

Human Relations Commission Meeting Minutes
June 3, 2025

The meeting was called to order at 6:04 pm. Present: Sridhar Kadaba, Leslie Ohta, Kevin Kuzia, Lori LaCapra, Neil Griffin, and Sherri Tanguay

1. Approval of Minutes November 12, 2025

The minutes were approved unanimously.

2. Committee Reports:

a. Affirmative Action/Recruitment Report - Sherri Tanguay, Director of Human Resources

Ms. Tanguay presented the latest recruitment report from March 3, 2025 to June 2, 2025. She spoke about the recruiting process and promotions. The Commission briefly discussed the job categories and recruitment efforts within the Police Department. There was brief discussion on DEI. Ms. Ohta spoke about her experience as a board member with the ABC House.

b. Human Services Report – Lori LaCapra, Director of Youth and Family Services

Ms. LaCapra provided an update on phase one of the building renovation. She noted that the renovation looks great and added that there is more space. Ms. LaCapra stated that the annex will be reconfigured to provide more offices and a play therapy room. Mr. Kadaba asked if the play therapy room is something new. Ms. LaCapra noted that the clinicians used their offices for play therapy and explained that the new play therapy room will be a separate space with comfortable chairs and toys. Ms. Ohta asked about the waiting list. Ms. LaCapra noted that it was 46 and currently at 30. Ms. LaCapra spoke about the waitlist process and noted that many families turn down referrals to other places and prefer to wait. She spoke about staffing and recruitment.

Ms. LaCapra noted that she will be retiring in September. Commission members thanked her for her service. There was discussion on the types of interventions and programs offered. Ms. LaCapra explained that they are seeing emotional dysregulation in preschool and elementary school students. She spoke briefly about the parent groups which are designed to provide strategies and support. Ms. LaCapra spoke about the increase in vaping among high school students. She noted that they get a lot of referral requests and explained that they are asked to do interventions because vaping starts off as recreational use and becomes a dependency. Mr. Kuzia inquired about referrals for middle school students. Ms. LaCapra noted that they receive referrals for all kids in different age groups and explained that, with middle schoolers, the issues include anxiety, not fitting in, and negative impact of social media and technology. Ms. LaCapra shared some success stories and noted that one of their students graduated with a Master in Social Work. Mr. Kadaba asked if there was a way to share some of these success stories. The Commission briefly discussed the positive impact of such programs. Mr. Griffin noted that the most successful students from Welles Village have come out of Ms. LaCapra's program.

3. Martin Luther King Report - David O'Connor

No report was presented as Mr. O'Connor was not able to attend the meeting.

4. Housing Authority Report- Neil Griffin, Director, Housing Authority

There was a brief discussion on the Welles Village conversion. Mr. Griffin spoke briefly about the advantages of building affordable housing where there is existing infrastructure. There was discussion on walkability, public transportation, utilities, and amenities.

Mr. Griffin provided an update on the Nye Road housing development- GHA submitted an application for 9% LIHTC award and is working on the closing requirements with CHFA. The construction work is scheduled to be in bid in July 2025. Depending on how quickly GHA, DOH and CHFA can complete their required tasks for the closing will dictate when construction can commence. Mr. Griffin noted that 13 of the units will have to be rented at market rate. He explained that this applies to households making 80-100 percent of the median income.

Mr. Griffin provided an update on the Welles Village conversion- GHA received the Rental Assistance Demonstration Conversion Commitment and closed the transaction with HUD on May 31, 2025. Currently GHA is working to complete the post-closing requirements. Existing tenants maintain the protections provided under the public housing program and the property received increased revenue from a historically stable funding source.

Mr. Griffin noted that GHA's Five Year Plan had been finalized and submitted to HUD. The Five-Year Plan includes HUD's required components and forms and includes the agencies goals and objectives.

5. Old business none

6. New business none

7. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:48 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Nadya Yuskaev
Recording Secretary