City of Albert Lea
Human Rights Commission
Meeting Minutes

June 11, 2026 Meeting – 6:00pm
City Council Chambers - 221 E. Clark Street

Members Present: Rev. Dr. Charles Alkula, Aruna Evenson, Jeremy Corey-Gruenes, Peggy Olson and Ex-Officio Keith Van Beek

Members Absent: Angie Hanson, Cesar Victorino, Irasema Hernandez and Student Representative Rice Boettcher

Staff in Attendance: City Manager Ian Rigg, Human Resource Director Mike Zelenak and Administrative Assistant/Deputy Clerk Karla Tukua

Call to Order:
The meeting was called to order by Rev. Dr. Charles Alkula at 6:00pm

Adopt Agenda:
Olson made the motion to approve the agenda for tonight's meeting and Corey-Gruenes seconded the motion. The commission voted in favor of said motion 4-0. Motion declared passed.

Approval of Minutes:
Corey-Gruenes made the motion to approve the minutes from the May 14, 2026 meeting and Evenson seconded the motion. The commission voted in favor of said motion 4-0. Motion declared passed.

Old Business:
A. Re-Cap of Wind Down Wednesday – The dunk tank was a big hit and there were many people that participated. Some of the ideas that came out of Wind Down Wednesday.
    - If we don't do the dunk tank there would need to be an interactive event.
    - The dunk tank was a hit, it brought people to the HRC table and they had opportunities to talk about Human Rights.
    - Will need additional help, maybe split the shifts from 2:30pm to 5:30pm and then 5:30pm – 8:00pm. Have 1 person for photo's and 1 person to man the dunk tank.
    - Have a new non-profit for fund raising each time, suggestions were SEMCAC or Humane Society.
    - Rigg gave an explanation of why the HRC cannot collect donations, adding a non-profit organization would need to be at event to accept donation.

- Rigg asked about other ideas of what the Commission could do to get the HRC visibility and Van Beek mentioned Councilor Christensen had suggested having block parties. There was continued discussion about the benefits of having block parties to get neighbors to know each.
- Van Beek also brought up doing an event with Bikers Against Child Abuse. They've done kids ID program, they adopt kids that have been in abusive situations, going to court with them. Or having them help with the next Wind Down Wednesday event.
- After discussion, Evenson will check into having the Bikers Against Child Abuse at our next Wind Down Wednesday in July and then possibly look at having the dunk tank again in August.

B. Guest Column Article – Peggy Olson
- Olson presented her introduction of HRC Members and their reason for wanting to be a part of the Human Rights Commission.
- Article/Column needs to be at 900 words or less
- Olson will contact Rice Boettcher to get his information.
- Corey-Gruenes suggested adding the commission website information.
- Once she has it completed, she will send to Sarah at the Albert Lea Tribune for publishing.

C. Governor's Council on Recording the Truth – Details of Zoom Call on June 19th
- Rigg covered some of the key information. The Council stressed the importance of keeping the participants identity private and secure to keep them safe. The Council wants to ensure anyone that shares their story are protected and free from public data.
- Corey-Gruenes shared a hand out from the Minnesota Truth Council, which will be included in these minutes.
- Corey Gruenes will attend a training session and shared the dates for anyone else that would like to do this as well. He will share what he learns at our next meeting.
- Rigg added that he thought there would also be translation services for anyone that didn't speak English.

New Business: - None

Board Member Items: None

Staff Communications:
Ian Rigg –
- Rigg let commission members know he sent an e-mail out to them in regards to the Law Enforcement proposal. He covered the key points on the information that

was in the e-mail previously sent. In his e-mail he sent a link to the Free Press, this article did not come up for some, Corey-Gruenes said he had saved it and will send it out to all.

- Rigg covered the budget information in regards to HRC members helping with equity issues as it's related to the budgets. His example was in regards to the nuisance complaints: i.e., lawns not being mowed. What's the root causes, lack of funding, resources or lack of education. If the city goes out and has to mow their lawn, that resident would then have a bill to pay.

Adjournment:
Motion to adjourn was made by Corey-Gruenes and seconded by Evenson at 6:36pm. On a voice vote, all members present voted in favor of said motion 4-0, Victorino, Hanson and Hernandez were absent. Meeting adjourned. Next meeting will be Thursday, June 11, 2026, at 6:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Karla Tukua
Human Rights Commission Secretary

Approved:

Aruna Evenson
Human Rights Commission Vice Chair

Karla Tukua

From: Jeremy Corey-Gruenes <jcorey2@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, June 11, 2026 6:57 PM
To: Karla Tukua
Subject: Mankato Free Press Article Text

Here you go:

FREE PRESS Mankato Policy Update - June 8, 2026

MANKATO — Months after an influx of Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers prompted the City Council to adopt a temporary ordinance, members are considering whether to extend the measure again while they discuss making it permanent.

