



Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination Meeting Minutes

Date/Time: Tuesday, September 1, 2026, at 1:00 p.m.
Place: MCAD - 1 Ashburton Place, Suite 601, Boston, MA 02108
Format: Hybrid Meeting with YouTube Livestream for Public Observation
Livestream: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCh_wjAthLJTQf-KMgMGv1Yw

The Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination held a public meeting on Tuesday, September 1, 2026. Commissioners and staff participated in person and remotely, and the meeting was livestreamed for public observation.

Commissioners Participating In Person:

Chair Sunila Thomas George
Commissioner Christina Brown
Commissioner Edward Mitnick
Commissioner Jeremy Scheiner

Commissioner Participating Remotely:

Commissioner Steven Locke

Staff Present:

Michael Memmolo, Executive Director
Deirdre Ann Hosler, General Counsel
Shirani A. Jimenez, Director of Human Resources
Andrew Espinosa, Deputy Chief of Investigations
Leila Fajardo-Giles, Director of Preliminary Investigations
Ruthy Barros, Recording Secretary

1. Call to Order

Chair Sunila Thomas George called the meeting to order at 1:03 p.m. The Chair stated that notice of the meeting and the agenda had been properly filed with the Secretary of the Commonwealth and posted on the Commission's website in accordance with the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law. She stated that the meeting was open to public observation, including the Commission's deliberations and voting, except for any portion lawfully held in executive session. The Chair conducted a roll call. Commissioner Brown, Commissioner Locke, Commissioner Mitnick, Commissioner Scheiner, and Chair Thomas George were present. The Chair announced that a quorum was present.

Roll Call Attendance:

<i>Chair Thomas George</i>	<i>Present.</i>
<i>Commissioner Brown</i>	<i>Present.</i>
<i>Commissioner Locke</i>	<i>Present.</i>

Commissioner Mitnick
Commissioner Scheiner

Present.
Present.

2. Approval of May 27, 2026 and May 29, 2026 Commission Meeting Minutes

The Chair asked whether there were any questions or discussion concerning the May 27, 2026 and May 29, 2026 Commission meeting minutes. Hearing none, the Chair proposed taking one vote on both sets of minutes. Chair Thomas George moved to approve both sets of minutes, and Commissioner Edward Mitnick seconded the motion. The Chair called for a voice vote. All five Commissioners voted in favor. No Commissioner opposed or abstained. The motion was approved unanimously, 5-0.

Vote:

<i>Chair Thomas George</i>	<i>Aye.</i>
<i>Commissioner Brown</i>	<i>Aye.</i>
<i>Commissioner Locke</i>	<i>Aye.</i>
<i>Commissioner Mitnick</i>	<i>Aye.</i>
<i>Commissioner Scheiner</i>	<i>Aye.</i>

3. Commissioner Update

Chair Thomas George provided an update on summer activities and implementation work. Staff continued adapting to the Commission Case Management System (CCMS). Although implementation involved expected challenges, the system was operating and staff were identifying more efficient ways to process cases and conduct their work. The Chair recognized the Investigations team and the Clerk of the Commission for their patience, collaboration, training, and support during the transition.

The Chair highlighted the opening of the Fall River office, the participation of Commissioners and staff in Boston Pride, and the July all-staff meeting. She stated that the all-staff meeting brought employees from across the Commonwealth together for information-sharing, collaboration, and renewed focus on the Commission's history and mission. The communications and training teams were commended for organizing the program.

The Chair also discussed the continuing implementation of the newly promulgated regulations and the summer internship program. Seven interns completed substantive assignments and reported that the experience strengthened their understanding of civil rights work and their interest in related careers.

4. Executive Director Update

Executive Director Michael Memmolo presented operational, programmatic, fiscal, and staffing updates. The Fall River hybrid office opened on June 5, 2026. The office was receiving approximately two in-person service inquiries per week, and 12 complaints had been filed through the office's kiosk or regular intake process. Administrative and service staff coordinated in-person and virtual assistance and routed matters to the appropriate personnel.

