

Human Rights Commission Immigrant Rights Committee Meeting Minutes

August 7, 2025

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 10:01 AM

2. Roll Call

Present (all via zoom) were Gabriel Camacho, Elizabeth Brusie, and Corey Barr

3. Acceptance of Minutes

a. Minutes for Previous Meeting

The minutes will be voted on at the next full HRC meeting on August 11th.

4. Discussion

a. Proposed Edits to HRC Statement in Support of Human Rights for All

The Committee worked off proposed edits made by Corey Barr to the statement in support of Human Rights for All which the HRC had previously approved. Changes discussed were to change the title to something more specific to ICE and immigration, and to edit the content along the same lines. Core Barr made a motion, seconded by Elizabeth Brusie, to approve the following edits:

-Change the title to "Statement on ICE Operations and Enforcement Activities, and the Impacts on Our Community

- Change the first sentence to: "The Watertown Human Rights Commission is deeply concerned about the exponential increase in ICE detentions across Massachusetts in recent months, including in Watertown and neighboring communities. In particular, the Commission notes with concern the arrest and detention of our neighbors without due process. "

b. Potential Public Forum on ICE with Watertown Police Department

The Committee discussed holding an event to educate the public on ICE activity and immigrant rights in conjunction with the Watertown Police Department. Doug Newton told the Committee that he passed this along to Captain Unsworth and that he may have input from WPD on this possibility at the next HRC meeting.

c. HRC Immigrant Justice/Food Justice Event with Library in Fall 2025

Corey Barr shared that she no longer has capacity to take the lead on this event moving forward. She asked if any other members of the Committee can do so. Neither could, so this will be brought to the full HRC at its next meeting.

d. Potential Additional Actions from the HRC in Support of Immigrant Neighbors

One additional possibility which came up was working with the Action Plan Committee and its consultant to host a focus group with immigrants. Gabriel Camacho told the Committee that he has discussed this possibility with the consultant.

5. Public Comment

Jacky van Leeuwen sent an email prior to the Committee meeting which was read at the beginning of the meeting and is included below.

6. Adjournment

Th meeting adjourned at 10:32 AM.

Public Comment:

To HRC,

Please include the following in public record, to be read, if possible, during Public Comment.
Thank you.

Thank you for the opportunity to express my thoughts on the wording of the HRC Statement....

1. I agree with the suggestion that the title be changed from: "Statement of Support for Human Rights for All" to "**Statement on ICE Operations and Impacts on Our Community**". I think the unique assault on immigrants and what that means for the vulnerabilities of all of us calls for a bold statement that calls out the 'operations'/assaults for what they are.

.

2. As suggested, change first sentence from: "We are deeply concerned by the recent ICE detentions in Watertown and neighboring communities," to "The Watertown Human Rights (Commission) is deeply concerned about the exponential increase in ICE detentions across Massachusetts in recent months, including in Watertown and neighborhood communities. In particular, the Commission notes with concern the arbitrary arrest and detention of our neighbors without due process."

3. I hope the finalized statement is published in Watertown News and all other available platforms and that the HRC agrees to request that the City Council issue a statement.

Thank you for being part of the leadership needed to oppose ICE operations and to support dignity and compassion for ALL Watertown. I am proud that we have such a dedicated Human Rights Commission.

Jacky van Leeuwen
32 Whites Ave
Member of Watertown Rapid Response Network