

# **HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION**

City and County of San Francisco

*Daniel Lurie, Mayor*

## **DRAFT MEETING MINUTES**

**May 8, 2025, 5:00 PM**

**San Francisco City Hall, Room 416**

**1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place**

**San Francisco, CA 94102**

### **COMMISSIONERS**

Leah Pimentel, Chair

Hasib Emran, Vice Chair

Rodrigo Durán, Commissioner

Mark Kelleher, Commissioner

Sarah Montoya, Commissioner

Irene Yee Riley, Commissioner

Amerika Sanchez, Commissioner

Robert Sandoval, Commissioner

Michael Sweet, Commissioner

Rosie Williams, Commissioner

**Mawuli Tugbenyoh**

**Acting Director, San Francisco Human Rights Commission**

**1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL OF COMMISSIONERS**

Chair Pimentel called the meeting to order at 5:14 PM.

**Land Acknowledgement:** Vice Chair Emran delivered the land acknowledgment, recognizing the Ramaytush Ohlone people as the indigenous stewards of the San Francisco Peninsula.

**Present:**

1. Leah Pimentel, Chair
2. Hasib Emran, Vice Chair
3. Mark Kelleher
4. Irene Yee Riley
5. Amerika Sanchez (5:16)
6. Michael Sweet
7. Rosie Williams (5:11)

**Absent:**

1. Rodrigo Duran
2. Sarah Montoya
3. Robert Sandoval

**Quorum** was confirmed.

**2. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT (Discussion Item)**

- **Chris Fortline:** Expressed concern about electromagnetic surveillance and unauthorized access by outside entities. Warned that veterans and other residents were targeted without oversight, and that public records were being concealed. Cited historical unrest in the 1970s and referenced a potential \$5 billion in federal damages owed to San Francisco.
- **Ace Washington:** Criticized repeated meeting cancellations and what he described as the Commission's role in "dividing unity" in the Black community. Questioned the legitimacy of the Juneteenth RFP process and asserted that the legacy of Wesley Johnson and Fillmore leadership was being erased. Stated that the community had been sidelined and that accountability was overdue.
- **Jim McAfee:** Shared a personal account of his domestic partner being held at Laguna Honda Hospital against his will. Alleged falsified documents, stolen funds, and medical abuse. Emphasized that criminal acts cannot be justified by good intentions and asked the Commission for help.

**3. ADOPTION OF MEETING MINUTES FROM MARCH 27, 2025 (Discussion and Action Item)**

Commissioners reviewed the **March 27, 2025** meeting minutes.

**Motion:**

- Commissioner Riley made a motion to approve the March 27, 2025, minutes.
- Commissioner Sanchez seconded.

**Vote:** Approved unanimously.

**Public Comment:**

- **Ace Washington:** Voiced disapproval regarding the March 27 minutes and reiterated concerns raised during that meeting about the Juneteenth RFP and meeting cancellations. Stated that community members were left in the dark and criticized ongoing political dynamics affecting the Fillmore. Emphasized his long history with the Commission and called for a community meeting to restore trust.

**4. ACTING DIRECTOR'S REPORT AND DEPARTMENT UPDATES (Discussion Item)**

**Presenter:** Acting Executive Director Mawuli Tugbenyoh

- **RFP 100:** Applications closed on May 5, 2025. The department hosted one launch session and four technical assistance conferences, distributing hundreds of flyers through community organizations and businesses across the city. Over 140 unique applications were received. A final list of awardees is expected to be presented to the Commission for review next month.
- **Staffing Update:** Phil Kim joined the Human Rights Commission as Deputy Director. He will support cross-divisional communication and project coordination. Kim previously served as Executive Director in the Office of the Superintendent at SFUSD.
- **Black to San Francisco:** Housing and internship placements are confirmed for the six-week summer program, which will host local and HBCU interns. The program is scheduled to begin on June 23, 2025.
- **Office of Transgender Initiatives (OTI):** The team has expanded efforts in response to anti-trans legislation and budget pressures. OTI recently led Transgender Advocacy Week with 11 community organizations and conducted gender inclusion training with the City Attorney's Office. The department is finalizing a citywide training module and updating "Know Your Rights" materials and other resources to support transgender and gender-diverse San Franciscans.

**Commissioner Comments:**

- **Commissioner Kelleher:** welcomed Phil Kim and noted their previous collaboration during LYRIC's capital campaign, which resulted in a major facility expansion.
- **Vice Chair Emran:** also welcomed Kim and requested clarification on the number of interns expected for the Black to San Francisco program.
  - **Acting Director Tugbenyoh** confirmed that 70 interns are expected to participate.