For the second consecutive year, the agency participated in the Boston Pride Parade. The Executive Director emphasized the importance of visible and accurate information about legal protections for LGBTQIA+ communities. The agency also participated in Juneteenth observances at the State House and in Fall River, completed fiscal-year and housing-contract closeout work, held an internal Pride celebration, and welcomed the new Director of Preliminary Investigations.

The CCMS Attorney Portal went live on June 15. In approximately 11 weeks, attorneys filed more than 200 complaints through the portal, an average of approximately 19 per week. Management noted that attorney-filed complaints historically represented approximately 30 percent of complaints. Two of the three planned CCMS phases were operational. The Pro Se Portal was the next phase and was expected to launch by the end of October. Although reporting remained a work in progress, the overall implementation was described as on schedule.

During the Executive Director's update, the Commission recessed briefly to address microphone interference. No substantive business was conducted during the technical recess. The Commission resumed the Executive Director's update after approximately two minutes.

The Executive Director reported that the newly promulgated procedural regulations became effective on June 22, 2026. At the July all-staff meeting, representatives from the Governor's legal office presented a citation from the Governor and Lieutenant Governor recognizing the Commission's 80th anniversary and civil rights work. Staff also completed internal training on case assessment, investigations, interviewing, and related case processing practices. The agency continued accessibility, language access, contract, and policy work.

The federal contract performance target was 1,471 cases. By the end of June, the agency had closed more than 1,000 cases and reported that it was on pace under the contract. The agency also reported that the related work had been accepted and fully funded.

Commissioners asked about the CCMS schedule, case flow, and the investigative backlog. Management reported approximately 3,417 non-housing cases that were 18 months or older, which the agency uses as its backlog definition. The total case inventory was approximately 8,000, including approximately 5,000 cases that were less than 18 months old and newer complaints continuing to enter the system.

The Commission also discussed the summer internship program. Staff explained that interns met with constituents and complainants, listened to their accounts, and assisted staff in organizing potential complaints. The program was described as a meaningful educational experience and a recruitment pipeline for future investigators, attorneys, and other agency staff.

5. Legal Update

General Counsel Deirdre Ann Hosler reported that the Commission's newly promulgated procedural regulations were published on June 19, 2026. Two internal staff trainings were planned for September, one in Springfield and one in Boston. General Counsel Hosler and

Deputy General Counsel Diane Nordbye were collaborating with the Attorney General's Office and other state partners on guidance, training, and compliance matters.

General Counsel Hosler also discussed the new MCAD Style Guide, which establishes uniform standards for professional writing and document formatting, including fonts, margins, letterhead, and document presentation. Existing CCMS templates had been drafted to conform to these standards. Staff members would remain responsible for following the guide, with a designated Publications Law Clerk conducting final review and providing oversight. Internal trainings on the Style Guide were planned for Worcester and Boston.

6. Investigations Update

Deputy Chief of Investigations Andrew Espinosa provided an update on behalf of the Investigations Division. He reported that the Preliminary Investigations Unit was fully funded and staffed. The unit's core team consisted of an attorney director, an additional attorney, two investigators, and two administrative staff members, with support from other administrative staff as needed. The Review and Authorization program had ended, and matters previously handled through that program were being redirected to the Preliminary Investigations Unit. The division was also preparing for the Pro Se pilot and related portal functions, updating public and internal documents, and conducting training to ensure that staff understood the new process.

The division held three case review and triage trainings using older complaints to examine public interest value, possible investigative paths, and potential jurisdictional barriers. Administrative staff also received training on locating the most appropriate service address using the Secretary of the Commonwealth's corporations database, municipal and statewide assessor and GIS records, and county registries of deeds. Since the launch of CCMS, the division had issued approximately 15 standard operating procedures and job aids. Recruitment was also underway for four investigator positions, an attorney unit supervisor, and an additional attorney advisor.

