

# City of Spokane Human Rights Commission Bylaws

Updated by Lisa Rosier December 2014

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## I. PURPOSE

Pursuant to Spokane Municipal Code 4.10.040 the City of Spokane Human Rights Commission has the power and duty to (a) adopt rules; (b) hold regular public meetings and keep a written record of its proceedings which is a public record, (c) conduct and arrange for surveys, studies, and polls, (d) convene ad hoc committees, (e) make recommendations for public policy. In light of this code authorization it is appropriate that the City of Spokane Human Rights Commission have a working set of rules and procedures for its performance and members which are available to the public at large.

## II. GENERAL PROVISIONS

(2.1) The rules of the City of Spokane Commission on Human Rights (SHRC) are also the rules of its subcommittees in so far as applicable, except as regards a motion to recess from day to day, and a motion to dispense with the first reading of a resolution or motion, if printed copies are available.

(2.2) Each subcommittee is a part of the City of Spokane Human Rights Commission, and is subject to the authority and direction of the (SHRC) and to its rules so far as applicable.

(2.3) The provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act of WA Chapter 42.30 RCW, the City Charter, the City of Spokane Municipal Code, and all City Ordinances are incorporated herein by this reference as though fully set forth as the rules of the City of Spokane Human Rights Commission to the extent applicable.

(2.4) The City of Spokane Human Rights Commission's rules shall be published and made available to any person desiring a copy. The commission chair shall work with the commissioners to devise a draft budget to submit to Administration and City Council no later than the September meeting of the SHRC.

- a) Financial Controls. The SHRC must approve, by majority vote, expenses that are more than \$300. For internal controls, the commission will receive a monthly report from city staff on funds expended. This report will be included in the commission's public agenda for public transparency. The SHRC will maintain these policies to be consistent with those of the City of Spokane.<sup>1</sup>

(2.5) On questions of procedure not covered in these procedures and rules, *Robert's Rules of Order* (latest edition) may be used to expedite due process.

## III. REGULAR, ADDITIONAL, AND SPECIAL MEETINGS

(3.1) The City of Spokane Human Rights Commission shall regularly meet at 5:30 p.m. on the first Wednesday of each month.

(3.2) A regular meeting of the SHRC may be dispensed with if, in the judgment of the Chair, there is no need for the meeting.

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<sup>1</sup> Any unexpended funds will be returned to the City's General Fund.

(3.3) Additional regular meetings and hearings of the SHRC may be called by the Chair as the Chair deems reasonably necessary or by Committee Leads when appropriate.

#### **IV. NOTICE FOR REGULAR MEETINGS**

(4.1) The Chair or a person acting on behalf of the Chair shall notify in electronic or written form each member of the SHRC of the time and place of the meeting and the agenda of each regular meeting of the Commission, at least 24 hours before the time of the meeting, and shall provide to each member of the Commission, at least 24 hours before the meeting, a copy of the agenda and:

(4.2) For each resolution scheduled on the agenda for consideration a copy of:

- a) The resolution;
- b) Any committee reports thereon;
- c) Any letter requesting a resolution; and
- d) For each other report, resolution, or other matter on the agenda a copy of the materials relating to the matter in question and any report, resolution, or any other matter made by any subcommittee.

(4.3) The Chair of the SHRC or a subcommittee shall be empowered to adjourn any meeting of the Commission or a subcommittee if a quorum is not present within fifteen minutes of the time scheduled for such meeting.

#### **V. EMERGENCY MEETINGS**

(5.1) The Chair may call an emergency meeting of the City SHRC at any time on any measure or matter which the Chair determines to be of an emergency nature provided however, that the Chair has tried to consult the members of the Commission.

(5.2) As soon as possible after calling an emergency meeting of the City SHRC the Chair shall notify each member of the Commission of the time and location of the meeting.

(5.3) To the extent feasible, the notice provided under paragraph (2) above shall include an agenda for the emergency meeting and copies of available materials which otherwise would have been provided if the emergency meeting was a regular meeting.

#### **VI. SPECIAL MEETINGS**

(6.1) Special meetings, which shall include all meetings except regularly scheduled meetings, shall be called and convened as provided for by Chapter 42.30 RCW.

#### **VII. MEETINGS AND PROCEDURES**

(7.1) Meetings of the City SHRC shall be called to order and presided over by the Chair or, in the Chair's absence, by the member designated by the Chair.

(7.2) Meetings of the Commission shall be open to the public unless closed in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 42.30 RCW.

(7.3) Any meeting of the Commission that is open to the public shall be open to coverage by television, radio, and still photography in accordance with Washington Law.

