



LEHIGH COUNTY HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION
(LCHRC)
MEETING MINUTES
March 11, 2025

The meeting of the LCHRC was held at 6:00 p.m. by Zoom video conference. A recording of this meeting is available at <https://www.lehighcounty.org/Departments/Community-Economic-Development/Human-Relations-Commission>.

ATTENDING

Joanna Armstrong (JA), Angela Baio (AB), Amy Beck (AmB), Michael Blicher Jr. (MB), Liz Bradbury (LB), Tony Branco (TB), Guillermo Lopez Jr. (GL), Luis A. Perez Jr. (LP), Christopher Raad (CR), Pas Simpson (PS), Tony Swartz (TS) and Carmen Bell (CB) ex-officio non-voting advisor

County Staff: Catherine Roseberry (CR) Assistant Solicitor, Frank Kane (FK) (absent)

Public: None

ABSENT – Andrew Gildner (AG), Joyce Moore (JM)

AGENDA ITEMS

Call to order at 6:02 p.m. by LB.

Roll call by LB.

LB reminded the Commissioners they must turn on their cameras when there is a vote. Quorum is present.

LB called for review and approval of minutes from February 11, 2025 meeting. Discussion ensued. Motion to approve the minutes as corrected this evening by TB, seconded by PS. Unanimous voice approval to approve and accept the minutes.

LB noted the links to the previous Zoom meetings (September through January) are not currently available. Staff is working with IT to correct the issue; there will be an update at the April meeting.

LB noted that the January 14 minutes were incorrect in that Luis Perez's attendance was incorrectly noted. PS made a motion to amend the minutes of the January 14, 2025 meeting to reflect that Luis Perez was not present; GL seconded the motion. Unanimous voice approval; the minutes were amended as moved.

OLD BUSINESS

Complaint Form

The complaint form works but requires a computer and computer knowledge to download the form and save it, to go back into the saved form, to fill out the form and save it again; and then to attach it to an email and email it to staff. LB went on to say that someone did attempt to fill out the form on their phone and contacted staff when it did not work which is what the instructions on the website direct a complainant to do: contact staff if they need help to fill out the form.

TS contacted LB to be sure the complaint form was 'accessible.' TS reported that the form was not accessible but after further testing, it is now accessible. LB asked TS to explain what making it 'accessible' does and who benefits from that change? TS explained that people who are blind or have some visual impairment use a screen reader. A screen reader voices everything that is on the screen; there are many types of controls on the screen reader which allow one to dig deeper and to move around on the page. TS confirmed that he has entered data and saved it and reopened it and all the data he entered was still there so the complaint form is working the way it should; it is accessible. LB thanked TS for making sure this essential type of accessibility is available on this site.

Training

LB redid the training video and she will give the YouTube link to the group. If any of the Board members are aware of an organization that wants training on how the Lehigh County Human Relations Ordinance works or on the basic idea of how to file complaints, contact LB.

LB has been contacted by Dr. Jennifer Swan who is Vice Chairperson of the Allentown Human Relations Commission (AHRC) to conduct training specifically for the AHRC which does have significantly less protected classes than the LCHRC. LB will also discuss with them the ramifications of the LCHRC ordinance and its relationship to the AHRC's ordinance.

PS was speaking with the Chairperson of the AHRC, Jose Rivera, who had questions about that subject, too.

LB produced a 90-minute video on how to investigate a human relations complaint.

TB suggested LB invite representatives from the 26 municipalities to one session so everyone gets exactly the same information. He also suggested inviting the press. LB liked the idea and thought perhaps it might be a ZOOM meeting.

CB questioned whether it would be beneficial for the members of the Training Committee to also be trained on how to investigate a complaint and on how to explain how the Ordinance works. LB and PS thought it was a great idea. LB suggested making a date between meetings where the committee members could watch the explanation about the Ordinance and LB could answer any questions they might have. Further discussion ensued.

Logo

CB reported that the United Way intern working on the distribution list is on spring break but is expected to return next week. LB asked CB to notify her when the United Way intern returns so that LB can work with her and CB to prepare the letter and get it sent out.

NEW BUSINESS

Preliminary Outreach on a Complaint

Staff contacted LB with the name and phone number of a prospective complainant who contacted the office after realizing they needed help filling out the complaint form. LB discussed how to fill out the complaint form with that individual; they were expected to meet with LP.

LB discussed this individual's circumstances with regard to protected class and did note that simply because someone is of a protected class that does not necessarily mean that the negative impact of something that happened at work is because of being of a protected class. LP will follow-up with contacting this individual; however, LB pointed out that it is the complainant's responsibility to contact LCHRC; it is not the LCHRC's job to chase them down. More to follow on how this moves forward.

TB asked CR whether the LCHRC would have to respond on the perspective complainant's information if a Right-To-Know request were filed. CR replied that it is definitely not something that the LCHRC would be required to disclose.

CLOSING AGENDA ITEMS

Citizens Input (on Non-Agenda items) – None

LCHRC Announcements

It was requested that the County of Lehigh’s Information Technology (IT) department “track” and keep record of the number of times the LCHRC website was accessed and to monthly report those numbers. LB reported website tracking information from February 2025 at 678 ‘hits’ and 156 ‘unique hits’ (A ‘hit’ is counted as the number of times a web page has been viewed. A ‘unique hit’ only counts the 1st time a person visits a page from a single computer so if the same person from the same computer views the site 5 times, it counts as one hit.) LB joked that she constantly refers to the site and that 200 of the hits might be from her.

AB asked whether there was any interest in doing a training in Northampton County about the LCHRC Ordinance. LB noted there is a new slide in the Ordinance training that says “if you are not in Lehigh County, but would like to pass a similar ordinance in your community, contact us for help and information about how to do so.”

LB took a moment to remind everyone that the LCHRC is doing the right thing. There had been a suggestion in Pennsylvania to roll back protections that are interpreted to protect transgender people. That is exactly why, LB stated, the Commission had to enshrine these protected classes in law. Protected classes have been enshrined in law and are therefore not at risk of being overturned due to interpretation by the State.

Motion to Adjourn

LB called for a motion to adjourn; TB made the motion. GL seconded that motion. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Cynthia L. King