



LEHIGH COUNTY HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION
(LCHRC)
MEETING MINUTES
January 13, 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), Andrew Gildner (AG), Laura Gutierrez (LG), Joyce Moore (JM), Luis A. Perez Jr (LP), Christopher Raad (CR), Julianna Rodrigues (JR), Pas Simpson (PS).

County Staff: Catherine Roseberry (CMR) Assistant Solicitor, Cyndi King (staff) (absent)

Public: None

ABSENT – Carmen Bell (CB),

AGENDA ITEMS

Call to order at 6:03 p.m. by LB.

LB announced website tracking statistics for December 2025: 367 hits and 140 unique hits.

Roll call by LB.

LB reminded the Commissioners to turn their cameras on if a vote is being cast. However, no voting is expected for this meeting. Quorum is present.

Statements of Financial Interest (SOFI) forms were emailed to the Board.

LB directed everyone to fill them out and email them to staff.

LB called for review and approval of minutes from December 9, 2025 meeting. Motion to approve the minutes by AmB, seconded by PS. No opposition; minutes approved.

OLD BUSINESS

Human Relations Ordinance Passages Throughout the Area

Delaware County has passed its county-wide Human Relations Ordinance. There are 584,000 people in Delaware County. LB has seen the text of their ordinance and she says it is “great.” They kept most of the Lehigh County language but it does not include height and weight; and instead of 180-days to file a complaint, they have 120-days to file; and lastly, they did not enumerate healthcare providers, as provided within the Lehigh County Ordinance, but used the limited list found in the PA MCARE Act. They do protect employees in all businesses rather than just larger businesses as Chester County did. Delaware County is moving forward with their commission.

LB reminded the group that passage of Lehigh County’s 2024 ordinance provided language used in the ordinances of City of Allentown, Collingdale Borough, Chester County, and Delaware County and that 1,669,000 people are now protected from discrimination who were not previously protected.

If Northampton County can be encouraged to pass a similar ordinance, over 2-million people would be protected. CB is working on this.

Training Update

LB did a presentation at PRISM, the LGBTQ Community Center within the American Baptist Church in Pottstown. This is one of only two LGBT community centers in Montgomery County.

LB will do a two-hour training on February 5 at 5:30 p.m. at Allentown City Hall for the Allentown Human Relations Commissioners on investigating and resolving complaints. LB suggested that if any Lehigh County Commissioners have not taken the training or have not participated in an investigation to please consider attending this one.

Logo Update

CR sent LB three logo suggestions. LB shared the images on her screen. CR used Artificial Intelligence (AI) to generate the three logos. Discussion ensued. LB suggested the group come up with a few more AI-generated images for the February meeting.

Update on Complaints that have been brought forth

A new complaint came in on Christmas Day. LB spoke with the complainant and based upon all the information provided which includes 14 documents of evidence, this is clearly a *prima facie* case based upon protected class. TB and AmB volunteered to investigate this complaint with LB. LB requested one or two more investigators who would be able to possibly go with her during the day to speak directly with the respondents. LP volunteered.

LB reviewed the 2025 complaints filed with the LCHRC. There were 8 complaints. One named a private landlord as respondent; one named a private business as respondent; and six complaints named government agencies as respondents.

MOU with Allentown on HRC

Craig Beavers, Chairperson, Allentown Human Relations Commission (AHRC) contacted LB asking whether there had been any movement on this MOU between the County and City. The content of MOU provided the understanding if there was a complaint filed against the county, then city commission would take it and if there was a complaint filed against the city then the county commission would take it. CMR suggested that LB take this up with the new DCED Director, Samantha Pearson, to outline LCHRC's interest in this process which would ultimately come through the Lehigh County Board of Commissioners (BOC) and Allentown City Council. Craig Beavers told LB he will speak with Santo Napoli, Allentown's new president of city council about the MOU.

Rules & Procedures Committee

LB, TB, MB, AmB, JM (Chair), and LP comprise this committee. They had a productive meeting last week. JM reported the committee decided to have meeting recordings posted to the website until the minutes are approved and become final at which time staff will post the final meeting minutes and delete the meeting recordings. This will be voted on by the LCHRC at the February meeting.

The committee would also like LCHRC to add the Crown Act to the ordinance. JM sees this going before the BOC along with other nuances and tweaks to the ordinance and it is not yet time for a vote on this. LB added the Crown Act is now part of the state law, too, and also AHRC's law.

CMR agreed with JM's idea of presenting a consolidated amendment or revision to the BOC and added that the administration might have some thoughts to add as well. CMR suggested that [the committee] work with Samantha Pearson on the revisions. Discussion ensued on the recordings. CMR will check on utilizing

the recording only for the purpose of the preparation of the minutes and not for presentation to the public as a record.

Discussion ensued on the Sunshine Act requirements.

Another procedure being discussed by the committee is the policy that the LCHRC will meet virtually once per month. JM would like this also voted on at the February meeting.

JM noted committee discussion on a decorum clause which she stated is very important to have language to be gentle with each other and to be respectful of one another and expecting respect from the public; there must be a policy on decorum.

Another policy topic is limiting public comment to three-minutes.

Another topic is appointing a *pro tem* chair to run the meeting in the instance that both the chair and vice-chair are not present.

Another procedural policy being discussed is a basic policy for the staff person accepting complaints – how they come in and how the Commission tends to them.

Another topic being discussed by LB, CMR, and also the committee is the policy for absences being zeroed out if a commissioner is reapplying.

JM reiterated that the committee's focus is to come up with a list of items the LCHRC should be concerned about and then to write language for the committee to [present it at a regular meeting] and then create draft modifications to the ordinance.

LB spoke of a committee meeting attended by TB and JM where they discussed if a commissioner has a disability which could cause a problem with them being able to attend a meeting, the commissioner must, at the time they begin to serve, relay what that problem is so that, in the same way a business accommodates an employee, the Commission can make accommodations so they will be able to attend.

LB reminded the group that no Human Relations Commission in the state has a handbook of policies. So, once again, as other commissions ask to use LCHRC policies, LCHRC is looked to not only come up with the language of the law but also to produce a handbook.

NEW BUSINESS - None

CLOSING AGENDA ITEMS

Citizens Input (on Non-Agenda items) - None

LCHRC Announcements - None

Motion to Adjourn

LB called for a motion to adjourn; TB made the motion; multiple seconds.
Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Cynthia L. King