**Public Comment:**

- **Ace Washington:** Stated support for Acting Director Tugbenyoh personally but expressed distrust in the Commission's leadership overall. Criticized the agency's

engagement with the Fillmore community and described the current structure as misaligned and ineffective. Called for direct conversation and corrective action.

## **5. OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL (OFA) PROGRAM PRESENTATION (Discussion Item)**

**Presenters:** HRC OFA Staff Kamiesha James, Kahmarii Jones-White, and Jessie Lin of the Human Rights Commission.

- **Kamiesha James** provided a program overview, noting that OFA was created in 2018 as a mayoral initiative to address economic inequity by connecting San Francisco youth to paid internships, training, and post-secondary opportunities. She shared that OFA’s goals include increasing economic mobility and public safety by ensuring that underserved youth have access to meaningful work experiences.
- **Kahmarii Jones-White** outlined the program’s structure, highlighting the following components:
  - **CSI Cohort:** Youth ages 13–20 placed in themed cohorts that develop projects in response to issues affecting their communities.
  - **Partner Cohorts:** Youth placed with government agencies, nonprofits, and private employers for job experience.
  - **Program Fellows and Senior Fellows:** College-aged leaders who mentor and supervise CSI and partner cohorts.
  - **Fiscal Sponsor:** Processes payroll and ensures youth receive payment for their work.
- **Kahmarii Jones-White** also presented the internship timeline and impact metrics. In 2024, OFA received 3,718 applications, placed 3,357 youth, and enrolled 2,850 participants. She reported that 80% of participants rely on government assistance, and 43% report a household income under \$60,000.
- **Kamiesha James** then shared 2025 updates. The program has secured partnerships with 22 city departments and 61 CBOs and private employers. While applications remain open, the program is currently operating with a waitlist due to high demand. OFA is exploring ways to onboard more partners and expand capacity. The summer program runs from June 23 to August 8, 2025. Senior fellows begin training on June 2, followed by fellows on June 9.
- **Jessie Lin** shared her personal experience in the program—first as an intern, then senior fellow, and now as HRC staff. She expressed appreciation for the professional growth and mentorship she gained through OFA.

### **Public Comment:**

- **Ace Washington:** Congratulated the OFA team and expressed appreciation for the work being done. Offered his endorsement, referring to it as deserving the “Fillmore Corridor Stamp.”

### **Commissioners’ Discussion:**

- **Commissioner Williams** thanked the team and asked whether prior OFA participation was required to apply as a fellow or senior fellow. Jones-White responded that while some fellows are former participants, the roles are open to all qualified candidates based on leadership potential and interviews.
- **Commissioner Sanchez** inquired whether the 2025 waitlist was larger than in previous

years and if the team had explored expanding with existing partners. James confirmed that the waitlist size is consistent, but that budget limitations are the main constraint. She added that some partners are willing to fund their interns, which could help expand placements.

- **Chair Pimentel** suggested connecting OFA with the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce to access more private-sector partners with the capacity to support interns financially. James welcomed the idea.
- **Commissioner Williams** raised questions about quality control, partner onboarding, and intern support. James described OFA's thorough onboarding and agreement process for new partners, as well as its use of surveys and site visits to monitor intern experience. Lin added that staff plan to conduct summer visits to observe placements firsthand.
- **Commissioner Riley** asked whether OFA works with private companies like Salesforce or UCSF. James confirmed that both are OFA partners and typically fund their interns. She explained that smaller employers may request OFA budget support.
- **Chair Pimentel** followed up by offering to make an introduction to the new Chamber of Commerce president to help connect OFA with businesses interested in hosting interns.
- **Commissioner Williams** emphasized the importance of long-term funding and the responsibility the Commission assumes when it becomes a primary funder of cultural and equity-based youth programs.

## **6. BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS FROM LGBTQI+ ADVISORY COMMITTEE (Discussion Item)**

- **Commissioner Mark Kelleher**, co-chair of the LGBTQI+ Advisory Committee, presented budget recommendations developed in partnership with the Transgender Advisory Committee and the Office of Transgender Initiatives (OTI). He explained that the committees had identified approximately \$26 million in city budget allocations for FY2024–2026 that support critical services for LGBTQ+ and transgender communities, many of which were initially launched or funded through Human Rights Commission grants.
- **Kelleher** emphasized the urgency of protecting this funding amid anticipated city budget cuts. He highlighted the increased need for services due to rising anti-trans legislation, stating that 859 anti-trans bills had been introduced nationwide in 2024 alone. He noted that San Francisco LGBTQ+ organizations are seeing a surge in demand, particularly from transgender people and families relocating from states with hostile laws.
- **Kelleher** referenced organizations such as El/La Para Trans Latinas, which reported a 46% increase in clients, most of whom are new arrivals fleeing violence and persecution. He added that local LGBTQ+ organizations are struggling to meet demand as federal DEI funding dries up and corporate donors withdraw support. He warned that service disruptions could endanger the lives and safety of community members and requested the Commission's support in advocating for continued funding with the Mayor's Office and Board of Supervisors.

