South Carolina Human Affairs Commission
Board Meeting

Thursday, September 10, 2026
South Carolina Human Affairs Commission
Roundtable Conference Room
8301 Parklane Road
Columbia, SC 29223

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT	STAFF PRESENT
Chairman Steve Hall Commissioner Rosetta Daniels Commissioner Patrick Palmer Commissioner Christine Ruth Commissioner James Wilson **ABSENT** Vice Chair Sharon Sellers Commissioner Leon Winn	Marvin Caldwell, Jr., Deputy Commissioner Clark Leslie, Deputy Commissioner General Counsel, Trey McLeod Lawrence Smalls, Deputy Director Nicole Laing, Housing Attorney Tarnya Whitmire, EEO Director Janeen Sanders, Executive Assistant **GUEST** Tom Kaminer, Budget Directors Shared Services, Dept of Admin

I. CALL TO ORDER: Meeting called to order at 10:00am by Chair Hall.

Opening Remarks:

- Chair Hall thanked the Commissioner, leadership team, staff, and fellow Board members for their continued work in support of the Commission's mission
- Remarks emphasized fairness, impartiality, professionalism, and respect in the Commission's work in employment, housing, and public accommodations
- Board members reflected on the 25th anniversary of September 11, 2001, and recognized its continued impact on first responders and others

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Motion made and seconded to approve minutes from previous meeting. Motion passed [unanimously].

III. OLD BUSINESS: None

IV. NEW BUSINESS: None

V. BOARD REPORTS:

A. Administration Update (Deputy Commissioner Leslie)

Office Relocation:

- Transition to new office space completed; staff who supported the move were recognized
- A few furniture items remain pending

Technology Improvements:

- New computers and laptops
- Video conferencing equipment and noise canceling headsets
- Meeting room technology

Meeting Space for Public Participation:

- Downstairs training rooms identified as an option for larger groups
- Smaller rooms available for individual meetings
- Advance notice of public comment will assist staff in selecting an appropriate room

B. Legal Update (General Counsel McLeod)

Caseload:

- Intake reviews completed: 194
- Letters of determination prepared and issued through legal review: 3
- Active legal matters, including circuit court cases and panel hearings [Note: totals to be confirmed against written report]

Current Projects:

- Reviewing and revising internal human resources policies following the office relocation
- Proposed updates to employment regulations under Chapter 65, including filing requirements, confidentiality, and related procedures
  - Anticipated effective date: August 2027, subject to the required process

Honeycutt Hearing:

- Hearing had been scheduled for October 14, 2026
- Concerns raised regarding discovery and a possible continuance
- Legal staff to follow up on hearing status
- Board members emphasized timely notice of schedule changes

Hearing Panel Training:

- Board members requested training before serving on administrative hearing panels
- Legal staff to develop reference materials, a hearing manual, and focused training on hearing procedures, panel responsibilities, and decision making expectations

C. Legislative Update (Commissioner Warren)

Proposed Legislative Budget Priorities:

- One (1) Public Information Officer: media relations, public awareness, community outreach, website content, and social media
- Two (2) Fair Housing Investigators: address increased caseloads associated with reduced staffing at federal partner agencies
- One (1) EEO Intake Officer: manage increased employment inquiries and prevent intake backlogs

Caseload Growth:

- Fair housing: approximately 25% increase
- EEO intake: approximately 40% increase
- HUD and EEOC provide contract payments for cases handled by the Commission; additional staffing needed to maintain timely service

D. Personnel Update (Mr. Smalls)

Current Staffing:

- 56 full time employees
- 5 vacancies

Recruitment:

- (3) EEO Investigator positions; applicant list expected
- Tenant Services and Training Coordinator; interviews planned
- Fair Housing Investigator; interviews planned

Recent Activity:

- 2 resignations (1 Fair Housing, 1 EEO)
- 3 investigators hired in August

E. Finance Update (Mr. Kaminer)

FY26 Year End:

- Ended with a slight deficit, primarily due to one time furniture and supply purchases for the new office

- Excluding those expenses, the Commission would have ended the year with a slight surplus

FY27 and FY28 Projections:

- Potential operating deficits under a fully staffed scenario
- Existing cash reserves sufficient to provide a near term buffer
- Future budget requests may need to account for operating costs, employee benefits, equipment, supplies, and projected salary increases

Other:

- Board discussed removing outdated or unnecessary budget line items
- Mr. Kaminer to provide updated financial information to Commissioner Warren and raise concerns if the outlook changes

VI. COMMISSION REPORTS:

A. **Administration** (Commissioner Warren)

IAOHRA Conference:

- Seven (7) individuals attended
- Marvin Caldwell, Jr. received the Arthur L. Green Award
- Commissioner Warren received the President's Award as outgoing IAOHRA President
- Commissioner recognized staff contributions and the Commission's representation at the conference

Website:

- Ongoing revisions to reflect the new address, logo, and current information

Case Management System:

- Exploring a new case management system
- Exploring an online customer portal allowing individuals to check the status of their cases

B. **Consultative Services Update** (Deputy Commissioner Leslie)

Training Services:

- Training available for managers, supervisors, and human resources professionals and can be tailored to organizational needs
- Detailed list of available training topics to be shared with interested Board members and contacts
- Board discussed mock hearings and educational resources to help external organizations understand administrative hearing procedures

C. **Compliance Programs**

i. **EEO Enforcement and Intake Services** (Chief of Staff Caldwell)

Current Contract:

- Contract target: 550 cases (prior year: 530)
- Completed through end of August: 445 cases, with additional cases moving through review
- Staff anticipate meeting the contract target

Current Inventory:

- 811 open cases
  - 424 with investigative supervisors
  - 386 with administrative coordinators
- 220 inquiries in intake
- Board discussed the effect of increased referrals from federal partners

ii. **Fair Housing Enforcement** (Chief of Staff Caldwell)

Completed Contract Period:

- 108 cases investigated; 99% accepted
- 31 settlements (18 conciliation, 13 withdrawal) totaling approximately $34,000 in compensation for complainants
- 68 no cause determinations
- 2 cause determinations
- 7 administrative closures

Workload:

- Disability complaints, including service animal and emotional support animal matters, represent a significant portion of the workload
- Training on fair housing and assistance animals conducted during the reporting period

Service Animals and Emotional Support Animals:

- Board discussed the distinction between service animals and emotional support animals in public accommodations
- Legal staff clarified that public accommodation requirements differ from fair housing requirements and that emotional support animals do not have the same access rights as service animals in covered public places

VII. PUBLIC COMMENT: None

VIII. **BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS:** Meeting ended for General Session.

IX. **EXECUTIVE SESSION:** Motion made, seconded, and approved by voice vote to enter executive session. Discussions were had surrounding

X. **NEXT BOARD MEETING:** The next Board meeting is scheduled for 10am on Thursday, November 19, 2026.

XI. **ADJOURNMENT:** Chair Hall announced a brief break and invited attendees to tour the new office space. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by Janeen D. Sanders, SCHAC Executive Assistant.

Dr. Alisa Warren, Commissioner

Steve Hall, Chairman

11/19/26

Date