



County of Onondaga
Office of Diversity and Inclusion
Onondaga County/Syracuse Human Rights Commission

Monica Williams
CHIEF DIVERSITY OFFICER

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Montanette Rocker
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Pending approval pending approval pending approval pending

**ONONDAGA COUNTY/CITY OF SYRACUSE
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION MEETING**

JUNE 18, 2025, ONONDAGA COUNTY/SYRACUSE HRC Meeting

******Hybrid Meeting******

_ Agnes McCray	_ Adam Leslie
_ Lauren Rosenstein	_ Roosevelt Baums
_ Paul Harvey	_ H. Bernard Alex (HRC CHAIR)
_ Mary Grace Almandrez	_ Duane L. Reese II

Absent: Commissioners Roosevelt Baums and Adam Leslie.

Present (in-person): Chairperson H. Bernard Alex, Commissioners Mary Grace Almandrez, Paul Harvey, Agnes McCray, Duane Reese II, Lauren Rosenstein.

(online): No one joined virtually.

County staff present: Montanette Rocker and Human Rights Specialist Anthony Heard Sr.

Opening: In-person and virtual session began at 5:35 p.m.

Welcome and Introduction: Meeting called to order.

Community members present: None

Report and updates from ODI admin: Montanette gave an update on a Housing Hearing being hosted on June 18th the same night of the HRC meeting. Also gave Commissioners the go-ahead to search for magnetic name tags to wear at community events. Reminded Commissioners about the upcoming Asha Laaya Farm Open House event on July 25. Chairperson Alex wants to connect with Monu Chhetri of the Deaf New American Advocacy Inc. and discuss an incident that happened with a group of deaf, new American farmers in 2023. Alex also wants to discuss with Monu Chhetri any other difficulties and/or issues that the deaf new Americans face or encounter in our community.



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Discussion: Chairman Alex recognized and honored the legacy of former Onondaga County Legislator Mary Kuhn who passed away in June. Commissioner Alex discussed possibly making a donation to the League of Women's Voters, an organization that Mary Kuhn was active in.

Updates: Chairperson Alex has spoken with Jawwaad Rasheed, the SPD Chief Accountability Officer, to determine a date and time to host a symposium to discuss 21st century policing in Syracuse. The basis of the forum: What has Syracuse Police done and continues to do regarding policing and why is Jawwaad Rasheed the Accountability Officer for SPD? The event will be geared toward parents, children, young adults and other law enforcement agencies. The Commission will need to come up with a date and time to host the session. The Commission discussed hosting the event at the end of August or in September, after Labor Day.

Commissioner Alex is seeking input from other HRC members. The Commission would like to know if the Onondaga County Sheriff's Office wants to attend the session. Chairperson Alex said there are community members who still have questions about the incident involving the Onondaga County Sheriff Office's patrol deputies and an 11-year-old girl. Patrol deputies handcuffed and detained an 11-year-old girl in a case of mistaken identity. Possible locations to host the community conversation included the Syracuse Dunbar Center, Syracuse Community Connections and the Syracuse Northeast Community Center, PSLA at Fowler and/or at a local high school auditorium or cafeteria. The Commission is looking to host the hearing during the third or fourth week of September and possibly during a weekday or weekend. Chairman Alex will ask Mr. Rasheed about his availability during the second week of September or the first Saturday after the second week in September.

Commissioners offered the following suggestions for the forum:

- Have a follow-up and Q&A session during the talk
- Community members should submit questions in advance of forum
- Designate a moderator to manage the community dialogue
- Have someone from the Onondaga County District Attorney's Office speak at the forum



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Chairperson Alex discussed a news story involving the deaths of incarcerated individuals during the NYS Corrections Offices' strike. The news stories detailed the deaths of incarcerated individuals who had critical medical appointment but lacked the transportation to attend the appointments. Commissioners discussed how many prisons have been closed in recent years and whether sentencing laws could have released or could still release eligible incarcerated individuals from the state's carceral systems. The comment "Just having oversight isn't enough," one commissioner said. The Commission also discussed ICE (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement) in Oswego County and also making contact with the local Eastern Farmworkers Association.

Upcoming HRC events: Juneteenth celebrations are taking place tomorrow on June 19th and other activities are planned throughout the County to recognize the national holiday. The town of DeWitt will conduct a flag-raising ceremony at 2:45 p.m. Bethany Baptist Church is hosting a Juneteenth Celebration.

Follow up: Agendas that need to be approved for 2025 are January, February, March, April, May, June, and August. Minutes that need to be approved for 2025 are January, February, March, April, May and June.

Meeting ended at 6:53 p.m.
Minutes submitted by Montanette Rocker