

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION



Erin Agidius
Chair
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Regular Meeting
~Minutes~

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<https://www.ci.moscow.id.us/450/Human-Rights-Commission>

**Tuesday,
November 18, 2025**

4:00 PM

**Mayor's Conference Room
206 E. 3rd St.**

The meeting was called to order at 4:03 p.m.

PRESENT: Erin Agidius, John Freeland, Jana Argersinger, Nicholas Smiley-Kallas, Rula Awwad-Rafferty, Jim Huggins, Elizabeth Stevens
ABSENT: Emily Mowrer, Jonathan Hukill, Vanessa Stevens
STAFF: Anthony Dahlinger (staff liaison), Karen Potter (deputy clerk)
GUESTS: Future city councilmembers: Evan Holmes, Sage McCetich

REGULAR AGENDA

1. Mission of the Human Rights Commission

The mission statement was read at the beginning of the meeting.

2. Approval of Human Rights Commission Minutes for October 21, 2025 (ACTION ITEM)

Minutes presented for approval.

PROPOSED ACTIONS: Approve minutes as presented; approve minutes with amendments; or take such other action deemed appropriate.

Agenda Item #4: Changed the vote from \$500 to \$300 for button purchase.

Huggins moved to accept the minutes as amended, and Freeland seconded the motion. Vote: Ayes: Seven. Nays: None. Abstentions: None. Motion carried.

3. Review of Calendar (ACTION ITEM)

Review upcoming meetings and events.

PROPOSED ACTIONS: Add/edit items to the calendar; or take such other action deemed appropriate.

There were no changes to the calendar.

4. Button Purchase (ACTION ITEM)

Reorder buttons for distribution at events.

PROPOSED ACTIONS: Vote to approve \$300.00 for the purchase of buttons or take such other action deemed appropriate.

There was discussion. Once materials are ordered, Stevens will host an event to assemble the buttons. The previous order was placed by Mowrer, and those details are needed before a vote can be taken.

Stevens moved to table this item until the next meeting, and Freeman seconded the motion. Vote: Ayes: Seven. Nays: None. Abstentions: None. Motion carried.

5. Public Comment and Response to Previous Comments (limited to 10 minutes)

Members of the public may speak to the Commission regarding matters NOT on the agenda or currently pending before the Commission. Please state your name and city of residence for the record, and limit your remarks to three (3) minutes.

Holmes and McCetich introduced themselves as council members-elect.

REPORTS

1. Latah County Human Rights Task Force Report

The Living Voices presentation, "Native Vision," was held at Moscow High School and to fifth-grade classes at Moscow elementary schools. There was a public performance at the 1912 Center and additional shows at Lapwai Middle and High Schools. A total of 600 people attended. Next year's presentation will be "Fly to Freedom," about female pilots in World War II. It was suggested that more college outreach could be done for these presentations and that they be held on campus. Muneta said it might be seen as a DEI program. The call for nominations for the Rosa Parks Award has been distributed. The task force has begun planning the MLK Breakfast, with the theme of immigration. A decision regarding the commission's funding for the breakfast should be made by the end of the week.

2. Supporting Diverse Learners Report – V. Stevens

V. Stevens sent an earlier email with a report about this forum. About 12-14 people attended, and the discussion was very engaging. With more notice and publicity, this event could have attracted a larger turnout from community members. It was suggested that another social justice forum be held to repeat or build on this one.

3. Sheikh Award Ceremony

Awwad-Rafferty did a great job as the master of ceremonies for this award. The Moscow High School Human Rights Club attended to support Lee Anne Eareckson. The Sheikh children received the link to watch the ceremony and were very happy with Mayor Bettge's decision to honor both recipients.

4. Better Together Dinner – Argersinger

Notes from student conversations and responses to table topics were shared with attendees. There was discussion about sharing this document with the incoming mayor and city council members,

highlighting the dinner's success and how the event aligned with the commission's work. Additionally, there was talk about choosing a non-religious venue for a future event that would serve as a community space, such as Inland Oasis or the International Programs Office. Students appreciated visible symbols like signs. Going forward, more financial support will be needed from community organizations. There was mention of forming a subcommittee to compile comments and develop achievable goals, with Awwad-Rafferty leading this effort. It was also emphasized that subcommittees should have an agenda, keep notes, and meet in a public setting, such as city hall. The University of Idaho ASUI will be asked to collaborate and reach out to more students for a future event. The task force will also be asked to collaborate. Social media was the most effective channel for promoting the first dinner. Argersinger will email dinner costs to the commissioners for future planning and asked the staff liaison to revisit the idea of virtual meetings for commissioners at regular and subcommittee meetings with city administration. This item will remain on the agenda.

