

Human Rights Commission Meeting Minutes

January 12, 2026

1. Call to Order
Sarah Zoen called the meeting to order at 6:03 PM.
2. Roll Call
Present were Commissioners Corey Barr, Elizabeth Brusie, Lisa Laplante, Susan Musinsky, Mel Poindexter, Sarah Zoen, and Liz Aeschlimann.
3. Acceptance of Minutes
 - a. Minutes 12.8.25
Sarah Zoen made a motion, seconded by Elizabeth Brusie, to approve the minutes. The Commission voted eight to zero to approve the minutes.
4. Public Comment
No member of the public offered comment.
5. Committee Reports
 - a. Action Plan Committee: Acceptance of Minutes; Discussion of Final Report from Liz Peck of Peck Policy Strategies on Needs Assessment for Human Rights Commission in Watertown; Involvement of Full Human Rights Commission in Action Plan Moving Forward
Sarah Zoen explained that the Committee has discussed prioritizing the goals as laid out in Liz Peck's report and assigning them to various subcommittees within the Commission. After a discussion, the Commission agreed to have Commissioners inform the Chair which sub-group they would like to be part of to be assigned. Liz Aeschlimann made a motion, seconded by Lisa Laplante, to form two subcommittees: one to focus on action planning for goals one, two, and four and another to focus on goals three and five. See the attachment below for more information on each goal. The Commission voted eight to zero to approve the motion.
6. Discussion
 - a. Recent Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Activity Across the United States
Captain Dan Unsworth of the Watertown Police Department spoke to the Commission about the police department's policy around immigration enforcement. He reiterated that the police department does not have the authority to impede ICE in any way. The department will respond to any calls received, including those of ICE activity, but can only act to protect the safety of everyone involved. He further added that the police department is not always made aware of ICE activity in Watertown before it takes place.
 - b. Update on Human Rights Commission Logo
Lisa Laplante shared that she will be speaking at an art class at the middle school to promote the HRC's logo contest and hopefully lead to more submissions. A teacher at the middle school is enthusiastic about the project.
 - c. Human Rights Commission Table at Unity Breakfast
The Commission discussed logistics surrounding their participation at the Unity Breakfast.
 - d. Human Rights Commission Email

Doug Newton shared that he will discuss with the city manager setting up an email for the Human Rights Commission which residents can use to contact the Commission.

e. Community Outreach & Plan to Work with Community Engagement Team

Doug Newton shared that the city's communications team is interested to hear specifics from the Commission as to how they would like to be promoted to the public. The Commission agreed that they would like to have Mel Poindexter meet with the city's community engagement specialist, which Doug Newton will facilitate.

f. Screening of Movie on Immigrants' Experiences at Library

Susan Musinsky shared that the screening of a film on the immigrant experience by a friend of hers is on hold for now.

g. Script for Public Service Announcement with Watertown Cable Access

Sarah Zoen shared the script that she and Mel Poindexter will read for the PSA with Watertown Cable Access.

h. Potential Human Rights Commission Sharepoint File

Doug Newton will discuss this possibility with the City Manager.

7. Public Comment

No member of the public offered comment.

8. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:52 PM.