



**Bloomington/Monroe County  
Human Rights Commission**

**March 3, 2025 Special Meeting Minutes  
Hooker Conference Room, City Hall  
5:00 p.m.**

The Bloomington/Monroe County Human Rights Commission met for a special meeting at 5:00 p.m. on Monday, March 3, 2025, in the Hooker Conference Room of Showers City Hall.

**Commissioners Attending:** Sharon Baker (online via Zoom), Stephen Coover, Ryne Shadday, Emma Williams, Lilliana Young.

**Staff Attending:** BMCHRC Director Michael Shermis, BMCHRC Assistant Annabelle Vosmeier

**Public Attending:** Elaine Terkhorn, London Montgomery, Melanie Davis.

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**Call to Order:** Chair Shadday called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

**Report from Staff**

1. **Case Updates:** Six new cases and one reopened case are in the intake phase. As these cases are formally filed, they will be assigned to commissioners beginning with Williams and Coover. This is far more complaints than typical.

**Unfinished Business**

1. **Safe Haven for Transgender Life Resolution:** Young presented the draft resolution as originally presented and commissioners provided thoughts and comments. Coover suggested language providing recognition to businesses and organizations that already support the transgender community. Williams asked for more clarification on what different bodies' responsibilities would be and what actions could be taken: for example, state that the BMCHRC would "serve as a resource," rather than "advise". Baker mentioned an Alexandria, VA, resolution that states that the City would ensure that all laws and ordinances would be consistent with the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment. Questions were sent to the Bloomington Police Department regarding LGBTQ+ policy; hope to have response by the next meeting.

Commissioners discussed the potential of backlash and Williams provided perspective that legally there are some actions that the BMCHRC cannot take. Raised the issue that federal backlash could result in loss of funding and resources for other programs. Shadday stated that it is the BMCHRC's responsibility to do what's right and let others worry about the optics, etc. Legal and City Council will decide what risks to take. Young expressed that the trans community is in the crosshairs and provided a personal plea that the community needs others to stand with them and take the blows for them; she continued that the state doesn't like Bloomington anyway, so if they're already targeting the City, let it mean something.

London Montgomery provided comments about the Worcester, MA, “Sanctuary City for Transgender and Gender Diverse People” resolution. Suggested that language be borrowed from that resolution. Continued with the statement that the idea of backlash is real: trans people are being used as an easy-to-target wedge issue that can make it easier to go after everyone. Disagreed with the statement of another trans woman she met at the statehouse who said “In order to be tolerated, we need to be tolerable.” Rather, the trans community cannot fly under the radar anymore; the day after they removed the word transgender from the Stonewall National Monument, 1000 people arrived to protest. This resolution does not have to say anything new that is not already enshrined in the Human Rights Ordinance.

Discussion of being careful with language so that Legal won’t push it back for review, wasting time. However, commissioners settled on starting with the strongest language possible and letting Legal trim it back as necessary. BMCHRC staff will draft the resolution based on Young’s language, the Worcester, MA, language, and the conversations from this special meeting. It will be reviewed, revised, and voted on at the March 17 meeting.

#### **Public Input**

1. None.

**Adjournment:** Young moved to adjourn; Williams seconded. Chair Shadday adjourned the meeting at 6:07 p.m.