(7.4) A transcript or minutes shall be kept of each business meeting and any subcommittee unless a majority of the Commission or the subcommittee agrees some other form of permanent record is preferable.

(7.5) Official attendance of all meetings shall be kept by the Commission recorder. Official attendance of all subcommittee meetings shall be kept by the subcommittee recorder. All minutes shall document all members names and attendance for each monthly meeting reflecting the attendance of previous meetings held of the SHRC showing their attendance up to the current meeting.

(7.6) When a recommendation is made as to the kind of motion which should be granted, and/or for consideration of a resolution, a copy of the language recommended shall be furnished to each member of the Commission at the beginning of the Commission meeting at which the motion/resolution is to be considered, or as soon thereafter as the proposed language becomes available.

## **VIII. QUOROM**

(8.1) A simple majority (more than 50%) of the currently filled Commission positions of the City SHRC shall constitute a quorum to conduct meetings and for transaction of business. A simple majority of that quorum is necessary to take action (act).

(8.2) In the event that there is not a quorum a majority of the members of the Commission shall be able to meet to discuss issues or events on human rights but cannot take a formal vote where a formal vote is required, this includes motions or resolutions.

## **IX. VOTING**

(9.1) No vote may be conducted on any measure or motion pending before the City SHRC unless a quorum of the Commission is actually present for such purpose.

(9.2) A record of the vote of the Commission shall be provided on any question before the Commission upon the request of any member.

(9.3) No vote of any member of the Commission on any measure, motion, or matter may be under proxy.

(9.4) A record of vote of each member of the Commission on each record of any matter before the Commission shall be made available for public inspection at the Offices of the City Clerk and with respect to any vote on any motion measure or matter the record shall be included showing the total number of votes cast for and against and the names of those members voting for and against.

## **X. APPLICATIONS TO SERVE ON SHRC**

(10.1) All nominations shall be referred to the SHRC by the Mayor's Boards and Commissions office for consideration by the full City SHRC.

(10.2) In considering a nomination, the Commission shall inquire into the nominee's experience, qualifications, suitability, time commitment availability and integrity to serve on the Commission or in the position to which he or she has been nominated. The Chair is responsible for contacting any candidate references and relaying feedback to the Commission for consideration. The Chair will also coordinate any requests for background checks through the City Boards and Commissions office,

however neither the Commission nor the Chair are responsible for conducting the background check. Results from the background check will be shared with the Commission.

(10.3) The Chair of the SHRC shall appoint an interview panel to interview applicants for consideration for appointment to the SHRC. The interview panel may include the Chair of the SHRC. After the interview of applicants, the interview panel shall provide the Chair with information on the applicant to be included on the agenda at the next meeting of the full SHRC for consideration and voting by the full SHRC members.

(10.4) Each nominee shall submit in response to questions prepared by the Commission the following information:

- a) A detailed biographical resume which contains information relating to education, employment and achievements.
- b) Copies of other relevant documents requested by the Commission.

(10.5) Information received pursuant to this subsection shall be available for public inspection except as specifically designated as confidential under Washington law.

(10.6) The Commission by rule determines its officers and the manner selected. The nine members are nominated by the members of the Commission from the applications received by the City Boards and Commissions office. The Chair shall forward the selected nominations voted on by the SHRC for membership to the Commission to the Mayor for approval and appointment by the City Council.

(10.7) Applicants for consideration to appointment of the SHRC may reside or work within the City of Spokane.

## **XI. SUBCOMMITTEES**

(11.1) There shall be 3 subcommittees of the City SHRC. The Chair may attend a subcommittee meeting. The subcommittees include, but are not limited to: Civic Impact, Outreach, and Stability Planning.

(11.2) Each subcommittee is responsible for assisting the Commission (e.g. drafting all or a portion of a response to comments, draft positions, educational material, activities or other purely advisory functions). Each subcommittee reports only to the Commission and acts only under and within the authority of the Commission as delegated to the subcommittee. Any and all acts of any subcommittee must be ratified by the full Commission.

## **XII. REFERRAL OF MATTERS TO SUBCOMMITTEE**

(12.1) In view of the procedural responsibilities of the SHRC no special order providing for consideration of any matter shall be necessary for reference to a subcommittee of the Commission.

(12.2) The Chair shall refer to a subcommittee such matters as the Chair deems appropriate given the Chair's responsibility.

(12.3) All other measures or matters shall be subject to consideration by the full Commission.

(12.4) In referring any matter or measure to a subcommittee the Chair may specify a date by which the subcommittee shall report back thereon to the Commission.