The division reported 346 substantive closures or determinations since July 1 and recently conducted its first non-housing site visit in many years in connection with a public accommodation matter. The Chair noted that cases receiving probable cause determinations continue through post-determination proceedings and require ongoing agency resources. Commissioners discussed the need for clear accountability measures and FY27 baselines. They asked management to establish a baseline as of June 30, 2026, and identify measurable outcomes to be achieved by June 30, 2027, so that progress could be evaluated.

At 1:58 p.m., the Commission recessed and reconvened at 2:07 p.m.

7. Executive Director FY26 Year-End Review (July 1, 2025-June 30, 2026)

The Chair reviewed the evaluation framework. FY26 was the second year of the Executive Director's three-year contract, which requires an annual performance assessment. The Commission had not completed a midyear FY26 review while new Commissioners were

being appointed and regulatory work was prioritized. A mid-year evaluation was expected for FY27.

Executive Director Memmolo summarized work on CCMS, statutory and regulatory changes, Commission and counsel processes, policies and procedures, governance, staffing, and organizational change. Most CCMS functions were launched during FY26, and the Pro Se Portal remained the principal incomplete component. He described extensive retraining, new procedures and structures, stakeholder outreach, and change management work. He also noted that turnover, hiring, onboarding, and post-pandemic attrition affected case processing capacity.

Commissioners discussed the importance of historical context and baselines when assessing case processing. Counsel explained that delays can arise at several stages but that the Commission did not have a current backlog of Full Commission matters. Commissioners praised the Executive Director and management team for implementing CCMS and the new regulations, securing full agency funding, supporting the expansion to five Commissioners, maintaining strong communication with the Commission, and developing productive relationships with the Legislature and Administration. The Chair also reviewed the multi-year history of the Executive Director role and the significant organizational change that preceded FY26.

The Commission reviewed the seven FY26 goals and noted that five were completed. Commissioners raised concerns about the continuing case backlog. The Chair explained that Goal 4, concerning timely investigations and case processing, had been written too broadly and was intended to focus on putting processes and conditions in place to support greater timeliness. Several Commissioners noted that they had joined the Commission during FY26 and received the prior year's goals only shortly before the evaluation. They stated that the FY27 goals should use clear baselines, measurable targets, and regular reporting, particularly for backlog reduction, so that the next evaluation could assess concrete impact.

The Commission recessed from approximately 2:50 p.m. to 2:53 p.m. when Commissioner Locke experienced an audio-connection issue. After Commissioner Locke rejoined the meeting, the Chair confirmed that all five Commissioners remained present and the meeting resumed.

Commissioner Edward Mitnick moved to assign the Executive Director an Exceptional rating for FY26 performance, and Commissioner Jeremy Scheiner seconded the motion. The Chair called for a voice vote. All five Commissioners voted in favor. No Commissioner opposed or abstained. The motion was approved unanimously, 5-0. Executive Director Memmolo thanked the Commission and stated that the rating reflected the work of the entire management team and agency staff.

Vote:

Chair Thomas George

Aye.

Commissioner Brown

Aye.

Commissioner Locke

Aye.

Commissioner Mitnick
Commissioner Scheiner

Aye.
Aye.

8. Executive Director FY27 SMART Goals (July 1, 2026-June 30, 2027)

9. The Commission did not vote on the draft FY27 goals. Commissioners agreed that the subject required a dedicated discussion rather than a brief opening discussion followed by a continuation. The Commission requested that the goals be revised as specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound objectives supported by clear baselines, target dates, and a usable evaluation rubric.

Commissioners asked that the most important operational metrics be identified and that regular progress updates or a dashboard be provided so the Commission could assess measurable impact during the year and at the mid-year review. Particular attention would be given to reducing the pre-probable-cause investigative backlog while maintaining balanced goals for other divisions, programs, and agency priorities.

The Commission distinguished the Executive Director's annual goals from broader Commission-wide strategic planning. Commissioners stated that long range planning should be collaborative and include Commissioners, management, and staff rather than being assigned to one individual. The Commission discussed developing an approach and timing for a two-, three-, or five-year agency vision after the near term FY27 goal setting and backlog planning work. January was discussed as a possible time to revisit the broader strategic planning process.

