



**City of Albert Lea
Human Rights Commission
Meeting Minutes**

*January 08, 2026 Meeting – 6:00pm
City Council Chambers - 221 E. Clark Street*

Members Present: Rev. Dr. Charles Alkula, Angie Hanson, Irasema Hernandez, Jeremy Corey-Gruenes, and Peggy Olson

Members Absent: Aruna Evenson, Cesar Victorino, Ex-Officio Keith Van Beek and Student Representative Rice Boettcher

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

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Alkula

Adopt Agenda:

Hanson 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 5-0. Commission members Evenson and Victorino were absent. Motion declared passed.

Approval of Minutes:

Hernandez made the motion to approve the minutes from the December 11, 2025 meeting and Olson seconded the motion. The commission voted in favor of said motion 5-0. Evenson and Victorino were absent. Motion declared passed.

Old Business:

Air Quality Update – Ian Rigg

Rigg provided an update regarding an article from Minnesota Reformer showing high levels of contaminants being released into the air from Pro-Manufacturing. Rigg and the Mayor had an opportunity to meet with DeBoer of Pro-Manufacturing. DeBoer explained that Pro-Manufacturing utilizes a 3rd party vendor to do their testing and replace their air filters as required by OSHA. The person that did their testing entered the numbers incorrectly and Pro-Manufacturing explained the testing's before this and after this will show lower numbers.

Rigg explained that his son does this same testing for 3M and if the pollution numbers were as high as they were in the news article, there would have been someone from the State or OSHA coming in to do more testing and this did not happen. Rigg added that

the he and the Mayor were satisfied with the explanation for the spike in the numbers. The numbers should be lower with further testing.

New Business: - None

Board Member Items:

Irasema Hernandez –

- Hernandez would like to see the HRC out in the Albert Lea community to let Albert Lea residents know that there is a Human Rights Commission and what the commission is about. She spoke about the recent Karen New Year celebration, which the HRC could have had a booth at. There was discussion on ideas on how to get the word out and possible future events to have a booth at. Rigg noted the City could provide a banner for the booth to call attention to the HRC.
- There was discussion about having a booth at the County Fair and partnering with other City departments to share space. The commission was asked to brainstorm and come back with ideas for the next meeting in February.
- Hernandez spoke about the Karen New Year celebration, stating it was a lot of fun and there was a good response from the community. Approximately 1,300 residents attended this event, on an expectation of 700.

Jeremy Corey-Gruenes –

- Corey-Gruenes encouraged commission members to attend the Martin Luther King Jr. event on the 19th at Riverland Community College. It's from 5:30pm - 7:00pm, with food provided beforehand.
- Hernandez will send the flyer to Tukua and she'll send to the group.
- Corey-Gruenes made a suggestion to do a Guest Column post for the Albert Lea Tribune. This is another way to get the word out on the Human Rights Commission. After discussion between members on what this could entail, Olson committed to writing the first article. Hanson suggested writing about the history of the commission and possibly doing a bio of the commission members. Each member could give their reason for applying to be on the commission. Corey-Gruenes will check with the paper on approval and notify the group once he hears back.
- Corey-Gruenes spoke about the recent ICE raids in Minneapolis, and how to talk about this without being political. He spoke about his concern after watching the videos of the shooting, listening to the recordings and the witness account. He disagreed with this being political and the charge that it's political silences voices and the truth.
- Rigg added, that from the start there has been two different stories that have come from this and two different viewpoints. He shared his conversation with Police Chief Hanson and reinforced the Police Departments role. Explaining that

the City of Albert Lea Police Dept. does not participate in any Borders, Customs, ICE raids or events unless it's considered criminal in nature. Rigg noted that the Chief also stated the detainees at Freeborn County have been processed in front of a Judge for continued detainment. There was continued discussion between members in regards to ICE and their activities in Minneapolis. Commission members also noted they have heard from many here in Albert Lea who are afraid to leave their homes just due to their concern with ICE and their practices.

Angie Hanson – Citizen's Academy

- Hanson spoke about the Police Department's Citizen's Academy that she recently participated in. There are two goals, one is to build relationships with members of the community and said, it does that. The second goal is to teach participants about the functions of the Police Dept. Hanson explained that she learned a lot about the department and through this course she has a higher level of confidence in our Police Dept. Through participating in the academy, she could see the Police are well trained and do a lot of good in the community. She got insight on the different departments and officer's responsibilities as well. She shared her experience with the program and would recommend it to commission members. If anyone is interested, Officer Luke Tuzinski is over the program.

Staff Communications: - None

Adjournment: - 6:55pm

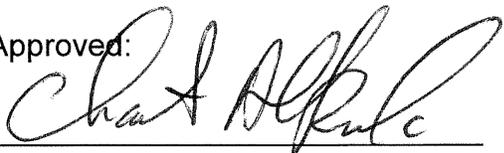
Motion to adjourn was made by Hernandez and seconded by Corey-Gruenes at 6:55pm. On a voice vote, all members present voted in favor of said motion 5-0, Evenson and Victorino were absent. Meeting adjourned. Next meeting is Thursday, February 12th, 2026, at 6:00pm., if there is business to discuss. Members will be notified by e-mail prior to meeting.

Respectfully submitted,



Karla Tukuia
Human Rights Commission Secretary

Approved:



Rev. Dr. Charles Alkula
Human Rights Commission Chair