(12.5) The Commission, by motion, may discharge a subcommittee from consideration of any measure referred to a subcommittee of the Commission.

(12.6) Should a subcommittee fail to report back to the full Commission on any matter within a reasonable time, the Chair may withdraw the matter from such subcommittee and report that fact

to the full Commission for further disposition. The full Commission may at any time, by majority vote of those members present, discharge a subcommittee from consideration of a specific matter. (12.7) The proceedings of each subcommittee shall be governed by the rules and procedures of the full Commission, subject to such authorizations or limitations as the Commission may from time to time prescribe.

### **XIII. COMPOSITION OF SUBCOMMITTEES**

(13.1) The size and ratio of each subcommittee shall be determined by the City SHRC members and the members shall be appointed to each subcommittee as approved by the Chair and to the positions of Leads of each subcommittee in accordance with the majority vote of members of each subcommittee. The Leads of the subcommittees shall designate a member of the subcommittee to act on their behalf as deemed necessary.

(13.2) All members of the SHRC must be a participant on at least one subcommittee. Volunteers as invited by SHRC members, may participate on subcommittees but have no voting authority on the SHRC issues in the community.

### **XIV. SUBCOMMITTEE MEETINGS**

(14.1) Each subcommittee of the City SHRC is authorized to meet, and report to the full Commission on a measure or matter referred to it.

(14.2) No subcommittee of the Commission may meet at the same time as a meeting of the Commission is being held.

(14.3) The Lead of each subcommittee shall schedule meetings of the subcommittee and notify the Chair of the scheduled meeting.

### **XV. SUBCOMMITTEE QUORUM**

(15.1) For the purposes of conducting a subcommittee meeting a majority of members shall be in attendance. If a full SHRC is in place, 3 (three) members of the SHRC will be participating on at least 1 (one) subcommittee. Therefore 3 (three) SHRC members on a subcommittee is a full meeting of members. A quorum would be 2 (two) members in attendance to vote on motions, decisions and directions of the subcommittee.

### **XVI. EFFECT OF A VACANCY**

(16.1) Any vacancy in the membership of a subcommittee shall not affect the power of the remaining members to execute the functions of the subcommittee.

### **XVII. RECORDS**

(17.1) Each subcommittee of the City SHRC shall provide the Commission with such records of votes taken in subcommittee and such other records with respect to the subcommittee as necessary for the Commission to comply with all rules, regulations, ordinances, and laws of the State of Washington and to conduct the business of the Commission.

## **XVIII. REPORTING**

(18.1) Whenever the subcommittee authorizes the favorable reporting of a matter to the Commission from the subcommittee, the Lead of the subcommittee or a member designated by the Lead to do so, shall present a report to the Commission at the next monthly meeting of the Commission. The Lead or his/her designee shall notify the Chair of the report for inclusion on the meeting agenda.

(18.2) Any such report shall contain all matters required for the members of the Commission to intelligently and fully consider the matter and develop any action deemed advisable with regards thereto.

(18.3) At a minimum such subcommittee reports shall include a statement of the topic or subject of the report, an objective narrative as to the nature of the report and the facts underlying the same, a recommendation of the action desired by the Commission, and a listing of all sources of information considered by the subcommittee with a summary of the information considered from each source.

## **XIX ELECTIONS**

(19.1) Annual elections for the position of Chair of the SHRC, Recorder of meetings and Leads for subcommittees shall be held annually during the SHRC November meeting, being the last held for that year. Officers shall formally take office at the January meeting the following year.

(19.2) The Chair of the Commission shall be voted into the position by a majority of the members of the Commission. The Chair shall advise the Mayor of their election to office after which the Mayor forwards the recommendation of the Commission to city council for appointment.

(19.3) A term for the position of Chair shall be one (1) year. A person may hold the position of Chair for a maximum of two (2) consecutive years or two (2) terms. They may be reconsidered for election to the Chair position after they have completed (2) consecutive years or terms only after a full year has passed between terms. The Commission shall be allowed to have a Vice Chair. The duties of the Vice Chair shall be assisting with setting the agendas in absence of the Chair. In the event the Chair position is vacated the Vice Chair shall serve as the acting Chair until the commission acts to fill the position permanently for the remaining portion of the term. The Vice Chair will serve a one (1) year term with an election every January.

(19.4) A term for the position of subcommittee Lead shall be one (1) year. A person may hold the position of Lead for a maximum of two (2) consecutive years for each subcommittee. They may be reconsidered for a Lead position if they have completed two (2) consecutive years after a full year has passed between terms.