5. Kenworthy Film

In October, a member of the public expressed concern about a film shown at the Kenworthy Theatre. It was noted that, while the commission wants to hear all sides and perspectives, it does not have control over private entities, and citizens' concerns should be directed to those private entities that do have authority. There was a discussion. The commission will keep this item on the list of future social justice forum topics and provide broader education on free speech, discrimination, and harassment. It was noted that it might be better to serve the community by avoiding focusing on specific issues. This item will be removed from future agendas.

6. Marketing and Messaging – Mowrer

There was no report.

7. Letter to the City Council – Agidius

Agidius recently sent a letter to Mayor Bettge and the City Council. It was a follow-up to a September conversation about funding concerns. The letter asked that any future expectations or commission requirements be provided in writing. They have not responded yet.

8. Expiring Commissioner Terms

Four commissioner terms will end in December: Argersinger, Hukill, Mowrer, and Smiley-Kallas. Potter will inform the commissioners once she receives the procedure for expiring commissioners from the City Clerk and clarify if any action is required from them.

9. Report on Hate Incidents / Moscow as an Inclusive Community

No incidents were reported. City attorney Mia Bautista will attend the December meeting to discuss the Bias Reporting System.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Argersinger requested that a new item be added to the December agenda: Coalition for Human Rights Groups.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 4:58 p.m.

Erin Agidius, Chair

HOST NOTES FROM BETTER TOGETHER DINNER 9/29/25

Conversation with Students

Common themes and highlights (DRAFT—Jana and all)

Welcoming experiences

- Safe spaces: One World, Cafe Artista, Bookpeople, UU church, Mass, student groups, cultural events such as Cruise the World and Dia de los Muertos
- Key people in the community are anchors

Concerns

- Closure of identity-focused centers
 - University's way of handling closures
 - Feeling unseen, stressed
 - Freshman especially lacking support
- Aggressive, even frightening incidents

Ideas/solutions

- Community members showing up at difficult/unwelcoming events to show support (for example, pride flags are huge)—or supportive chalk art any time, with no agenda.
- Get the word out more broadly on campus about reporting hate incidents

NOTES FROM TABLE HOSTS

Host: Rula

- OMA + CAMP programs- saw major changes
 - Syllabus week used to have
 - Only one teacher mentioned diversity and respect
- Feel stressed about lack of being seen
- First office transitions
 - Feel for freshmen- don't have that support, not like family
- Felt welcome at Mass, Student Group, then Dia de los Muertos event, the event about Chinese New Year and cultural events, Cruise the world

- Unsupported when the dean told everyone's groups were being closed, they ended student questions
- Key people in the community help make it better and inclusive. Some people are anchors for support and trust acted in their leadership capacity and helped for lots of folks... Victor, for example

Host: Elizabeth Stevens

What helped:

- Pride flags are huge
- Yard signs (Free Palestine, Human Rights)
- Accepting spaces (One World, Book People, Cafe Artista, UU Church)

What hurt:

- Had pride sticker on car... windows got smashed (happened 3 years ago)
- 2 incidents- guy yelled to smile, on Main Street, near One World/Book People; Guys in big truck would drive around and yell, targeted people in 1s and 2s
- Anti-abortion people- one called this student a bitch (Stand in front with Pride Flag?)
- Yelling Preacher- It's fine to have a different opinion, but they shouldn't push it. Particularly graphic signs.
- Proselytizing Christians who pretended to be philosophy majors- conversation felt like bullying
- They feel pretty safe over all, just aware that Christ Church owns a lot of businesses. They are not in your face... pretty chill.
- It would be helpful if community members would hold pride flags when the extremists are out. Or chalk art, left any time, that is supportive, with no agenda.

What can we do?

- Feeding is good
- Open events
- Need for a third space... R Center is good space
- Table on campus
- Crafternoons (used to be in women's center)
- Fund for people who are food insecure or have other issues

What do you wish people understood?

