
CITY OF KALAMAZOO
Civil Rights Board
Wednesday, June 4, 2025 – 5:00 p.m. • City Commission Chambers

MEMBERS PRESENT: Madison Lukeman, Pamela Burpee, Eursla Moore-Doyle, Sandra Calderon and Cathy Phason

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

Ex-Officio Members: Tanya Hewitt-Smith and Commissioner Hoffman (Absent)

CITY STAFF PRESENT: Marcia Jones (Assistant City Attorney), Lal Tluangi (Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Specialist).

The Civil Rights Board meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by Chair Phason.

Agenda: Director Calderon motioned to approve the agenda. Director Burpee seconded the motion. Motion approved by unanimous vote. Agenda adopted.

Minutes: Vice-Chair Lukeman motioned to approve minutes from February 5th, 2025, supported by Director Moore-Doyle. Motion approved by unanimous vote. April 30th, 2025, minutes approved.

Public Announcements and Communications: None. Chair Phason welcomed new director Eursla Moore-Doyle to the board.

New Business:

Subcommittee Commitment and Discussion – Chair Phason emphasized the importance of subcommittee participation, stating that members are expected to attend scheduled activities and communicate with their teams. If a member cannot commit, they are encouraged to step down so a more available board member can serve. In response to Director Moore-Doyle’s request, Chair Phason provided summaries of each subcommittee. Vice-Chair Lukeman added that the Education Subcommittee will become fully active once the board reaches full membership.

Updates on Ordinance Edits – Chair Phason reported that the subcommittee is awaiting final ordinance edits from Committee Member Attorney Lewis and is coordinating with the City Commission to identify a participating commissioner for the review process. Vice-Chair Lukeman noted that Attorney Lewis expects to complete the edits by the end of the week. Chair Phason will follow up with interested commissioners.

Discussion of Nomination Process – Vice-Chair Lukeman explained that the board packet includes updated interview questions developed by the Nomination Committee based on ongoing experience. Interviews are conducted jointly with DEI staff, requiring a majority of the committee to be present. Following interviews, the committee discusses the candidates and submits recommendations to DEI Specialist Lal, who prepares the nomination forms. In response to Chair Phason’s question about the denial process, Vice-Chair Lukeman noted that six applicants were interviewed over the past four weeks, and the committee is prepared to recommend two candidates.

Nomination of New Board Members (Joshua and Willow) – Chair Phason announced that the board would review each applicant, with application materials provided in advance. Director Calderon moved to nominate Willow Sipling for a three-year term on the Civil Rights Board, seconded by Vice-Chair Lukeman. The board unanimously approved the recommendation. Director Calderon highlighted Willow’s strong background in Human Resources and extensive involvement with the City of Kalamazoo. Vice-Chair Lukeman affirmed that Willow would be a valuable addition to the board.

Vice-Chair Lukeman then moved to nominate Joshua DeBoer for a three-year term, seconded by Director Moore-Doyle. She noted his experience as a KRESA board member, local landlord, and volunteer with OutFront Kalamazoo. Director Calderon added that Joshua's perspective as a landlord would enhance board discussions. The board unanimously approved his recommendation to the mayor.

Discussion of Monthly Meetings – Vice-Chair Lukeman inquired about the next City Commission meeting, and Director Pamela confirmed it is scheduled for June 16. DEI Director Tanya Hewitt-Smith noted there may be time to add board appointments to that agenda. Vice Chair Lukeman stated that any shift to monthly meetings should occur once the board is fully seated. Director Calderon added that, under a monthly schedule with a full board, the next meeting would be July 2. Director Burpee supported delaying the change until full membership is reached. Tanya reminded the board that this had previously been discussed and agreed upon. Vice-Chair Lukeman noted that the monthly schedule is mentioned during interviews, ensuring applicants are aware of the time commitment. Tanya also suggested focusing on the July 7 City Commission meeting for appointments. Director Moore-Doyle recommended waiting until after the summer, given scheduling conflicts. Vice-Chair Lukeman proposed keeping the bimonthly schedule and revisiting the issue in August. Chair Phason expressed concern about the Education Committee's ability to function under the current schedule, but Tanya clarified that subcommittees could proceed independently. Based on the discussion, Chair Phason concluded that the board would make the decision on monthly meetings until it is fully staffed.

Public Comments:

Lewis Smith – Apologized for the delay in the ordinance edits and that edits will be ready for reviewed by the end of the week.

Oshtemo Resident – Shared that he had an opportunity to speak with a person of color who has had leadership positions in various states and the difficult position of operating in a space of making changes. Applaud the board's effort to continuing to work in a space of resistance and encouraged the board to keep working towards their goals.

Maggie Adams – Welcomed Director Moore-Doyle to the board and she is grateful that the board will be full. She reminded the board to relook at their bylaws as it looks like the board can change their bylaws to change the approval from mayor to City Commission.

Dr. Charlae Davis – Welcomed Director Moore-Doyle to the board. Showcased her gratitude for the board. Shared that in recent weeks that there have been troubling times in the local community so the board serves at an important time. Uplifted the former Vice-Mayor Patrese for being the catalyst for the housing ordinance. She continues to look forward to collaborating with the board and is happy to hear that City Commissioners are willing to work with the ordinance subcommittee. She also expressed that she hopes the board is able to view complaints sooner in the complaint process.

Tobi Hanna-Davies – Thanked the board and welcomed Director Moore-Doyle. Recommended to the board that they utilize variety of communication methods to better engage the community to highlight what the Civil Rights Boards does and publicizing events.

Miscellaneous Board Comments: None

Closing Comments: Director Calderon welcomed Director Moore-Doyle to the board, followed by Director Phason, who expressed appreciation for the community's presence and anticipation of a fully seated board. Vice-Chair Lukeman proposed that the Education Subcommittee convene within the next two months to initiate its work. Director Moore-Doyle expressed gratitude for the warm welcome and shared her prior experience with boards and community events. DEI Director Tanya also welcomed Director Moore-Doyle and thanked the nomination committee for advancing the board's progress toward full capacity. Chair Phason echoed earlier sentiments, acknowledged Attorney Lewis's professional commitments with the county, and expressed understanding of

related delays. She closed by thanking ISAAC, the community, and the board for their continued engagement and dedication.

Next Meeting: August 6th, 2025, at 5:00 pm

ADJOURNMENT: 5:53 pm

Lal Tluangi, Recording Secretary
Tanya Hewitt-Smith, Staff Liaison
Stephanie Hoffman, City Commission Liaison
Cathy Phason, Chair