



LEHIGH COUNTY HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION
(LCHRC)
MEETING MINUTES
October 14, 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), Laura Gutierrez (LG), Andrew Gildner (AG), Joyce Moore (JM), Christopher Raad (CR), Julianna Rodrigues (JR), Pas Simpson (PS), and Carmen Bell (CB) ex-officio non-voting advisor

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

Public: None

ABSENT – Luis A. Perez Jr (LP)

AGENDA ITEMS

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

Roll call by LB.

LB reminded the Commissioners they must turn on their cameras twice during the meeting: once for roll call and again if there is a vote. Quorum is present.

LB noted that the website had 944 hits with 191 unique hits.

Two new commissioners (LG, JR) were introduced to the group. The entire

Board introduced themselves and briefly spoke about their roles on and off the Board.

LB called for review and approval of minutes from September 9, 2025 meeting. Motion to approve the minutes by AmB, seconded by MB. No opposition; motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS

Human Relations Ordinance Passages Throughout the Area

On September 17, 2025, Delaware County Board of Commissioners passed a resolution with unanimous approval to establish a Human Relations Commission. LCHRC language was used for the resolution and also to write the beginning of their ordinance. LB has been requested to train their commissioners once they have been selected. LB noted that Delco had not begun working on their ordinance until Lehigh County passed ours. Chester County has also passed a fully inclusive non-discrimination law based on Lehigh County's law. Chester is the first non-home rule county in the state to pass a non-discrimination law ordinance. LB did trainings and presentations with both groups prior to the passages of their laws. Over one million people in two counties are protected from discrimination. LB discussed the meaning of "home rule charter" in terms of county government. LB will focus on meetings with activists in Centre County to have a passage there. LB is in contact with Mary Gonzalez of Bucks County about how they can move ahead.

Training Update

LB has a group of trainings about the LCHRC scheduled for organizations. September 21, 2025 LB did a presentation for 15 Unitarians who regularly meet at L.V. Active Life. Each of these people were representing other organizations. The information presented will be taken back to their groups.

On October 22, LB will be doing a 2-hour, in-person training at Northampton Community College Fowler Family Southside Center for the Bethlehem Human Relations Commissioners on investigation procedures. This is a public meeting so if you are interested in investigation procedures, you are welcome to attend.

Two lawyers that organize the state's HRC public hearings (if a complaint gets to a public hearing) have contacted LB to see whether LCHRC would like a training about setting up a public hearing on a complaint. LB responded she would be happy to receive this training and others from the Board are invited. JM nodded her head and raised her hand to be included. It will be a TEAMS meeting on

October 30, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. and it will last 1-1/2 hours. Earlier today, LB sent an email with the link to the LCHRC. Further information on state public human relations hearings was provided.

November 13 will be a presentation on the ordinance to the Pennsylvania Coalition to Advance Respect with one of its major partner resources being the National Sexual Violence Resource Center. LB explained that one of the protected classes in the LCHRC ordinance is victims of domestic abuse.

December 7 is a presentation on the ordinance to the Lehigh Valley Humanists in Allentown.

Logo Update

LB asked CB to say a few words about the assistance The United Way provided to this project. CB said that it was not difficult for Victoria to put together [the mailing list] and United Way was thrilled to be able to help out. Victoria was able to send out the letter and Request for Proposal (RFP) previously revamped by CR, to about 150-organizations. Included in the letter was information about the LCHRC and included that commissioners are available for presentations on the ordinance. The deadline for responses is November 28. If no responses are received, the commission will have to come up with a new plan.

Update on Complaints that have been brought forth

LB spoke about one new complaint, Complaint #6, at the last meeting and requested two commissioners to assist in the investigation. AmB and AG assisted LB with that investigation. LB discussed aspects of the complaint but maintained the complainant's anonymity. Although there were 8 protected classes that the complainant filed under, all three investigators determined that the complaint and the discrimination had to do with only one protected class. The complaint was sent to the respondent. The respondent's representative replied to LB; LB requested statements from specific respondents and the representative agreed to provide those. LB has not received those statements yet but the case is nearly resolved. LB will confer with AmB and AG about the updates from those statements because she does not have to be completely confidential with them because they are also the investigators along with LB.

Discussion on Draft Letter in Support of MOU with City

There has been no movement.

Rules & Procedures Committee

LB, TB, MB, AmB, JM, and LP comprise this committee. JM has exerted a "herculean" effort and LB turned the floor over to her. JM said that TB should be

lauded for his initial efforts at coming up with two very good formats for the policies and procedures for the commission and also a conflict of interest and recusal policy which the committee is currently laboring over. The committee has met twice but have covered an “incredible amount of territory.” Their aim is to use accurate language and terminology and to remain true to the ordinance while not burdening the policies with minutia. CMR offered her expertise and JM accepted the offer with thanks. JM will contact CMR. Discussion ensued.

LB asked the commission to consider what policies might be considered for future work. She connected the work being done by the policies and procedures committee to that of creating a handbook for human relations commissions which would be (probably) the first of its kind in the state. LB encouraged the group to email LB or JM with idea for future work; if any other board members would like to participate in this committee, they are encouraged to do so. It was decided to forward the current “living document” to CMR for her review and input.

NEW BUSINESS

Executive Session - None

No vote on complaint.

CLOSING AGENDA ITEMS

Citizens Input (on Non-Agenda items) - None

LCHRC Announcements

LB reminded the Commission that they must attend the monthly meetings as often as possible but they cannot miss more than three meetings in a 12-month period and cannot miss more than two meetings in a row. Commissioners starting a new term begin at “zero” again. LB commented that this LCHRC is “extraordinary” in the number of people dedicated to attending the meetings. AmB commended LB for being a “force of nature” for her work of moving [establishing human relations commissions] across the state to which she graciously noted that all the members of the LCHRC are forces of nature with the works they have done.

Motion to Adjourn

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

Respectfully submitted,
Cynthia L. King