(19.5) Members may be appointed to either a two (2) term or a three (3) term position on the SHRC based on the current vacancies of the Commission. Members may serve two (2) consecutive terms and may apply for consideration to the SHRC for another term after a full year has passed since their last day of completion of their term.

## **XX OTHER PROCEDURES**

(20.1) Any member who misses more than three (3) meetings of the full SHRC in a twelve (12) month period and/or fails to participate in SHRC activities that have not been excused (at the discretion of the Chair or Vice Chair), or if there are any other mitigating factors of the member's

behavior that is brought to the attention of the SHRC or Chair, may be asked to resign from the Commission by the Chair.

(20.2) If a member is asked to resign or if they are removed from the SHRC, the Chair shall notify the other members of the decision as well as the coordinator of the City Boards and Commission advising of the vacancy.

(20.3) Any member who resigns, is removed, or has completed their full terms of the SHRC cannot reapply for a seat on the Commission until one (1) full year after their last day of their notification of resignation, removal from the Commission or term completion has passed.

(20.4) All members who cannot make a meeting of the SHRC must notify the Chair of their absence. All members who cannot make a subcommittee meeting must notify the Lead of their respective subcommittees.

(20.5) The Chair of the City SHRC may establish other such Commission procedures and take such other action as may be necessary to carry out the rules of the Commission or to facilitate the effective operation of the Commission and its subcommittees in a manner consistent with these rules.

(20.6) All Commissioners of the City of Spokane Human Rights Commission shall do their best to attend at least one community meeting, event, workshop, symposium, conference or gathering each month as a representative of the Human Rights Commission. All Commissioners shall share their experiences at these events at the following meeting with the rest of the Human Rights Commission.

## **XXI. DUTIES OF POSITIONS**

(21.1) The Chair of the SHRC calls meetings to order; is responsible for conducting the meetings in accordance with state and local laws and these bylaws; keeps meetings on track and within the time allotted for the meetings; plans and schedules meetings; develop and distribute the agenda and other relevant documents to members prior to meetings; ensure the minutes are complete, accurate, retained, distributed and reviewed and approved by members at the next meeting; respond to inquiries from and issues statements as the chair to the community, media and government officials on human rights issues and questions pertaining to the SHRC; plans and coordinates the dates, times and location of members participating in community events; completes an end of year report to the community and City Council on SHRC activities; oversees any budget allocations to the SHRC; update any social media sites relating to the SHRC and may delegate duties to commission members as needed.

(21.2) The Chair is involved in the strategic planning of SHRC events and ensures that SHRC activities are in accordance with the mission and bylaws of the SHRC.

(21.3) Although the Chair may not be a voting member on subcommittees, they should attend these meetings as time permits to ensure they remain informed of subcommittee activities and assist in ensuring the subcommittees stay on track.

(21.4) The Chair shall ensure that all views are heard; is impartial; does not dominate meetings; keeps the meetings on track and encourages and facilitates all members of the Commission to participate.

(21.5) Any person who acts on behalf of the Chair will be subjected to the same responsibilities as the Chair as defined in these bylaws.

(21.6) Minutes taker: The responsibility of the person taking the minutes at any meeting of the SHRC or a meeting sanctioned by the SHRC shall be to take notes that accurately reflect the

decisions and discussions of the meeting; write up these notes in an agreed format by the SHRC; ensure responsibilities, motions, votes and agreements from the meetings are accurately documented; keep an accurate attendance sheet of members and guests at meetings which is continually updated and shared among members at each meeting; note the time the meeting commences and ends; shares the minutes with the Chair for review and amendment (if any) before they are distributed. Circulation of the minutes after they have been reviewed are the responsibility of the Chair.

(21.7) The minutes should be finalized and circulated within 10 days of the meeting taking place.

(21.8) Subcommittee Leads: Leads of subcommittees shall ensure that members meet in a timely manner before the monthly meeting of the full SHRC; calls meetings to order; is responsible for conducting the meetings in accordance with state and local laws and these bylaws; keeps meetings on track and within the time allotted for the meetings; develop and distribute the agenda and other relevant documents to members prior to subcommittee meetings; ensures minutes are taken at meetings and distributed to the Chair prior to the monthly meeting for distribution to the full Commission; informs the Chair and full Commission of the times, dates and locations of subcommittee meetings.

## **XXII. AMENDMENTS TO COMMISSION RULES**

(22.1) The rules of the City SHRC may be modified, amended, suspended, or repealed, in the same manner and method as prescribed for the adoption of Commission rules, but only if written notice of the proposed change has been provided to each member at least 24 hours before the time or the meeting to cast a vote on the change occurs.