

Human Rights Commission Meeting Minutes

September 8, 2025

1. Call to Order
Mel Poindexter called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM.
2. Roll Call
Present were Corey Barr, Susan Musinsky, Mel Poindexter, Xin Peng, Elizabeth Brusie, Liz Aeschlimann and Sarah Zoen (by zoom).
3. Public Comment
 - a. Captain Unsworth of the Police Department spoke to introduce Watertown's new Civil Rights Officer, Michael Scafidi. Officer Scafidi has served in the Watertown Police Department for five years.
4. Acceptance of Minutes
 - a. Minutes 8.11.25
The Commission voted unanimously to approve the minutes for the August meeting.
5. Funding Request: Indigenous People's Day
 - a. Program Flier- Jennifer Wolfrum of the Pigsgusset Initiative
Watertown resident and member of the Pigsgusset Initiative of Watertown Citizens for Peace, Justice and the Environment spoke to the Commission about her funding request for an Indigenous People's Day event. She is seeking to raise up to \$2,500 for various parts of the event and has raised funds from other sources. Susan Musinsky made a motion, seconded by Corey Barr, that the Commission express a commitment to supporting the event financially. This matter was referred to the Action Plan Committee who will decide on the full amount.
6. Discussion
 - a. Human Rights Commission Logo: Contest with Watertown students
Susan Musinsky shared that she has been working with Nnamdi Okaka of Watertown Public Schools to design and promote a contest for WPS students to create a logo for the Commission .
 - b. Human Rights Commission Website
Doug Newton reported on a call that had taken place with him, Commissioner Lisa Laplante, and Digital Media Jeanne Ostroff regarding updates to the Human Rights Commission page of the city website.
 - c. Human Rights Commission Process for Receiving Feedback
 - d. Promotion of Human Rights Commission among the community
 - e. For this item as well as the above, the Commission discussed being in contact with city staff including the community engagement team regarding promotion of the Human Rights Commission, especially on the website.
 - f. Watertown Pride 2026
Xin Peng reported that the Pride Committee has met and will meet again on October 28th to finalize plans and logistics for Watertown Pride 2026.
 - g. Faire on the Square 2025

The Commission discussed logistics around its table at the upcoming Faire on the Square.

h. Watertown Public Schools Youth Summit

Dr. Cerrone Daly clarified that the Youth Summit is managed by the Watertown Anti-Bias Coalition, and WPS is a part of the effort.

i. Watertown Cable Access Television Public Service Announcement (PSA) Day- September 19

Xin Peng shared that WCATV is allowing organizations to broadcast a public service announcement. He suggested that one or two Commissioners record such a message for the HRC. The Commission agreed that Sarah Zoen and Mel Poindexter will record a joint message.

j. Immigrant Rights Movie: Potential Community Event & Speakers

Susan Musinsky shared that a friend of hers has produced a movie which is free and available on Amazon regarding the rights of immigrants. The filmmaker is seeking places to screen the movie along with community members and Susan Musinsky felt as though the HRC could consider hosting or sponsoring a screening. Xin Peng made a motion, seconded by Corey Barr, to allow the Commission to collaborate with the library on hosting this event. The Commission voted unanimously to approve the motion.

k. Communication with Belmont on Forum on Immigration & Customs Enforcement (ICE)

Corey Barr shared that she did hear back from the Massachusetts Human Rights Coalition about the forum that she had flagged as being problematic.

l. Human Rights Commission Complaint Form Revisions

Elizabeth Brusie shared that she will bring a revised Complaint Form to the Commission at its next meeting.

7. Public Comment

No member of the public offered comment.

8. Complaint Form Submission Received

a. Xin Peng Complaint

Xin Peng shared that it was difficult to file a complaint due to the form itself and that it can't be edited. He added that he wanted the Commission to include what he filed in the data.

9. Committee Reports

a. Action Plan Committee: Approval of Minutes; Upcoming focus groups; Work with Liz Peck on Needs Assessment; Stipend Increase for Consultant to accommodate focus group spending

Consultant hired by the HRC Liz Peck joined the meeting to share the work she has been doing to organize focus groups in October. She updated the Commission on upcoming focus groups for community members with disabilities, Spanish-speaking immigrants, and the general public. To allow Liz to provide gift cards for focus group participants as a reward, per advice from the City Attorney, Sarah Zoen made a motion, seconded by Corey Barr, that the Commission replace the \$2,000 it had allocated for the focus groups with an increase to Liz Peck's stipend of the same amount. The Commission voted unanimously to approve the motion.

10. Report from Staff Liaison

Doug Newton said that everything he planned to cover had been discussed already. He added that the October meeting falls on a holiday and that the Commission should re-schedule. The Commission will schedule their next meeting via a doodle poll.

11. Public Comment

No member of the public offered comment.

12. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:52 PM.