Commissioners also discussed whether future evaluations should combine weighted operational goals with leadership, judgment, communication, and other responsibilities in the Executive Director's job description. No evaluation redesign was adopted. The Commission requested a revised FY27 goals document for its consideration, and the item was continued to a future meeting.

10. Next Meeting Dates: September 2026-January 2027

The Commission agreed to place the following hybrid meetings on the calendar, with the understanding that a meeting could be cancelled if no business required action:

Wednesday, September 16, 2026, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. – FY27 goals discussion
Friday, October 23, 2026, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
Friday, November 13, 2026, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
Friday, December 11, 2026, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
Friday, January 8, 2027, from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. – Mid-year review and contract discussion

The January meeting was extended to three hours to accommodate the mid-year evaluation and an initial discussion concerning the Executive Director's contract, including possible executive-session business if lawfully appropriate and listed on the agenda.

The Commission also discussed the cadence of oral updates. Informational reports may be included in the meeting packet, while oral updates may be prioritized when they directly inform a decision or agenda item. Commissioners also expressed interest in attending agency staff appreciation or holiday events once dates were available.

11. Other Business

The Chair asked whether there was any other business. No additional business was raised.

12. Adjournment

Chair Thomas George moved to adjourn the meeting, and Commissioner Edward Mitnick seconded the motion. The Chair called for a voice vote. All five Commissioners voted in favor. No Commissioner opposed or abstained. The motion was approved unanimously, 5-0. The meeting adjourned at 3:25 p.m.

Vote:

<i>Chair Thomas George</i>	<i>Aye.</i>
<i>Commissioner Brown</i>	<i>Aye.</i>
<i>Commissioner Locke</i>	<i>Aye.</i>
<i>Commissioner Mitnick</i>	<i>Aye.</i>
<i>Commissioner Scheiner</i>	<i>Aye.</i>

Meeting Materials

1. MCAD Public Meeting Notice and Agenda for September 1, 2026.
2. May 27, 2026 Commission Meeting Minutes.
3. May 29, 2026 Commission Meeting Minutes.
4. Executive Director FY26 Year-End Review and performance-rating materials.
5. Executive Director FY27 SMART Goals draft.

FY27 Executive Director SMART Goals for Mike Memmolo

1. Oversee the Agency's Successful Transition to Operating Under Promulgated Procedural Regulations and Educating the Public (15%)

Objective: By February 28, 2027, ensure internal compliance and external education on new procedural regulations.

Key Milestones:

- Ensure agency-wide regulations training by September 30, 2026.
- Announce and publish regulations through the agency's digital channels by September 30th, 2026 (subject to promulgation).
- Ensure all agency standard operating procedures (SOPs) and division/unit specific policies are aligned with regulations by December 31, 2026.
- Ensure the agency provides monthly open-enrollment regulations trainings for the legal community between November 2026 - February 2027, reaching at least 150 total attendees.

2. Complete Public Portal Operational Launch of the Comprehensive Case Management System (CCMS) (20%)

Objective: Complete opening and use of the public portal and ensure successful access by December 31, 2026.

Key Milestones:

- Launch the public portal by October 30, 2026.
- Create and publish "how to use the MCAD public portal" video series by November 30th, 2026.
- Finalize portal accessibility audit and implement remediation by December 31, 2026.
- Facilitate at least three hybrid training courses for at least 100 constituents by December 31, 2026.

Tracking: Provide monthly reports on portal usage to the Commission starting December 2026.

3. Ensure Timely Investigations and Case Processing (25%)

Objective: Reduce Commission investigative caseload by processing cases more efficiently and effectively through the implementation of the new procedural regulations and use of the new case management system.

Note: Revisit this goal during Part B after implementation of online portal to assess impact on overall case inventory.

