



## Human Rights Commission

Regular Meeting | March 17, 2025 | 3:30 – 4:30 pm

City Hall at One Technology Center | 10 North Meeting Room

### Meeting Minutes

Commissioners Present: Casey Bakhsh, Dezeray Edwards, Drew France, Anthony Meadows, Josiah Robinson, Joshua Starks, Dave Walker

Commissioners Absent: Larissa McNeil, Katie Eller Murray, Amanda Peregrina, Parisa Pilehvar, Tamecca Rogers, Andrea Walker

#### I. **Call to Order and Introductions**

- a. Vice Chair Robinson called the meeting to order at 3:31 pm.

#### II. **Approve Meeting Minutes**

- a. Vice Chair Robinson entertained a motion to approve the February meeting minutes.
  - i. Commissioner France made a motion, Commissioner Bakhsh seconded.
    - 1. Aye: 6, Nay: 0, Abstain: 1 (Commissioner Starks)
  - ii. Motion carried, February meeting minutes approved.

#### III. **Guest Speaker: Nathan Pickard, City of Tulsa Auditor**

- a. Nathan Pickard introduced himself and shared a handout (Appendix 1). Nathan is in his first term as City Auditor and took office on December 2, 2024. Been meeting with Tulsans and various groups to learn how to better serve the city.
- b. Nathan shared the core commitments of the Office of the City Auditor. The office is independent and objective, City Auditor is an elected position. Hasn't been on the ballot in many years due to being run unopposed, but Nathan has been working to get the word out so that is not the case in the future.
- c. Reviewed the duties required of the City Auditor. Internal auditing is a way to see if procedures and policies are efficient.
- d. Commissioner France asked for a real-world example of something a past auditor has accomplished.
  - i. Nathan: Ensuring Human Resources hiring and promotions process is efficient and effective. Improving sewer cleaning procedures.
- e. Commissioner Edwards: Do we have a set of standards/best practices to stack up City of Tulsa performance against cities of similar size? For example, 911 response times.
  - i. Nathan: Yes, have a standard to measure against.
  - ii. Commissioner Edwards: What is the best way to engage your office with a particular issue?

- iii. Nathan: Engaging more directly with residents as well as the authorities, boards, and commissions to hear these ideas.
- f. The office is adding a form to the website for all residents to request audits. Also Reviewing trends in 311 calls.
- g. Historically, the office will perform about ten audits per year in addition to responding to ethics investigations and special requests.
- h. Commissioner Q&A
  - i. Vice Chair Robinson asked questions about the schedule of auditing plans. Nathan shared that the plans follow the City's fiscal years, so they begin in July and end in June. He took office in the middle of the previous auditor's plan and is following through on the existing plan. His term is two years, though will be a four-year term moving forward, and the plans are for one fiscal year.
  - ii. Casey: Purpose of HRC is to help monitor the human rights complaints process, which is perceived to be antiquated. Does that fit within your purview?
    - 1. Nathan: Very possibly. Previous auditor did a DEI audit.
    - 2. Casey: don't think we ever saw that
    - 3. Vice Chair Robinson echoed the concern about the complaints process. There have been attempts to make to make to it more accessible in the past, but those efforts haven't gone anywhere. Opportunity to address in ordinance and internal processes.
  - iii. Commissioner Edwards: Tulsa has done a number of surveys that often get shelved. Have those been looked at to identify easy wins? Noted several surveys that have been done in the past, will send reports to auditor's office. Would need to dive into data to see if different areas of the city are being served differently.
    - 1. Nathan agrees this is a good idea.
  - iv. Commissioner Starks voiced concerns related to the risk of state or national pressure on the city, putting programs in jeopardy. Want to know if the office is looking at a higher level at how state and national funding may impact local initiatives. Nathan made a note to look into this.
  - v. Commissioner France asked Nathan to share his vision and idea for the office that might intersect with HRC.
    - 1. Nathan: Biggest priority is increasing community engagement. Have begun looking at how the City can do a better job with community engagement across all departments, will present findings and opportunities. Want to have a complete feedback loop with the community to get more residents involved to have needs of community addressed.
    - 2. Commissioner Bakhsh: Appreciate the transparency component. Would love to learn more about recruitment/engagement efforts for residents to join authorities, boards, and commissions.
  - vi. Commissioner Walker: Do your office hold other community entites that receive funds from the City accountable to proper practices?