### **Commissioner Comments:**

- **Commissioner Riley** asked whether the departments listed on the funding spreadsheet were the fiscal administrators for the listed grants. Kelleher confirmed that they were. Riley noted that five of the listed grants are funded directly by HRC and asked whether

the department's budget could support them. Acting Director Tugbenyoh confirmed that those grants are part of the HRC's existing budget and are currently being funded.

- **Chair Pimentel** expressed support for the proposal and suggested inviting funded organizations to present at a future meeting to show the impact of their work and how city funds are being used.
- **Commissioner Williams** thanked Commissioner Kelleher and OTI staff for their advocacy. She asked for clarification on whether the spreadsheet included both new and ongoing grants. Cherry Javier from OTI responded that most of the items reflect continued funding and that anything currently on the list is vulnerable to being cut due to the deficit.
- **Commissioner Kelleher** acknowledged the support of staff, including Honey Mahogany, Kathy Mulkey-Meyer, Brittany Jones, Jessica Campos, and Jerry Javier. He noted that the committee's reorganization has allowed for more focused advocacy, and the spreadsheet presented was one outcome of that effort.

**Public Comment:** none.

## **7. JUNETEENTH RFP GRANT APPROVALS (Discussion and Action Item)**

Chief Financial Officer Samuel Thomas presented recommendations for grant awards under RFP 619, the Human Rights Commission's first independent Juneteenth grant solicitation. He explained that the RFP process was developed in response to previous concerns over administrative misalignment and a lack of transparency when Juneteenth contracts were handled by OEWD.

Thomas shared that the RFP was issued on March 10, 2025. Proposals were evaluated by independent scorers based on community impact, organizational capacity, fiscal responsibility, and cultural competency. Four service areas were funded:

- 1. San Francisco Housing Development Corporation**
  - a. \$550,000 per year
  - b. Hosts the Fillmore/Western Addition Juneteenth celebration, a multi-block event with music, vendors, and community programming.
- 2. Livable City**
  - a. \$270,000 per year
  - b. Organizes the Juneteenth Parade, focused on cultural celebration and youth engagement.
- 3. San Francisco African American Arts and Culture District**
  - a. \$350,000 per year
  - b. Produces the Bayview/Hunters Point Juneteenth celebration, centered on wellness, youth engagement, and economic development.
- 4. Andrea Baker Consulting**
  - a. \$30,000 per year
  - b. Hosts the Juneteenth on the Waterfront event at the Ferry Building, featuring vendors and performances.
  - c. Funded in part by the Board of Supervisors.

Thomas noted that each contract includes two optional one-year extensions, contingent on

performance. All grantees will be required to submit post-event reports with defined metrics, and HRC will maintain oversight throughout the grant term.

**Commissioner Comments:**

- **Chair Pimentel:** asked whether the contract extensions would include new funding or remain within the same budget. Thomas clarified that the listed amounts are not-to-exceed annual amounts that can be reauthorized each year, but total program allocations may change depending on future budgets.
- **Commissioner Sweet:** asked for clarification on the number of applicants. Thomas stated that four applications were awarded, two others were scored but not selected, and one additional application did not meet minimum qualifications.
- **Commissioner Sanchez:** expressed concern that RFP criteria may favor large organizations over culturally grounded grassroots groups. She requested that grantees be required to collect feedback from attendees. Thomas and Acting Director Tugbenyoh agreed that community feedback surveys could be added to guarantee expectations.
- **Chair Pimentel and Commissioner Riley:** requested that grantees present at a future meeting to share the outcomes of their events.
- **Commissioner Williams:** raised concerns about whether grantees were relying on HRC funding exclusively or supplementing with other sources. Thomas responded that while the public funds support the core event, grantees are allowed to pursue additional private funding. Acting Director Tugbenyoh added that private fundraising had traditionally supplemented public funds in prior Juneteenth celebrations.

**Motion:** Commissioner Riley moved to approve all four grants under RFP 619 and authorize the Acting Director to enter into grant agreements.

**Second:** Vice Chair Emran seconded the motion.

**Vote:** The motion was approved unanimously.

**Public Comment:**

**Ace Washington:** Questioned the transparency of the RFP process and criticized the repeated cancellation of prior meetings. Asserted that decisions had been leaked before being publicly announced. He expressed concern that the same organizations were awarded funding again, and stated that the city had taken control of a historically community-led event. He referenced the legacy of Wesley Johnson and the Fillmore Juneteenth tradition and called for accountability and inclusion.

