

RULES OF PRACTICE AND PROCEDURE  
OF THE MOORHEAD HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

**1. Recitals**

- 1.1 Commission: The Moorhead Human Rights Commission, hereinafter referred to as “Commission”, was duly established by Ordinance No. 89-19, passed September 11, 1989, and effective October 25, 1989.
- 1.2 Purpose: The purpose of the Commission is to secure for all persons, whether resident or visitor, equal opportunity in education, employment, housing, public accommodations, and public services and full participation for all Moorhead citizens in the affairs of this community.
- 1.3 Duties and Responsibilities:
- A) Education and Public Information: The Commission will foster, through education and public information, general awareness and understanding of human rights issues and laws in the community.
  - B) Community Cooperation: The Commission will enlist the cooperation of agencies, organizations, and individuals in the community and will cooperate with the human and civil rights agencies of other communities in formulating an active program directed to create equal opportunities and equal rights for all persons regardless of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, disability, sexual orientation, age, or familial status.
  - C) Human Rights Recognitions: The Commission will annually recognize individuals, businesses, and groups for their contribution to furthering human rights in the community.
  - D) Advice and Recommendations: The Commission will advise the Mayor, City Council, and City Manager on human rights issues and recommend to the Mayor, City Council, and City Manager the adoption of such specific policies or actions as are needed to provide for full and equal opportunity in the community. Upon request for Independent School District No. 152, the Commission may provide similar such advice and recommendations to the School Board and Superintendent of Independent School District No. 152.
  - E) Human Rights Concern Process: Members of the Executive Committee review grievances submitted, act on concerns, and follow up with affected people and parties.
  - F) Mediation: Commission Members are encouraged to attend mediation training designed to develop skills for dealing with citizen concerns if budget is available.

- G) Reporting: The Commission will make a regular report of its activities to the Mayor and the City Council each year and will submit such report in writing annually before April 1<sup>st</sup>. The report will describe educational and other community activities of the Commission; the number of Commission meetings held, together with the names of those in attendance; the activities of Commission committees; and such other information as the Commission may deem appropriate.

## 2. PARTICIPATION

- 2.1 Training: Appointees to the Human Rights Commission will be required to participate in such training and educational activities as may be offered by the City of Moorhead and the Minnesota Department of Human Rights, including, orientation and mediation training.
- 2.2 Appointment: The Commission will consist of eleven (11) members with one member from each of the four wards in the City and seven members at-large. The City of Moorhead's policies for appointments to citizens advisory groups will govern the Commission. The Commission will be comprised of representation from significant minority populations within the community as well as various institutional and community groups. At least four (4) of the eleven (11) Commission members shall be persons representative of minority populations and other groups which historically have or presently are being discriminated against or denied equal opportunity or treatment with regard to employment, education, housing, public accommodations, public services, and credit with at least three (3) of the four (4) members representing different minority populations and the other groups referenced in this Section. The Commission will include one youth member at-large age 12-18. In addition to the 11 Commission members, one City Council member will be appointed by the Mayor to the Commission as a voting member of the Commission.
- 2.3 Standing Committee for Candidate Identification: A standing committee of up to five persons for candidate identification will be established by appointment of the Mayor and ratification by the City Council. The Committee will be composed of the Mayor or the Mayor's designee, who will chair the Committee; two Council Members; and up to two of the most recent past chairs of the Human Rights Commission. The purpose of the Committee will be to identify candidates for Commission positions to be filled by persons representative of minority populations and other groups which historically have or presently are being discriminated against or denied equal opportunity or treatment with regard to employment, education, housing, public accommodations, public services, and credit. The Committee will be a resource for the Mayor and the City Council for their at-large and ward appointments to the Commission. The Committee will compile and keep current a list identifying possible candidate's representative of the above-referenced populations and other groups referenced in this section.

- 2.4 Compensation: Members of the Commission will serve without compensation. The City of Moorhead will formally recognize the volunteer service of Commission members.
- 2.5 Terms: Members of the Commission will be appointed for a term of three years. A member of the Commission serves until the member's successor is appointed and qualifies. A member of the Commission may not serve more than two full terms. Any member appointed to complete a partial term will be eligible thereafter for appointment for two additional full three-year terms.
- 2.6 Attendance: Attendance at Commission meetings is important to allow for an effective Commission. Members who miss three consecutive regular scheduled meetings or in excess of one-third of the regular scheduled meetings of the Commission in one year may be asked to resign. If the member is asked to resign but does not comply, the Commission may recommend the removal of the member for the consideration of the City Council in accordance with its policies on removal for citizens advisory groups.

