Town of Boone Human Relation Commission Meeting: September 16, 2026

Members Present: Drew Finley, Kirstin Morgan, Sean Morris, Tori Rodriguez, Brian Juneau, Alex Castillo

- Meeting began at 6:10pm
    - All members were present in-person except for Trevor Moody, Todd Carter, Joan Lacefield, Anitra Ball, Joanne Pulliati, and Camila Aranda, all of whom were absent

- Moment of silence observed

- Tentative agenda adopted
    - Tori Rodriguez offered friendly amendment to remove discussion of the World AIDS Day Event as Trevor Moody is absent
    - Kirstin Morgan motioned to adopt
    - Sean Morris seconded
    - Vote: approve 6, against 0, abstentions 0

- Opened for public comment at 6:11pm
    - Drew Finley opened it up for public comment
    - Kierney Greene asked the commission if anything would be done to have more sustainable affordable housing and expressed her inability to pay current housing rates in Boone
        - Tori Rodriguez shared that the Town was looking at parcels of land in the town limits that could be designated for the building of low income housing and shared about the Fair Housing Summit the HRC hosted back in April
        - Kirstin Morgan shared about limits placed on the Town regarding controlling rent and housing costs by state legislation
        - Alex Castillo shared about part of NC Constitution that prevents local governments from exercising any power not explicitly granted to them by the state constitution or state law
        - Drew Finley shared about the HRC website complaint form for fair housing concerns within the Town of Boone, and further discussed the Town Council meetings where housing issues are being discussed and worked on consistently
        - Tori Rodriguez also mentioned the Watauga Housing Council as an organization doing work on this issue
    - Closed at 6:19pm after public comment

- Approval of August 19, 2026 minutes
    - Brian Juneau motioned to approve
    - Kirstin Morgan seconded
    - Vote: approve 6, against 0, abstentions 0

- Overdose Awareness Month Event debrief – Tori Rodriguez & Sean Morris
    - Event was on August 31, 2026
    - Sean Morris shared that Homestead was most interested in working with the county and had already submitted a declaration to the Town Council
    - Sean Morris further shared that Homestead invited us all to a community dinner at Hospitality House this Friday, Sept. 18 at 5pm
        - Will include overdose awareness, prevention, and reversal trainings

- Buy Boone Lunch debrief – Tori Rodriguez
    - Event was on September 2, 2026
    - Tori Rodriguez shared that she would like to promote the event on social media more in the future, but that it went very well
        - FARM Café posted about us and the event on social media
    - Tori Rodriguez further discussed how this is a great event that does not cost much ($800) of our budget and can be planned relatively easily
        - Great way to spend time with residents of the town

- How Local Government Works Event updates – Kirstin Morgan, Alex Castillo, Sean Morris, Drew Finley, and Camila Aranda
    - Kirstin Morgan shared updates
        - Elected officials so far committed are only from Blowing Rock, still hoping to get someone from Boone as it would not look great to not have anyone
        - Expecting a good turnout from AppState students
        - Alex Castillo mentioned having someone who used to a be an alderman from Jefferson who might be able to join the panel
    - September 20, 2026 set as the event date, 1-4pm
        - Panel from 1-2:30pm
        - Vendor fair from 2:30-4pm

- Domestic Violence Awareness Month updates
    - Tori Rodriguez reached out to Oasis to offer to amplify their voice however we can and to tell us how we can support them
        - Oasis asked for examples of events, and Tori Rodriguez provided those but has not hear back
        - Tori Rodriguez suggested we commit to purchasing things off the Oasis list of needs for survivors to support them
        - Alex Castillo highlighted the need for soap, shampoo, and new clothes
    - Drew Finley asked what budget Tori Rodriguez would propose
        - Alex Castillo shared that the shelter capacity was 10-12
        - Tori Rodriguez proposed spending around $200-400 on gift cards or items from the list
            - Kirstin Morgan stated she liked the idea of gift cards to promote agency for clients

        - Alex Castillo also stated that Oasis has a policy of empowerment so the gift cards would fit that
    - Drew Finley said it seems like everyone is supportive of the idea, so just need to decide on an amount to spend
        - Annual HRC budget is $5,000 which gives us roughly $400 a month to spend
    - Tori Rodriguez proposed a budget of $400 for gift cards to donate to Oasis for Domestic Violence Awareness Month
        - Sean Morris motioned to approve
        - Alex Castillo seconded
        - Vote: approve 6, against 0, abstentions 0

- Trans Day of Remembrance updates – Joan Lacefield and Kirstin Morgan
    - Kirstin Morgan shared that she met with Joan Lacefield last week
        - They discussed possible venues and both FARM Café and Third Place are potential options
        - Once Joan Lacefield confirms time and place, Kirstin Morgan will reach out to drag performers and DJs
        - Joan Lacefield is also considering options for the candlelight vigil after she and Kirstin Morgan discussed options during their meeting
            - Jones House is a public space but may invite counter protesters
            - Could do in a private, indoor space but would be less impactful
    - Both events will happen in November
        - Day of Remembrance is Nov. 20
        - Benefit show will be Nov. 13 or 14
    - Drew Finley asked if there was a budget request for next month
        - Kirstin Morgan shared that the budget request would be for space rental for the charity drag show and possibly candles for the vigil but wanted to see about borrowing those first
        - Sean Morris shared places that might have candles to lend us
            - Sarah Parker with High Country UCC would likely donate
            - Boone United Methodist might be a good supporter

- Commission Member Reports
    - Drew Finley reported that there are only three meetings left this year after tonight
        - Shared that Todd Carter said most commissions and boards do not meet in December, and Drew Finley asked if we wanted to have a December meeting
        - Sean Morris asked that we table the discussion regarding the December meeting until the October meeting when Trevor Moody would be present since he is the only member with an event planned that month
    - Kirstin Morgan had no updates
    - Sean Morris had no updates
    - Tori Rodriguez already sent Todd the budget request for the Oasis gift cards
    - Brian Juneau had no updates

    - Alex Castillo wished us all happy Hispanic Heritage Month and Mexican Independence Day
        - He shared that if you haven't had dinner yet, Chipotle is raising money for Hospitality House
        - Stick Boy is doing its annual fundraiser to vote for your favorite nonprofit
        - He will be tailgating for the game on Saturday so come say hi

- Meeting adjourned at 7:04pm
    - Kirstin Morgan motioned to adjourn
    - Alex Castillo seconded
    - Vote: approve 6, against 0, abstentions 0