

Human Rights Commission Meeting Minutes

February 17th, 2026

1. Call to Order
Sarah Zoen called the meeting to order at 6:03 PM
2. Roll Call
Present were Corey Barr, Elizabeth Brusie, Gabriel Camacho, Lisa Laplante, Susan Musinsky, Mel Poindexter, Xin Peng, Sarah Zoen, and Liz Aeschlimann.
3. Acceptance of Minutes
 - a. Minutes for January Meeting
The Commission voted unanimously to approve the minutes for the previous meeting.
4. Public Comment
5. Committee Reports
 - a. Logo Committee: The Committee discussed that 36 logo submissions have now been received. The Committee has identified their top twelve logos and will be sending those finalists to a group of outside experts, who will also rank them. The Committee will then meet with those experts in a public meeting to discuss and send a final group to the Commission at its March meeting. The Commission viewed each of the final twelve logos during the meeting.
6. Discussion
 - a. Recent immigration enforcement activity & partnership with Watertown Public Schools
The Commission moved this item to the beginning of the meeting due to two guests attending the meeting to discuss this matter. These were Middlesex County District Attorney Marian Ryan and Immigration Attorney Karen Bobadilla. Captain Dan Unsworth of the Police Department also spoke to the Commission. Attorney Bobadilla emphasized the work that pro bono civil attorneys are engaged in to uphold the law and protect the rights of all including immigrants. District Attorney Ryan then spoke to the Commission and explained her office's position on the actions of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) as well as the role (or lack thereof) of local and state law enforcement when it comes to immigration .
 - b. Human Rights Commission Action Plan
The Commission discussed the goals laid out in Liz Peck's needs assessment report and the difficulty of scheduling meetings to divide the goals into two subcommittees. Doug Newton shared that he will be sending out doodle polls to each group to attempt to get meetings on the calendar.
 - c. Watertown Pride Funding Request
Doug Newton read an email requesting funding from the Human Rights Commission for Watertown's Pride celebration in June. After discussing the status of the current budget, with \$3,750 remaining in FY26, Corey Barr made a motion, seconded by Liz Aeschlimann, to approve \$1,000 for the Pride event. The Commission voted nine to zero to approve the motion.
 - d. New era for youth service program & future sharing of youth programs with students

Xin Peng shared a program on youth service which he felt the Commission could be beneficial in promoting to Watertown students. Doug Newton shared that he will coordinate with WPS staff on this.

e. Concern heard from resident related to human rights

Susan Musinsky said she heard from a resident whose tires were slashed, and that this resident felt that antisemitism was a motive for the action. Captain Unsworth added that the police have been made aware of this incident. No further action was taken by the Commission.

f. Update on collaboration with neighboring Human Rights Commissions

Mel Poindexter invited the Commissioners to attend two upcoming events at which other Human Rights Commissioners from nearby communities will also be in attendance. Multiple Commissioners expressed interest and excitement for the event.

7. Public Comment

No member of the public offered comment.

8. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:52 PM.