

Human Rights Commission Meeting Minutes

November 10, 2025

1. Call to Order

Mel Poindexter called the meeting to order at 6:04 PM.

2. Roll Call

Present were Corey Barr, Elizabeth Brusie, Gabriel Camacho, Susan Musinsky, Mel Poindexter, Xin Peng, Sarah Zoen, and Liz Aeschlimann. Also present was Consultant for the Human Rights Commission Needs Assessment Liz Peck.

3. Acceptance of Minutes

- Minutes 10.20.25

Mel Poindexter made a motion, seconded by Corey Barr, to approve the minutes for October 20, 2025. The Commission voted eight to zero to approve the motion.

4. Presentation on Human Rights Commission Needs Assessment, Including Recent Focus Groups: Liz Peck of Peck Policy Strategies

Liz Peck spoke to the Commission for roughly one hour on the recent focus groups that she conducted as part of her ongoing Needs Assessment for the Human Rights Commission. This consisted of three focus groups: one for individuals with disabilities, one for LGBTQ+ individuals, and one for the general public. This presentation was not to be Liz's final report to the Human Rights Commission but instead a status update sharing general takeaways from the focus groups. The full presentation can be found as an attachment to the November 10th agenda. Liz shared some of the positive feedback she received on the welcoming nature of Watertown and its residents, as well as some concerns expressed in regards to discrimination encountered. Participants also expressed concern about the national environment around human rights, particularly as it relates to immigration.

Liz identified the following areas of opportunity for the Commission to focus its energy:

- Communication, listening and education
- Events & initiatives
- Immigrant communities
- Public schools & education
- Disability priorities; Proactive inclusion
- Affordable, accessible housing

The final report from Liz is expected in December.

5. Public Comment

Three residents offered comment, one in person at the meeting and another via email prior to the meeting, with another participating live virtually. Clyde Younger provided the Commission with a document related to immigration enforcement which is attached at the bottom of these minutes.

6. Discussion

a. Recent Immigration Enforcement Activity

The Commission discussed recent ICE activity which included a raid in Allston with some connected activity near the Target in Watertown. Captain Dan Unsworth, liaison from the Police Department to the Commission, spoke to the Commission on this matter. Captain Unsworth reiterated the department's policy in regards to immigration matters, which was developed collaboratively with community members including representatives from World in Watertown and Watertown Citizens for Peace, Justice, and the Environment. This policy along with the Supreme Judicial Court's *Lunn v. Commonwealth* ruling dictate that Watertown PD will not enforce a civil immigration detainer nor work with immigration enforcement unless a serious criminal matter is involved. He added that while he cannot speak for the Superintendent, the middle school and high school each have a School Resource Officer who is well trained on the department's policies. He further added that the Watertown Police are not in any position to dictate what Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) does, and that if they were to interfere with ICE they could face criminal charges themselves. Watertown Police will not inquire about anyone's immigration status as a condition of them receiving any kind of service from the department. In response to questions from the Commission and the public, Captain Unsworth added the following pieces of information:

- i. If ICE contacts Watertown PD expressing an interest in someone in Watertown custody, "that changes nothing for us." Watertown PD will not hold someone in anticipation of ICE arriving in compliance with the *Lunn* case.
- ii. ICE sometimes notifies the Watertown Police Department about forthcoming activity, but sometimes not. For instance, the police department was not told about ICE's presence near Target in the week prior to this meeting.
- iii. If the Watertown Police were to give public notification in advance of ICE activity based on information provided, that could potentially be construed as interference. Captain Unsworth would defer to Chief Hanrahan on that particular matter.

b. December 10th- Human Rights Day

The Commission does not have capacity to host an event on December 10th around Human Rights Day. That said, Mel Poindexter and Sarah Zoen will work together with Watertown Cable Access Television to create a public service announcement about the Commission's work and Human Rights Day.

7. Public Comment

No member of the public offered additional comment.

8. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:43 PM.