

ITEM #:	31
DATE:	08-11-26
DEPT:	ADMIN

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

SUBJECT: ORDINANCE REVISING *MUNICIPAL CODE* CHAPTER 14 (AMES HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION)

BACKGROUND:

At the November 18, 2025, joint meeting of the Ames City Council and Ames Human Relations Commission (AHRC), staff and the AHRC Chair recommended that Council consider updating the [Municipal Code Chapter 14: Human Relations](#) to better align the code with its current activities and objectives. City Council directed staff to place an item on a future agenda for the ordinance update (see attachment).

On March 10, 2026, [Senate File 579](#) was approved by the Iowa Legislature. This bill states, "The term of a commissioner appointed to a local agency or local commission shall be for two years." Currently, six positions are serving a three-year term, and one commissioner serves a one-year term.

The ordinance prepared by staff to modify Chapter 14 will:

- Clarify that discriminatory practices are prohibited.
- Correct a typographical error by adding a missing word.
- Update the Iowa Civil Rights Commission to reflect its recent renaming as the Iowa Office of Civil Rights.
- Revise the description of the Commission's powers and duties to use more accessible language and to emphasize the focus on community outreach and engagement.
- Align with Iowa law to ensure that Commissioners will serve a two-year term.*

*The term length for two current commission members will be adjusted from April 1, 2026 - March 31, 2029 to April 1, 2026 - March 31, 2029.

At the January AHRC strategic planning retreat, Commissioners emphasized that advocacy remains an important role AHRC plays in the community.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Approve first reading of ordinance on the recommended changes to *Municipal Code* Chapter 14: Human Relations Commission
2. Do not approve and provide further direction.

CITY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

City staff agrees with the Commission that modifications would be appropriate, and it is beneficial to align the *Municipal Code* language with the Commission's current activities. Furthermore, changing the term length aligns with actions taken at the state legislature. Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that City Council approve Alternative No. 1 as described above.

ATTACHMENT(S):

[DRAFT Ordinance Ch 14 \(AHRC\).pdf](#)