**CITY EXPERIENCE**  
Mayor's Office of Resilience and Equity

1. The question of jurisdiction is something Nathan seeking clarity on from the City Attorney. May be a right to audit clause in contracts.
- vii. Commissioner Bakhsh: What does community engagement mean to you?
  1. Nathan: Raising awareness of the office, attending town halls.
  2. Measure qualitative and quantitative data.
  3. Vice Chair Robinson: How does your community engagement approach differ from previous auditors?
    - a. Nathan shared that most cities don't have an elected auditor, and when they are elected it makes them responsible to the people. Previous auditors have been more traditional and focused on internal audits.

**IV. Vice Chair Report**

- a. Vice Chair Robinson highlighted Agenda Item V. Have been working with Chairwoman Walker to streamline processes to make meetings more efficient and effective. Opportunity for call to action, no pressure to share. Chairwoman Walker can provide more details when she is back next month.

**V. Committee, Liaison, and Title V Commissions Calls for Action**

- a. Commissioner Bakhsh: Fair Housing Committee is supporting an education event on April 1. Collaborating with the Tulsa Fair Housing Partners, will have future sessions focused on realtors and landlords. Posing opportunity to Commissioner Starks to organize a Fair Housing event focused on veterans.

**VI. Old Business – no old business**

**VII. New Business – no new business**

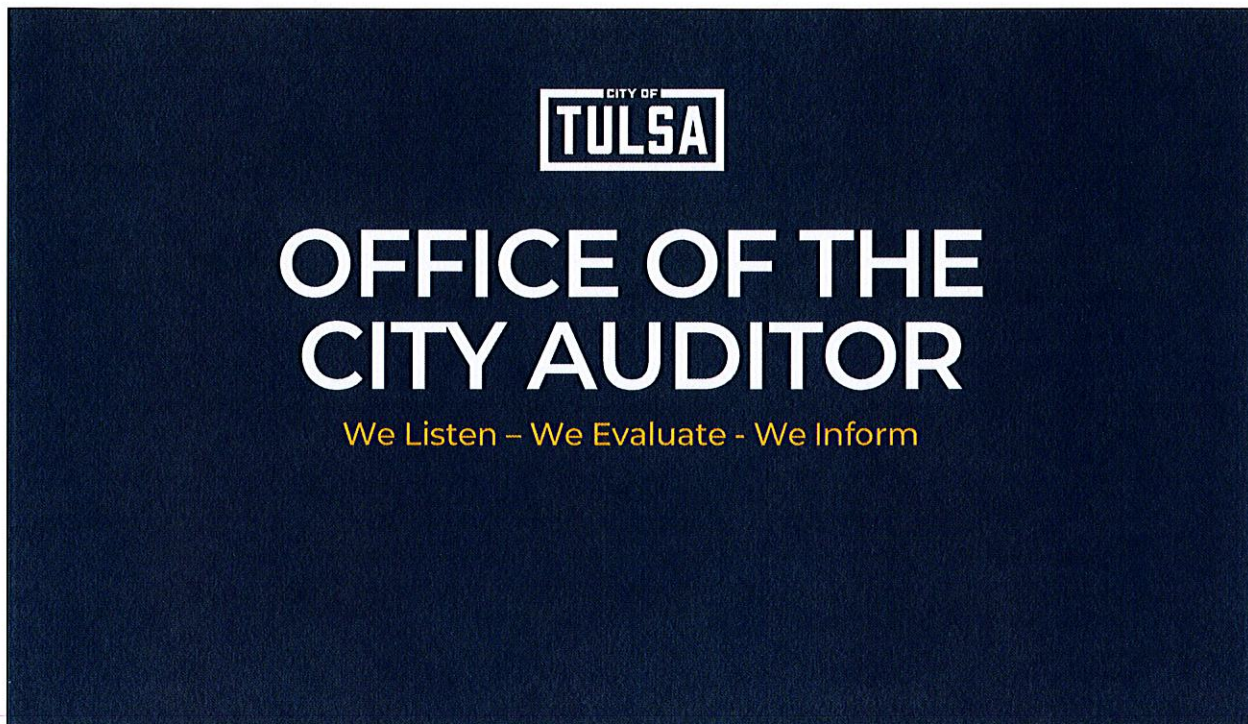
**VIII. Announcements / Public Comments**

