

STATE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE

Will Childers, Chairperson
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Betty Crance, Vice-Chairperson
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John Shepherd
Charlottesville
Renee F. Valdez
Alexandria
Christopher Olivo
Yorktown
Bruce Ellsworth
Crozet
Kimberly Hunt
Roanoke
Betsy Lang
Hampton



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental

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NELSON SMITH, COMMISSIONER

State Human Rights Committee Meeting

Minutes

Thursday, December 11, 2025

9:00AM

Eastern State Hospital (ESH)

4601 Ironbound Rd

Building 1

Williamsburg, VA 23188

[State Human Rights Committee Meeting](#) | [Meeting-Join](#) | [Microsoft Teams](#)

Meeting ID: 220 758 764 267 90

Passcode: ew7X7hq

Convene

9:00 a.m.

SHRC Members Present Physically Will Childers, **Chair**, Renee Valdez, Kimberly Hunt, Christopher Olivo, Bruce Ellsworth, Betsy Lang

SHRC Members Attending Virtually Betty Crance, **Vice Chair**

SHRC Members Absent John Shepherd

Staff Present Physically Taneika Goldman, State Human Rights Director
Delisa Turner, Executive Administrative Assistant, OHR
Mary Clair O'Hara, Associate Director for Quality and Compliance, OHR
Lashanique Green, Human Rights Advocate, Facility
Artea Ambrose, Human Rights Advocate, Region 1
Bob Williams, CEO, Eastern State Hospital (ESH)

Staff Attending Virtually Brandon Charles, Sr. Human Rights Manager, Facility Ops
Tony Davis, Human Rights Advocate, Facility
Cassie Purtlebaugh, Regional Human Rights Manager, Region 1

Others Attending in Person	Teresa Smith, Healthcare Compliance Unit Manager, Office of the Inspector General (OSIG) CR, Individual
Others Attending Virtually	Karen Taylor, Sr. Assistant Attorney General, Counsel for the SHRC Virginia Pharis, FANS Unit Manager, disAbility Law Center of Virginia (dLCV) Nicole Durose, Disability Rights Advocate, dLCV Renée Soniat, MS, Project Director, Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) Stephanie Fletcher, Compliance Coordinator, Northwestern Community Service Board (NWCSB)
Call to Order	At 9:00, Will Childers, SHRC Chair, called the December 11, 2025, SHRC meeting to order and welcomed all to the meeting. A call for introductions was made.
Approval of Agenda	At 9:04, the committee considered the agenda. Will Childers confirmed a change informed by Taneika Goldman: the parties to the Appeal of the Central Region LHRC Finding, scheduled for 11:00 are not available. She also indicated LaShanique Green, Human Rights Advocate, will present the advocate’s report for Eastern State Hospital (ESH). Bruce Ellsworth motioned for approval. Renee Valdez 2 nd . The agenda was approved as final with the aforementioned changes, unanimously.
Review of Draft Minutes	At 9:07, the committee considered the draft minutes from the October 23, 2025, meeting. Renee Valdez motioned for approval. Kimberly Hunt 2 nd . The draft minutes were approved, unanimously.
Welcome and Overview:	At 9:08, Bob Williams, CEO, welcomed and thanked the committee for allowing Eastern State Hospital (ESH) to host the meeting. ESH was established in 1773. The hospital celebrated over 750 combined years of employee service during an awards event on December 10, 2025. He spoke about his background, and how he transitioned into his current role. The culture at ESH is to treat their patients with dignity and respect as well as their employees. They currently offer a newer crisis intervention program called DEFUSE. ESH continues to work on changes to enhance the culture of the facility.
Townhall Debrief:	At 9:22, the committee discussed the Townhall and facility tour on December 10, 2025, at ESH. The committee relayed common themes and asked for clarity on the “pod transition process” and the appearance of punitive decision making related to privileges. They spoke about the importance of reinstating the patient advisory council and inquired about the process of when this will take effect.

Public Comment: At 9:30, Will Childers announced the public comment period. There were no public comments.

