



**Bloomington/Monroe County
Human Rights Commission**

**January 20, 2026 Meeting Minutes
Allison Conference Room, City Hall
5:00 p.m.**

The Bloomington/Monroe County Human Rights Commission met at 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 20, 2026, in the Allison Conference Room of Showers City Hall.

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

Staff Attending: BMCHRC Liaison Michael Shermis, BMCHRC Assistant Annabelle Vosmeier, Assistant City Attorney Taylor Brown, Legal Intern Nicole Stuve.

Public Attending: None.

Call to Order

1. Vice Chair Williams brought the BMCHRC to order at 5:00 PM.

Approval of Minutes of December 15, 2025 Meeting

1. Jackson moved to approve the minutes from December 15, 2025. Young seconded. Passed unanimously by roll call vote, 5-0, Baker absent at beginning of meeting.

Report from Staff

1. **Fourth Quarter Report.** Young moved to approve the quarterly report; Jackson seconded. Passed unanimously by roll call vote, 5-0, Baker absent at beginning of meeting.
2. **Appointments.** Shermis reported that Young and Shadday have been reappointed by the Office of the Mayor with their appointment letters to be sent soon. Bensberg will be reappointed by the City Council after an official vote by the City Council in February. Hopi Stosberg has been designated the City Council liaison to the Commission; she will receive packets and attend at least once per year.
3. **Speakers.** Shermis reported that Nick Minaudo from Indiana Legal Services has agreed to present at the February meeting. Ellen Wu, a member of the Indiana Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, has agreed to present at the April meeting on the advisory committee's recent publication on hate crimes in Indiana.
4. **Arts/Essay Contest.** The Commission selected "Where do you see people caring for each other in our community?" as the 2026 theme for the Arts/Essay Contest. Baker volunteered to judge art and Young volunteered to judge writing. Williams volunteered to judge either category after the opportunity is offered to Bensberg.

Reports from Commissioners

1. **Coover** was approached by Milestones Clinic and Health Resources (a Stone Belt

program). They are interested in presenting to us and shared a resource. June was discussed as a potential opportunity for them to present.

2. **Jackson and Shadday** shared updates about The Front Door, which has received a significant donor-designated gift through the Community Foundation alongside a Sophia Travis Social Services grant through Monroe County for programming in 2026. A roller-skating community building event will be held on February 22.

Open Cases

1. Williams's disability discrimination in employment case. Affidavit was sent to respondent following complainant interview.
2. Young's national origin discrimination in employment case. Complainant interview with investigating commissioner will be held next week.
3. Bensberg's disability discrimination in employment case: Requested some additional information before issuing a finding.
4. Jackson's racial discrimination in housing case. An NPC finding was issued last year. The complainant appealed and rescheduled two times due to health emergencies. The appeal has been put on hold until his health allows him to be present or make a decision about the appeal.

Assignment of New Cases

1. No cases are currently in development. Shermis reported that he had assisted someone with an accommodations issue; she contacted the Fair Housing Center and received support. Another individual described a housing issue, but discrimination was not evident since the respondent had offered several reasonable accommodations and solutions. With Legal's approval, the case was denied. The individual returned with an unrelated, more minor, inquiry; after staff assisted, the individual explained that he was just interested in the first, denied, case.

Unfinished Business

1. **Municipal ID program:** Brown presented on behalf of the Legal department. He underlined the Commission's scope under city law, which is limited to investigations and publications that minimize or eliminate discrimination. Legal's interpretation is that the Commission is authorized only to perform the powers and duties enumerated in code, which do not extend to advocacy. In response, Shadday submitted his resignation from the Commission. Brown confirmed that the Municipal ID program and LGBTQ+ Home Resolution could not be pursued by the Commission. Commissioners asked follow-up questions about what could be discussed in meetings and what activities could still occur.

New Business

1. **LGBTQ+ Home Resolution:** Dismissed as above.
2. **Annual Report 2026 Goals and Initiatives:** Staff will draft material aligned with the BMCHRC's legal scope.

Public Input

3. None.

Adjournment: Williams adjourned the meeting at 6:20 p.m.