged the
10 importance of all three votes. He pointed out the
11 Commission Initiated Complaints allows PHRC to follow
12 Section 8.1 of the PHRA.]

13 ***

14 [Whitney Downard, Reporter, Pennsylvania Capital-Star
15 asked for clarification of quorum rules. She shared
16 her understanding was there would not be a quorum
17 with the resignation of Commissioner Yiengst.

18 Interim Chair Jones stated, based on the number
19 of Commissioners, quorum was four Commissioners as
20 established at the beginning of the meeting.

21 ***

22 ADJOURNMENT

1 [Ms. Walter noted the next item on the Agenda was the
2 adjournment.]

3

4 INTERIM CHAIR JONES:

5 Is there a motion to adjourn?

6

7 COMMISSIONER HARDIMAN:

8 So moved.

9

10 COMMISSIONER AGRAWAL:

11 Second.

12

13 INTERIM CHAIR JONES:

14 It has been moved and seconded. All
15 those in favor signify by saying aye.

16 All those opposed?

17 (The motion carried unanimously.)

18 ***

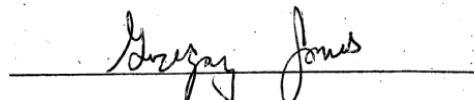
19 [The meeting adjourned at 3:38 p.m. The next meeting
20 date is May 18, 2026.]

21 ***

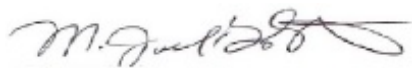
22

CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that the foregoing summary minutes of the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission was reduced to writing by me or under my supervision, and that the minutes accurately summarize the substance of the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission meeting.



Gregory Jones,
Minute Clerk
Sargent's Court Reporting
Service, Inc.



M. Joel Bolstein,
Chair



o/b/o Commissioner Mayur Patel
Mayur Patel,
Secretary