



Watertown City Council

Administration Building
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Watertown City Council Committee on Human Services Thursday, December 19, 2024

Members Present: Councilor Tony Palomba, Chair; Councilor Caroline Bays, Vice Chair; and Councilor John Gannon, Secretary

The Committee on Human Services held a public meeting on December 19, 2024, at 6:00pm to discuss the appointment of Elizabeth Aeschlimann as a member of the Human Rights Commission to a term expiring April 1, 2027.

1. Call to Order

Committee Chair Palomba called the meeting to order at 6:00pm and introduced the other committee members present: Caroline Bays, Vice Chair; and John Gannon, Secretary. Also present was Elizabeth Aeschlimann.

Chair Palomba started the meeting by asking Ms. Aeschlimann why she wanted to be a part of the Human Rights Commission. She replied that she likes Watertown, after having moved here four years ago, and she wants to develop roots here. She has attended community meetings, including those run by Watertown Community Conversations. She was enthused that Watertown was so committed to human rights that the City established a Human Rights Commission. She has attended meetings of the Commission since its inception. Councilor Palomba asked her what types of activities she would like the Commission to pursue. She stated that she hopes the Commission can respond to the interests of newer immigrants who have settled in the community. She has a background in community organization and has a Master of Divinity degree from Harvard University and has served as a Jewish chaplain. She stated that, through her work, she has strength in knowing how to speak with people of diverse backgrounds and inquiring what their needs are. She has studied abroad in Thailand and became familiar with human rights framework and with the United Nations declaration on human rights. She has written work related to human rights in the community and relationship-centered community organizing. She has

initiated a program in faith-based community organizing. She thinks the Human Rights Commission is doing a great job.

Action Item: Councilor Bays made a motion that the full Council vote to approve Elizabeth Aeschlimann as a member of the Human Rights Commission to a term expiring April 1, 2027. Councilor Gannon seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of 3-0.

Councilor Bays made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Councilor Gannon. The motion was approved by a vote of 3-0.

The meeting concluded at 6:22pm.

Minutes prepared by John Gannon

ELECTED OFFICIALS

Anthony Palomba,
Chair

Caroline Bays,
Vice Chair

John G. Gannon,
Secretary