

Human Relations Commission
Informal Meeting Minutes
January 21, 2026 5:00 p.m.

Attendance: Tasha Edens, Alicia Moody, Debbie Ruimerman, Howard Thody, and Faith Jackson, Director of Equal Opportunity and Diversity Management

Excused Absence: Anthony Gennaro and Sanji Lawrence

Absence: Linda Guarino

QUORUM: **Yes:** _____ **No:** X

Call to Order: Vice Chairperson Thody called the meeting to order at 5:13 p.m. He took attendance and noted for the record that there was no quorum.

Public Session: None.

Regular Meeting:

Approval of Agenda: The January 21, 2026 Meeting Agenda could not be approved due to lack of quorum.

Approval of Meeting Minutes: The August 20, 2025 Meeting Minutes could not be approved due to lack of quorum.

Old Business:

There was no discussion on the student survey sample.

The commission discussed the letter to the Principal of Beman Middle School. Director Jackson indicated that her office had received the draft of the letter and that it needs some revisions. However, she appreciated that Commissioner Thody and Ruimerman drafted something the commission could use as a starting point. Commissioner Ruimerman read the draft to the commission.

Dear Dr. Lilyana Auster,

We represent the Human Relations Commission. We are a commission of the town, focused on issues in the town needed to be brought forward. They would then be passed onto Town Council for further action.

We would like to set up a meeting with you to know how we can assist you with the student concerns and eventually with student/parent input.

If it's more convenient, we would like to invite you to attend, in person or virtually a HRC the 3rd Wed. of each month at 5p.m.

The contact person would be Faith Jackson, Director of Equal Opportunity and Diversity Management for a convenient date for the two of you.

Sincerely,

Commissioner Howard Thody and Commissioner Debbie Ruimerman

Commissioner Moody provided some input on the letter. She said that the purpose of the letter should be clearer and will email something for consideration. The commission also discussed the importance of clarifying in the letter the work the commission is looking to accomplish in partnership with Beman. Director Jackson said the commission should also have some understanding of Beman's existing after-school programming and how the commission's objective could fit in with what's already established. After some discussion, the commission decided that the best next step would be to invite her to one of the upcoming meetings so they can have an open discussion.

Commissioner Moody read a draft that she had put together.

We hope this message finds you well as you begin your leadership at the school. We are writing to formally introduce ourselves as members of the Middletown Human Relations Commission. Our commission works to promote equity, inclusion, and respectful dialogue within our community, including partnerships with local schools. We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you at your convenience to introduce our role, learn more about your vision for the school, and discuss the ongoing and future work related to anti-racism initiatives. In particular, we would like to discuss the Anti-Racism Commission study and explore ways to collaborate in support of students, families, and staff. We believe open communication and partnership are essential to creating an inclusive and supportive school environment, and we look forward to the possibility of working together. Please let us know a convenient time to meet. We are happy to accommodate your schedule. Thank you for your time and leadership. We look forward to connecting with you.

Director Jackson asked for Commissioner Moody to send her the draft. The office can take the two drafts and put something together for the commission to review.

New Business:

There was brief discussion on the two vacancies. Director Jackson said she sent the vacancy notice to the commissioners to send to others who may be interested. Due to the current party balance on the commission, new commissioners could be a member of any political party.

Announcements:

The next regularly scheduled meeting is Wednesday, February 18, 2026.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 5:46 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kasey Maurice". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Kasey" being more prominent and the last name "Maurice" following in a similar style.

Kasey Maurice,
Equal Opportunity and Diversity Specialist