- a. Public Comment from Aaron Griffith: Shared idea of two new commissions: Men's Commission (address men's mental health) and Labor Rights and Relations Commission (support workers rights, address minimum wage and poverty). Vice Chair Robinson noted that while HRC doesn't have the power to establish commissioners, Aaron's perspective is noted.
- b. Lexi introduced Natalie, the Department of Resilience and Equity's new team member.

**IX. Adjournment**

- a. Vice Chair Robinson entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting.
  - i. Commissioner France made a motion, Commissioner Meadows seconded.
    1. Aye: 7, Nay: 0
  - ii. Motion carried, meeting adjourned at 4:16 pm.

## Appendix 1



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## Core Commitments

- **Mission:** We provide accountability and build community trust by listening to residents and employees, performing audits, reviews, consulting, and reporting.
- **Vision:** City of Tulsa is exceeding the expectations of our residents.
- **Values:** Independence, accountability, trust, access

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## Independent And Objective

- City Charter Article IV, Section 1. – Office of the city auditor created
  - ▶ “The **City Auditor shall be elected...**”
- City Charter Article IV, Section 4. – Budget
  - ▶ “City Auditor shall not be subject to item veto or reduction by the Mayor.”
- City Charter Article IV, Section 5. – Production of records and accounts
  - ▶ “All officers, employees, divisions, departments, boards, authorities, commissions, and agencies of the city shall produce and make available to the City Auditor **any records, accounts, personnel, facilities, and inventories** which the City Auditor may request or require.”

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## Required of Auditor

- City Charter Article IV, Section 3. Duties:
  - ▶ States the City Auditor shall:
    - Examine periodically the accounts of all offices, divisions, departments, boards, authorities, commissions, and agencies of the city...;
    - Report to the Mayor and the Council the action taken by any office, employee, division, department, board, authority, commission, or agency on the recommendations of the City Auditor;
    - Perform such other duties and services as the Council may require by ordinance or resolution.
- Ordinance Title 12 – Chapter 6. Ethics Code
  - ▶ City Auditor is appointing and investigating authority for Mayor and investigating authority for individual Councilors.
- Ordinance Title 4 – Section 207. - Additional Duties
  - ▶ “The City Auditor shall examine periodically the **City of Tulsa's performance**, governance processes, risk management processes and systems of internal controls, and report in writing the results of such examinations to the Mayor and the City Council.”

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## We Listen

- The word auditor is Latin for “hearer”
- How we listen:
  - Annual risk assessment
    - Interviews with department heads
    - Survey of departments
  - Ethics hotline
  - Special Requests
  - Councilors, authorities, boards, commissions, town halls
  - Surveys of Tulsans
    - 311 Hotline
    - Electronic media
  - Outcomes of Tulsans
    - Public peace, order, morals, safety, health, and general welfare

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## We Evaluate

- How we evaluate historically
  - Annual Audit Plan
    - Audits according to Institute of Internal Auditing standards
  - Ethics Investigations
  - Special Requests
    - Mayor
    - Council
- Additional goals for evaluating
  - Agile assessments
    - Quick
    - Collaborative
    - Across departments and other stakeholders

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## We Inform

- Independent, risk-based, and objective **assurance, advice, insight, and foresight**
- Trusted independent reporting
  - Trusted by employees
  - Trusted by residents
- Accessible
  - Employees value and access City Auditor's Office as a resource
  - Residents have access to the necessary data, information, knowledge and insights about their government

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## How you reach us:

Follow us at Tulsa City Auditor on



New website coming soon

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