At 9:31, the committee reverted to the Townhall discussion. The committee stated a few patients had discrepancies with their Treatment Team and being involved with their own care. Overall, the committee recommended ESH consider ways to make the rules clearer so that patients understand them and staff consistently implement them. Taneika Goldman acknowledged how the assigned human rights advocate was also present for the discussion and that she will follow up on individual complaints and system-related suggestions

Public Comment Follow Up: At 9:44, Taneika Goldman facilitated follow-up to Derek Unger, CEO, Timber Ridge School, public comment during the October 23, 2025, proposing a joint task force to study adolescent human rights, especially in residential care settings. Mr. Unger offered to assist by providing data, and to work with representatives from the Office of Human Rights (OHR) and other residential service providers. The Committee agreed with the appointment of Christopher Olivo as the SHRC representative on this workgroup, with Renee Valdez assisting. The OHR will provide administrative support and assistance.

BREAK At 9:48, Will Childers called for a brief break.

Appeal: At 10:00, the SHRC facilitated the appeal of the Fact-Finding and Recommendations from Charlottesville Area LHRC in the matter of C.R. v Northwestern Community Service Board (NWCSB). A call for introductions took place by Will Childers prior to proceeding. Will Childers also inform the parties that they would receive the findings of the SHRC in writing within 20 working days.

The Individual presented in person. Stephanie Fletcher, Compliance Coordinator, NWCSB, presented virtually on behalf of the provider. In agreement with the preference of the Individual, the committee decided to review the appeal in open session.

At 10:22, upon a motion by Christopher Olivo, and Bruce Ellsworth 2nd, the committee convened for deliberation in closed session pursuant to VA CODE § 2.2-3711 (A) (4) (8) and (16), for the protection of the privacy of individuals in personal matters not related to public business, discussion of their medical records, and for consultation with legal counsel regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel.

At 10:35, upon a motion by Betty Crance and Bruce Ellsworth 2nd, the SHRC returned to open session. Upon reconvening in open session each member certified that, to the best of their knowledge, only matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements and only such matters related to the stated reason for going into closed session were heard, discussed, or considered.

Christopher Olivo motioned the following regarding the matter of C.R. v NWCSB: to uphold

Finding #1, #2 and #3. Bruce Ellsworth 2nd. Motion passed, unanimously.

- ESH Report:** At 10:37, LaShanique Green presented the advocate’s report on human rights complaints, the use of restraint and other noted human rights activities involving ESH for Jan 2025 - Oct 2025.
- LHRC Business:** At 11:03, the SHRC considered LHRC business.
- Cassie Purtlebaugh, Regional Human Rights Manager, Region 1, presented the Northwestern Area LHRC reappointment recommendations.
- Betty Crance made a motion to approve the reappointments for LHRC membership. Renee Valdez 2nd. Motion passed.
- Region 1
Northwestern Area LHRC
Lisa Parlett – Reappointment
Cathy Wolfe – Reappointment
- LHRC Liaison Reporting:** At 11:06, the SHRC considered LHRC liaison reporting. Kimberly Hunt and Will Childers stated they attended the Roanoke-Catawba LHRC meeting. Renee Valdez attended Prince William County LHRC virtually. Betsy Lang also noted that she planned to attend a region 5 LHRC meeting but it was cancelled. Will Childers encouraged others to attend a meeting in their local region. Taneika Goldman stated that the 2026 LHRC Meeting Calendar will be finalized by the end of the week.
- SHRC Calendar Review:** At 11:10, the committee finalized their meeting schedule for 2026 and the updates to the Workplan Objectives. Betsy Lang made a motion to accept the SHRC meeting calendar dates for calendar year 2026 and Workplan Objectives. Bruce Ellsworth 2nd. Motion passed, unanimously.
- Workplan Objectives
- BREAK*** At 11:17, Will Childers called for a brief break.
- Central State Update (CSH) VCBR Report:** At 11:45, Tony Davis gave an update to the progress of Central State Hospital’s new facility.

The committee accepted the Virginia Center for Behavioral Rehabilitation (VCBR) report as submitted.

Presentation: At 12:01, Renée Soniat gave a presentation overview of the Leadership Empowerment and Abuse Prevention (LEAP) Curriculum. She discussed what the LEAP Project is, who it is designed for and why people should learn about healthy relationship and abuse prevention.

SHRC Annual Report: At 12:50, Taneika Goldman discussed the 2024 SHRC Annual Report of Activities. She alongside Will Childers presented the Annual Report during the State Board Meeting on December 10, 2025.

Adjournment At 1:09, the December 11, 2025, SHRC Meeting was adjourned.

Next Meeting
January 15, 2026
Region 1