Key Milestones:

- Finalize Preliminary and Formal Investigation unit processes are finalized and are up and running with appropriate SOPs and staffing by October 31, 2026.
- Ensure processing time for newly filed complaints is completed within 30 days by October 31, 2026.
- Oversee the creation and implementation of a plan to reduce the backlog of aged cases (18 months or older as of August 24, 2026 (4016 cases)) by at least 40% by October 31, 2026 and the reduction is achieved by June 30, 2027.
- Oversee the creation and implementation of a plan to reduce the time to investigate complaints authorized for formal investigations to 18 months by June 30, 2027.
- When needed, ensure managers create and implement a plan to address post probable cause bottlenecks through identifying barriers and monitoring progress.

Tracking: The ED will provide the Commission with standardized CCMS quarterly reports that track cases at each stage of commission's processes.

4. Foster a Mission-Driven and Positive Work Culture (10%)

Objective: Overall positive satisfaction with majority of staff.

Objective: Ensure less than 10% vacancy rate for open positions

Objective: Ensure vacancies are filled within 60 days.

Key Milestones:

- Develop and implement written management and operational protocols for all offices by March 31, 2027 to promote consistency, accountability and effective management.
- Conduct an annual all-staff survey by December 31, 2026; identify agency strengths and weaknesses and create a FY28 action plan based on those results.
- Ensure that there is an increase in staff participation in monthly RISE (staff culture committee) meetings and events by 15% through the participation of staff from each division and unit (measured by average attendance) by June 30, 2027.
- Ensure vacant positions are posted, qualified candidates are interviewed, and vacancies are filled within 60 days, absent circumstances outside of the agency's control.
- Review the employee exit-interview feedback report developed by HR to identify recurring workplace or management issues.

Tracking: The ED will provide the Commission with the annual survey results, key findings, the FY28 action plan, vacancy and hiring data, RISE participation data, and a summary of significant workplace trends and management responses.

5. Strengthen Communication, Collaboration, Partnerships and Maintain Agency Funding (10%)

Objective: Advance MCAD's mission through active quarterly stakeholder engagement and legislative advocacy in furtherance of the Commission's mission and priorities.

Key Milestones:

- Assist the GOV and AGO with MCAD Advisory Board appointments, when requested.
- Work with the advisory board chair to complete annual open meeting law and public records law compliance training and other onboarding initiatives for all board members within 60 days of said appointment.
- Coordinate meetings with legislators on priority bills and provide formal letters of support, when appropriate, during Spring 2027.
- Ensure that at least two meetings are held per fiscal year with the Governor's office and key legislators regarding budgetary maintenance and support, during Spring 2027.

6. Bolster Agency Operations and Support Commission Oversight (10%)

Objective: By June 30, 2027, maintain effective agency operations.

Key Milestones:

- Conduct quarterly performance evaluations and provide substantive feedback of all senior managers to ensure they meet their individual FY27 goals. Address performance and operational concerns through documentation and corrective performance plans.
- Submit the agency's FY27 budget request, tied to the agency's mission and objectives, by the state's annual budget deadline.
- Submit FY26 annual report for the agency by calendar year end.

Tracking: Provide the Commission with monthly written updates on agency operations, including complaints received, investigative backlog, ADR statistics, post-probable cause statistics, hearings unit statistics, staffing, and budget status.

7. Multiyear Agencywide visioning and strategic planning (10%)

Objective: Draft a multi-year agency-wide strategic plan in Q3 and Q4 of FY27.

Key Milestones:

- Convene the senior management team and Commissioners to identify and prioritize the agency's long-term strategic priorities by March 31, 2027.
- Convene the senior management team and Commissioners to identify and prioritize the agency's long-term strategic priorities by March 31, 2027.
- Draft an outline of the multi-year strategic plan, including proposed goal areas, timelines, and resource needs, by April 30, 2027.
- Circulate the draft plan to the Commissioners and senior management for review and feedback by May 31, 2027, incorporating input ahead of the FY28 fiscal year.
- Commission members review, discuss and approve strategic priorities for FY28.