### **3. OFFICERS AND STAFF ROLES**

- 3.1 Chair: A Chair will be elected by the Commission at its annual meeting in February. The Chair will preside and maintain order at all Commission meetings in accordance with Rule 5.4 and will make such reports as required by law and as may be deemed necessary by the Commission to the Mayor and City Council. The Chair will have the authority to appoint committees and such other authority as may be granted by the Commission.
- 3.2 Vice-Chair: The Vice-Chair will be elected by the Commission at its annual meeting in February. The Vice-Chair will fulfill the duties of the Chair in the absence of the Chair, including the calling of Commission meetings, and assist the Chair with administrative duties.
- 3.3 Secretary: The Secretary will be a staff liaison responsible for the minutes of all meetings of the Commission and such reports at Commission meetings as may be deemed necessary or may be required of the Secretary and performing such other duties as are incidental to the Secretary's office or as are required of the Secretary by members of the Commission.
- 3.4 Liaisons: The Moorhead Human Rights Commission may authorize a Commissioner or staff to act as a permanent or temporary liaison with private and public organizations. The Liaison can explain the purpose and activities of the Commission, but cannot commit the Commission to any action without first receiving authorization from the Commission.
- 3.5 Staff: Staff responsibilities, with the commissions assistance, include but are not limited to the following:

- Draft the annual report, resolutions, and other documents as requested by the Commission.
- Record minutes of all regular meetings, draft those minutes and submit to the Commission at a consecutive meeting for approval. Following approval, staff will post meeting minutes on the website.
- Assist the Executive Committee to compose meeting agendas.
- Prepare and send meeting packets.
- Serve as intake coordinator for the Human Rights Concern Process. Staff will follow the Human Rights Concern Process as outlined in section six of this document.
- Coordinate the Human Rights Awards Ceremony and Human Rights Day Event.
- Gather research data from public and private organizations, in addition to local, state and federal government resources
- Continue to network with other HRC's and advocacy organizations to identify "best practices"
- Respond to complaints and questions
- Track and repeat baseline assessments
- Coordinate data sharing and gather feedback from stakeholders
- Monitor human rights issues in the community annually by collecting correspondence (i.e., Letters to the editor, newspaper articles, TV news stories) of HRC importance
- Monitor outcomes and follow-up on public inquiries
- Work to promote diversity in the community
- Collect and distribute materials relating to civil rights and human rights
- Take advantage of opportunities to appear in public
- Meet acts of hate with messages of unity by working with affected organizations and individuals in a timely manner
- Assist in the resolution of civil rights and human rights related tensions
- Assist in the creation and implementation of human rights awareness events and cultural festivals
- Coordinate community awareness efforts and recognition
- Identify who enforces existing civil rights and human rights laws and how
- Tie existing laws and enforcement mechanisms into the Commissions procedures
- Recognize and encourage positive human rights acts and activities

#### **4. MEDIA RELATIONS**

4.1 Media Relations: The policy of the Moorhead Human Rights Commission is to consistently provide reliable information about its activities. While the Commission recognizes the right of every Commissioner to address the media, some guidelines are needed to ensure that the views of the Commission as a whole, or the views of a body of the Commission, are presented clearly and uniformly.

4.2 Commission Chair: The chair is the authorized representative to speak to the media on behalf of the Commission. Chairs of Committees may speak to the media on behalf of their Committees, but not on behalf of the Commission as a whole. Commissioners who speak to the media as a member of the Human Rights Commission should qualify their remarks as representing their own views and not those of the Commission unless they have prior authorization from the Commission or committee.

4.3 Staff: Staff is authorized to speak to the media, but should direct requests for interviews to the Commission Chair or the most knowledgeable source on the subject.

## 5. COMMITTEES

5.1 Executive Committee: The Executive Committee will be comprised of the Chair, Vice-Chair, Education Committee Chair, and one member at-large. The Executive Committee will assist the Commission in reviewing, organizing, scheduling, and conducting its business and affairs. The Executive Committee will have the responsibility for recommending new and innovative programs and coordinating them with ongoing community efforts aimed at furthering human rights. The Executive Committee will meet each month and may review agenda items prior to Commission meetings, provide background information about agenda items, and make recommendations with respect thereto. The Executive Committee will review citizen concerns and determine further assistance, guidance and, in its discretion, mediation services.

5.2 Education Committee: The Education Committee will be comprised of two Commission members and an Education Committee Chair, appointed by the Commission Chair, and at least two community members. The Education Committee will develop and administer programs and activities, with the approval of the Commission, to inform and educate all segments of the community on human rights issues and laws. The Education Committee, in conjunction with members of the Commission, and the community will work to provide all members of the community resources, education, and activities to promote understanding and acceptance, a response to hate, and human diversity events and activities.