The council unanimously approved the emergency ordinance Feb. 23 and later adopted an updated version that took effect April 24 for another 60 days. With the ordinance set to expire June 25, council members must decide whether to extend it again, let it fizzle out or pursue a permanent version.

On Monday night, members of the council agreed that before enshrining the ordinance permanently into law, an important step would be to meet with the Public Safety Advisory Committee to hear their recommendations for the ordinance moving forward.

"I personally feel that the ordinance should be permanent," said Mayor Najwa Massad at the council meeting. "But we do have to work on it to make it more clarified, more for the community and for ourselves, and most importantly, for public safety."

City Manager Susan Arntz said a 60-day extension would keep the emergency ordinance in effect through late August, giving the council time to meet with the committee and likely complete the public notice and comment period required before adopting a permanent ordinance.

Even council member Dennis Dieken, who expressed doubts about the necessity of continuing the ordinance, said he would support extending it long enough to meet with the Public Safety Advisory Committee to hear their feedback.

AD

The initial ordinance required law enforcement agencies to notify the Mankato Department of Public Safety of their presence before working within the city, and for all agencies that equip officers with body cameras to ensure those cameras are on and working.

The ordinance also outlined identification procedures, making it illegal for officers to wear masks or any other face coverings that conceal their identity. When asked, officers must also provide their last name and badge numbers.

The ordinance was a response to the Trump administration sending over 3,000 Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents to Minnesota as part of Operation Metro Surge at the start of the year. Months after the peak of the surge, as many ICE agents have withdrawn from the state, the city has not issued any citations for violating the ordinance, confirmed Public Safety Director Jeremy Clifton.

But to many of the council members, that's not an issue.

"I think having this in place and it not being invoked is still a success," said council member Michael McLaughlin. "Just the fact that it's out there in case it needs to be invoked."

That need might be closer than people realize, Arntz warned at the meeting. She said the primary elections on Aug. 11 present a good reason to renew the emergency ordinance.
"I've talked to a couple of communities outside of Mankato who have seen, I'll just call it election interference," Arntz said. "I do think that there may be grounds to warrant continuing it through that time period to get us through the prima

Jeremy Corey-Gruenes
he, him
jcorey2@gmail.com

Minnesota Truth Council

Governor's Council on Recording the Truth of
Operation Metro Surge and Operation PARRIS

The Advocates
FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

We are hoping to partner with your organization. Your community relationships are essential to reaching the people whose stories need to be heard.

ABOUT THE COUNCIL

An Independent Process to Record the Truth

The Minnesota Truth Council is an independent, non-partisan body that will create a historical public record of survivor and witness experiences and produce a report with recommendations for legislative and policy reform.

The Advocates for Human Rights is the implementing partner of the Minnesota Truth Council.

The Council will document both the human rights violations resulting from the surge and how Minnesotans showed up for one another with compassion, courage, and resilience.

Independent | Non-partisan | Transparent | Victim-centered | Community-led

This is not a court. The Council will have no power to prosecute, convict, impose penalties, or provide compensation.

About The Advocates for Human Rights
An independent human rights organization based in Minneapolis with decades of experience in documentation, transitional justice, and building the historical record that accountability requires.

HOW PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS CAN HELP

Three Critical Roles

1. **Train and support story collectors.** Recruit and train volunteers from your community to conduct trauma-informed story collection and submit them to the Truth Council. Training, materials, and support provided by The Advocates.

2. **Help people share their stories.** Identify community members who want to publicly share what they experienced or witnessed during the surge. People can share their story anonymously or choose to include their name. Connect them to story collectors from your organization or from the Truth Council. Your trusted relationships are the bridge many people need to participate safely.

3. **Foster collective spaces.** Organize community spaces where groups can share their experiences together, complementing the individual storytelling process.

PROJECT TIMELINE

Key Dates

- **Beginning May 2026**
  Community story-gathering through partner organizations
- **Summer - Fall 2026**
  Minimum of four public meetings on selected themes
- **October 31, 2026**
  Preliminary findings and recommendations
- **December 1, 2026**
  Final report delivered to the Governor, Minnesota Legislature, and Congressional delegation

BECOME A PARTNER

For more information, email MNTruthCouncil@advrights.org.