



# Maine Human Rights Commission

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**Kit Thomson Crossman**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**Barbara Archer Hirsch**  
COMMISSION COUNSEL

## COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES FEBRUARY 9, 2026 MEETING

*Held in Hybrid Format – In Person (19 Union Street, Augusta, ME) and via Zoom*

Commissioner David chaired the meeting and called it to order at 8:31 AM. Also present were Commissioners O'Brien, Walker, Thomas (by Zoom), and Sanders.

### AGENDA

Commissioner Walker moved, seconded by Commissioner O'Brien, to adopt the Agenda and Consent Agenda to accept the Investigators' recommended decisions in each of the cases listed on the Consent Agenda (see listing on Page 3).

5 in favor | 0 opposed.

### MINUTES

A vote to adopt the January Commission Meeting Minutes will take place at the March 16, 2026 meeting.

### ADMINISTRATION

Monthly reports: Executive Director Thomson Crossman discussed reporting on the following Commission activities:

- Personnel: A report was placed on file.
- Compliance: Since the last meeting, there have been 5 unsuccessful conciliations and 1 successful conciliations, with 3 reasonable grounds cases remaining in active conciliation.
- New Charges: 88 new complaints were filed in December 2025 and January 2026, with a total of 111 new Respondents.
- Withdrawals and dismissals: 66 issued in December 2025 and January 2026, including 23 administrative dismissals, 17 right-to-sue letters, and 20 settlements (7 after MHRC investigation, 2 through the MHRC mediation program, and 11 private settlements) with a total of \$976,270 to Complainants.

Quarterly reports:

- Pending Inventory: 740 cases with an average case age (days since filing) of 303 days.
- Training & Education: Commission staff attended or presented at 15 events in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of FY2026.
- Financial Reports: A financial report was placed on file.

New Business: The Executive Director and Commissioners discussed federal funding and upcoming legislative hearings at the state level on the supplemental budget.

At approximately 8:45 A.M. Commissioner David began the Hearing Agenda.

### CASES VOTED ON IN A.M. SESSION

*E24-0021AB, Christopher Graves (Farmington) v. Tamra Hartley (North Bethesda, MD), Sodexo (North Bethesda, MD).* Attorney Ashley Perry presented the Complainant's position. Nobody was present to represent the Respondents. Investigator Carrie McCarter reviewed their report and recommendations and answered the Commissioners' questions.

Commissioner Douglas moved, seconded by Commissioner David, to find there are No Reasonable Grounds to believe that Tamra Hartley and/or Sodexo discriminated against Christopher Graves on the basis of sex and this claim should be dismissed in accordance with 5 M.R.S. § 4612(2).

5 in favor | 0 opposed.

Commissioner Douglas moved, seconded by Commissioner David, to find there are **Reasonable Grounds** to believe that Tamra Hartley and/or Sodexo discriminated against Christopher Graves on the basis of race and/or color and conciliation should be attempted in accordance with 5 M.R.S. § 4612(3).

4 in favor | 1 opposed.

Commissioner David moved, seconded by Commissioner O'Brien, to find there are No Reasonable Grounds to believe that Tamra Hartley and/or Sodexo unlawfully retaliated against Christopher Graves for engaging in MHRA – and/or WPA-protected activity and this claim should be dismissed in accordance with 5 M.R.S. § 4612(2).

5 in favor | 0 opposed.

*E24-0025AB\**, Theresa Marquardt (Nanticoke, PA) v. Midwest Veterinary Partners, LLC (Southfield, MI), Cape Veterinary Clinic (South Portland). Attorney Aimee Blanchard Parsons presented the Respondents' position. Attorney Katherine Gabriel presented the Complainant's position. Investigator Alex Brindley reviewed their report and recommendations and answered the Commissioners' questions.

Commissioner Douglas moved, seconded by Commissioner O'Brien, to find there are No Reasonable Grounds to believe that Midwest Veterinary Partners and Cape Veterinary Clinic discriminated against Theresa Marquardt on the basis of disability (hostile work environment and denial of reasonable accommodations); there are No Reasonable Grounds to believe that Midwest Veterinary Partners and Cape Veterinary Clinic retaliated against Theresa Marquardt for engaging in MHRA-protected activity; and these claims should be dismissed in accordance with 5 M.R.S. § 4612(2).

5 in favor | 0 opposed.

Commissioner Douglas moved, seconded by Commissioner O'Brien, to find there are **Reasonable Grounds** to believe that Midwest Veterinary Partners and Cape Veterinary Clinic discriminated against Theresa Marquardt on the basis of disability (discharge) and Conciliation should be attempted in accordance with 5 M.R.S. § 4612(3).

5 in favor | 0 opposed.

*H25-0338AB*, Lourdes Crespo (Bangor) v. Lauren Nichols (Newton, MA), Matthew Haag (Newton, MA). The Complainant was not present. Lauren Nichols and Matthew Haag were available to present their positions. Investigator Carrie McCarter was available to review their report and recommendations and to answer the Commissioners' questions.

Commissioner Sanders moved, seconded by Commissioner O'Brien, to find there are No Reasonable Grounds to believe that Lauren Nichols and Matthew Haag discriminated against Lourdes Crespo based on disability; there are No Reasonable Grounds to believe that Lauren Nichols and Matthew Haag discriminated against Lourdes Crespo based on ancestry; there are No Reasonable Grounds to believe that Lauren Nichols and Matthew Haag discriminated against Lourdes Crespo based on receipt of public assistance; there are No Reasonable Grounds to believe that Lauren Nichols and Matthew Haag discriminated against Lourdes Crespo based on religion; and the complaint should be dismissed in accordance with 5 M.R.S. § 4612(2).

\* Indicates a case in which a "reasonable grounds" finding is recommended

5 in favor | 0 opposed.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

At approximately 10:12 A.M., Commissioner David moved, seconded by Commissioner O’Brien, to go into executive session to discuss pending or contemplated litigation and the Commission’s legal rights and duties with Commission Counsel pursuant to 1 M.R.S. §405(6)(E).

5 in favor | 0 opposed.

At approximately 10:46 A.M., Commissioner Sanders moved, seconded by Commissioner Walker, to come out of Executive Session.

5 in favor | 0 opposed.

Commissioner Sanders moved, seconded by Commissioner Walker, to litigate H25-0206, and not to litigate E23-0339, E23-0366, E23-0385.

5 in favor | 0 opposed.

Commissioner Sanders moved, seconded by Commissioner Walker , to approve the agreements in MHRC v. Hellas Condominiums and MHRC v. Nicolantonio.

5 in favor | 0 opposed.

At approximately 10:48 P.M. the meeting was adjourned.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

The consent agenda is a listing of cases scheduled on the Commission’s meeting agenda in which there was no written disagreement to the Investigator’s recommendation. Commissioners considered these cases without oral argument by the parties.

E24-0010	Wayne Davis (Richmond) v. Senior Plus /Elder Independence of Maine (Lewiston)	NRG
E24-0022AB	Daren Mallory (Sebago) v. Southworth Milton, Inc. (Scarborough), Milton CAT (Milford, MA)	NRG
PA24-0030	Pamela Johnson (Bangor) v. Verizon Cellular (Bangor)	NRG

**TABLED**

ED24-0017	Robert Hendrick (Lincoln) v. NMCC (Presque Isle)
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*\* Indicates a case in which a "reasonable grounds" finding is recommended*