**8. COMMISSION BYLAWS UPDATE (Discussion and Action Item)**

Commissioner **Mark Kelleher** and **Economic Rights Director Brittnei Chicuata** presented the final draft of proposed amendments to the Commission's bylaws. Chicuata read each section of the revised bylaws into the record, noting that the updates reflected months of discussion and were based on consensus from prior Commission meetings.

**Amendments included:**

- Replacing "equal" with "equitable" in the Commission's mission statement. Formalizing

- officer term language and meeting scheduling procedures.
- Clarifying the size, expectations, and term limits for advisory committees.
- Revising the attendance policy for Commissioners and advisory members.
- Updating descriptions and structures of the LGBTQI+ Advisory Committee and Equity Advisory Committee.

A key issue arose regarding proposed changes to the residency requirement for the LGBTQI+ Advisory Committee. The original proposal sought to increase the number of non-San Francisco residents permitted to serve from three to five. Deputy City Attorney Jesse Mainardi advised the Commission that the San Francisco Administrative Code mandates all members of the LGBTQI+ Advisory Committee be city residents, making the proposed change legally impermissible.

**Commissioner Kelleher** acknowledged the oversight and proposed that the Commission proceed with all other amendments while maintaining the existing language allowing no more than three non-resident members.

**Motion:** Commissioner Riley moved to approve all proposed amendments to the Commission's bylaws, excluding the proposed change to lines 371–373 regarding the residency requirement, which would remain unchanged.

**Second:** Commissioner Kelleher seconded the motion.

**Vote:** Approved unanimously.

**Public Comment:** none.

## 9. COMMUNITY REPORT OUT AND UPCOMING EVENTS (Discussion and Action Item)

- **Chair Pimentel** shared that she attended the kickoff of CalFun, a campaign to support small businesses and restaurants across San Francisco. Participants receive stamps at featured locations and can win prizes. She offered to share a link to the campaign with the Commission.
- **Commissioner Riley** reported attending a Coalition for Community Safety and Justice (CCSJ) knowledge-sharing webinar focused on how community-based organizations can support residents experiencing discrimination or violence. She also attended one of the RFP 100 technical assistance sessions led by CFO Thomas and commended the clarity and support provided to nonprofit applicants.
- **Commissioner Williams** attended the annual benefit for Southern Exposure, an arts organization in the Mission District. She highlighted the diverse group of featured artists, ranging from emerging talent to those showcased at major institutions, and emphasized the importance of supporting local arts spaces.
- **Commissioner Sanchez** gave a shout out to The Hub, a newly opened community center at 1530 Sunnydale Avenue in Visitacion Valley. She described it as a long-overdue space offering a wide range of free activities, including ESL classes, yoga, and community movie nights. She encouraged others to visit and check the program calendar.



- **Commissioner Kelleher** announced an upcoming benefit for LYRIC, San Francisco's LGBTQ+ youth center, and invited commissioners to attend. He offered to share the link and coordinate tickets.
- **Vice Chair Emran** shared that he would be attending the 10th Annual San Francisco International Kepau Cultural Festival as part of AAPI Heritage Month and acknowledged the value of uplifting cultural contributions across the city.

**Public Comment:** none.

## **10. AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING (Discussion and Action Item)**

- **Commissioner Williams** proposed inviting recent grant recipients, such as those awarded through the Juneteenth RFP or LGBTQI+ Advisory Committee recommendations, to present at an upcoming Commission meeting. She noted this would allow commissioners and the public to hear directly from grantees about the work being funded and its community impact.
  - **Acting Director Tugbenyoh** responded that staff would work to coordinate presentations for the May 22, 2025, meeting, if possible. If more time were needed, updates would be provided to the Commission.
- **Commissioner Kelleher** expressed interest in hearing from grantees but noted he may be traveling and would confirm his availability for the next meeting.

**Next Meeting:** Confirmed for May 22, 2025.

**Public Comment:** none.

## **11. ADJOURNMENT**

**Chair Pimentel** adjourned the meeting in honor of **Commissioner Irene Yee Riley**, who recently experienced the loss of her brother. Commissioner Riley shared that her family is very close and that she and her brother regularly spend time together on weekends, enjoying dim sum and going to the movies. She expressed deep sorrow over his passing and appreciation for the Commission's support.

Meeting adjourned at 7:30 PM by Chair Pimentel.

### **Prepared by:**

Jessica Lepe, Commission Secretary, SF Human Rights Commission

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