The Education Committee will promote awareness through education on human rights issues and increasing available resources for the public through the following activities:

- Provide staff with ways to enhance and update the website on a regular basis
- Distribute the Commission's brochure
- Collect and distribute materials relating to human and civil rights issues
- Designate a press contact to relay information regarding human rights issues

- Take advantage of opportunities to appear in public such as newsletters, media, and local events as well as public presentations on the Moorhead Human Rights Commission and human rights issues
- Conduct public meetings as human rights issues arise
- Function as a reference for speakers on human rights issues
- Form a partnership with Moorhead and Fargo public and private schools to work on promoting acceptance and counter deep-seated biases among students while acknowledging differences and recognizing uniqueness.
- Provide education on human rights violations.

The Education Committee will respond to hate-motivated crimes and incidents by:

- Promoting a message of unity by working with affected organizations and individuals.
- Develop partnerships with citizens and organizations
- Update the Hate-Motivated Crime and Incident Response Plan as needed

The Education Committee will emphasize strength in diversity and positive aspects of the community through events and activities.

- Assist in the creation and implementation of human rights awareness events and cultural festivals

5.3 Other Committees: The Chair, with the approval of the Commission, may appoint additional ad-hoc or standing committees as are needed to carry out the responsibilities of the Commission.

## 6. MEETINGS

6.1 Regular Meetings: Regular meetings of the Commission will be held on the second Tuesday of every month at 7:00 p.m., unless otherwise agreed upon by the Commission and so stated in its agenda. Such meetings and notice thereof will comply with applicable law (three days posted notice).

6.2 Special Meetings: Special meetings may be called by the Chair with notice to all Commission members. The Chair must call a special meeting at the request of two Commission members. Such meetings and notice thereof will comply with applicable law (three days posted notice).

6.3 Emergency Meetings: Emergency meetings may be called by the Chair with notice to all Commission members. Such meetings and notice thereof will comply with applicable law (three days posted notice).

6.4 Procedure: All business of the Commission will be conducted in an orderly and lawful manner, and the Commission will at all times be vigilant to preserve and protect the rights and privacy of both persons having human rights complaints and persons against

whom human rights complaints may be made. Persons' specific human rights complaints against named individuals will not be heard at Commission meetings. Persons having specific human rights complaints will be referred to the Minnesota Department of Human Rights. Generally, Commission business will be conducted in accordance with Robert's Rules of parliamentary Procedure except, as Robert's Rules may be in conflict with these Rules of Practice and Procedure herein, in which case, these Rules will govern.

6.5 Minutes: The Commission will record the minutes of all meetings. Minutes will be posted on the website after approval at a subsequent meeting.

6.6 Public: All regular, special, and emergency Commission meetings, records, and minutes will be open to the public except as otherwise may be provided by applicable law including the Minnesota Data Privacy Act.

## **7. HUMAN RIGHTS CONCERN PROCESS**

The Moorhead Human Rights Commission promotes acceptance and respect for diversity and discourages all forms of discrimination according to the Minnesota Human Rights Act, section 363. Human Rights Concerns should be filed with a Commissioner or the City of Moorhead assigned staff person. A Commissioner who receives a concern should forward it to staff within 72 hours of the initial concern intake.

Staff will:

- Respond and explain the HRC process within 3-5 days of the original notification
- Inform individuals of their options under the Minnesota Human Rights Act
- Ask the person how he/she heard about the Moorhead Human Rights Commission
- Ask the person to sign a release form that will allow Commission staff to access records from public agencies
- Include an invitation to the next Human Rights Commission Meeting
- Provide referrals

The Moorhead Human Rights Commission authorizes the Executive Committee to process and act on concerns. All concerns should be brought before the Executive Committee within one month of the original notification. The Committee's actions should correspond with applicable laws and regulations. The Executive Committee will report to the full Commission within two months of the original notification to include response and action taken. The Executive Committee will follow-up and evaluate information for recurrence and community impact.

In the event that a Commissioner or staff believes that emergency action must be taken prior to an Executive Committee or regular Commission Meeting, the Commissioner or staff may notify the Chair or Vice-Chair who will then call a special meeting of the Commission or the Executive Committee. Such meetings and notice thereof will comply

with applicable law (three days posted notice). A majority vote of the members present at a special meeting may authorize emergency action.

Standards of follow-up will include seeking resolution by tracking referrals and outcomes. The affected people and parties will be kept informed.

## **8. AMENDMENTS**

These Rules of Practice and Procedure may be amended as needed by majority vote of the Commission members, upon written notice to all Commission members, provided the proposed amendment has been introduced at a previous regular meeting and provided that any such amendment complies with applicable law, including any applicable City Code or ordinance provisions, in particular, the legal requirement that any amendment, prior to taking effect, be approved by the City Council.