- They are making it not okay to talk about things (eg. abortion). Censoring our education. "We pay to go here."
- Can't mention "women" in violence prevention. Discussion of sexuality, abortion forbidden as "promoting an ideology"
- Can't talk about minorities, have to talk about the majority, keep it vague
- Research bans
- Panel of professors- to talk about what they can't talk about in class

- They got rid of some of the sexual harassment prevention (had to do with sexual and gender diversity)
- Trying to get rid of Athena Program
- Professors and University clear- no one gets dead named
- Blaine Eckels- cares- cool
- Feels like there's no place to support them, especially for new students
- Things are changing too quickly
- Center- Diversity center?

Host: Molly Pannkuk

- Having jobs locally that can help people stay
- On-campus students stay on campus
- Bus is a great resource- it's great that it's free, AND a lot of things are walking distance
- Do business students do projects (small business), involve them at Farmer's Market or Winter Market
- Aquatic Center is a great resource
- Moscow Glass Gallery
- Family connection and a long time connection with the church
- This LDS Church is very connected with the university
- The library is too small. Repurpose the old building
- Carousel in the mall. In Rexburg "Kidsburg" inexpensive play space. Sponsors
- Not in town, but in outlying towns in the country, people raise their eyebrows about Asians
- Downtown is more vibrant
- Fearful of having citizenship revoked
- Town presence on campus- displays (churches)
- Students are willing to engage
- Meet on own terms
- Town and county connection
- Listening with compassion

Host: Unidentified

- Andrew: Electrical engineer
- Alexa: Poly Sci
- Alia: Colorguard/band
- Ads on campus events- overwhelm
- Club limitations
- Invite Comm to events- how?
- Admin not showing up after Del
 - Space for community members to show up
- Funding
- IT Transparency
- Safe spaces in community to talk issues- faces

- Org collaborations

Host: Unidentified

- Campus/city divides
- UI and Moscow are decently integrated, compared to Pullman
- UI-Moscow work together relatively closely
- Feeling welcomed- everywhere she goes feels representation is fairly balanced
- Moscow is the city of the arts- maximize that representation
- Humble Burger music scene
- Mikey's music scene
- Lower isolation in new student experience
- Screen on the green attracts Moscow families
- Host events on campus where more students will attend
- Sporting events- are there more townies there?
- ¾ of students at K-12 parents are professors
- Moscow city biking system is excellent
- Young people asking for things to do
- People vs actions
- Farmers' Market
- Transportation accessible/ pickleball welcoming
- Hobbies/interests

Host: Jim Huggins

There were four guests at the table: Two American women, students at the U of I, who are friends. One is originally from Orofino, Idaho, but recently moved from Atlanta, and one from Atlanta, Georgia. They are both graduate students. This is their second year in Moscow. A married couple, the wife is a doctoral student at the U of I, and her husband. He isn't working due to visa restrictions. They are from Bangladesh. This is their second or third year in Moscow.

- Positive Comments: They were all happy to be at the dinner and discuss their experiences here and in the US.
 - All said: Moscow is a beautiful town, and the surroundings are beautiful and comforting. It does not seem as crowded as where they are from. There are some nice cultural things to do here and in Pullman, in the towns, and at the U of I and WSU.
 - The Bangladeshies also liked that there were other students from Bangladesh and other countries from their region to get together with. They felt welcome at the U of I for the most part. They felt that Moscow has a clean town.
- Negative Comments:
 - The Americans said "Moscow does not seem as friendly as Atlanta." "It is harder to meet people here." One said "People look at me like I'm strange or different,

when I am at Safeway, and they make me feel uncomfortable. Safeway is the grocery store near me. I do not get that feeling at Winco or WalMart though”
“There is no shopping here.” “Moscow is not as friendly as Orofino.”

- The two Bangladeshies said that they felt looked down upon by some people in town. “ Some people just do not understand us when we talk, or pretend to not understand us, or they just ignore us.” (to me their English was very good), and they said that English was their official language in Bangladesh. Bangali is spoken by most of the people. They said that they were very afraid to say some things because of the current atmosphere. (For interest, I asked them about Trump, and they would not say a thing, they were just quiet, and looked at me) The Bangladeshi couple were afraid to go home for summer break or vacations because they felt that they would not be let back into the US. They were especially afraid that since the husband just has a visa to accompany his wife, he might not be let in, even if she were to be. They also said that their families had received visas to come and visit, but they canceled their trip to the US because of fears that they would not be let in or could be rounded up and sent home, despite their visas.
- They all agreed that the townspeople did not seem as friendly to them as those people on campus.

