



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

*October 09, 2025 Meeting – 6:00pm  
City Council Chambers - 221 E. Clark Street*

**Members Present:** Rev. Dr. Charles Alkula, Aruna Evenson, Cesar Victorino, Jeremy Corey-Gruenes, Peggy Olson.

Angie Hanson arrived at 6:05pm.

**Members Absent:** Irasema Hernandez and Ex-Officio Keith Van Beek

**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, before the start of the meeting, Mayor Rich Murray spoke and thanked Commission members for their service on the Human Rights Commission. He said the City has a number of boards and he is thankful for all who serve. The Mayor encouraged members to reach out to him if they have questions he can help with, he welcomes those calls.

There was a pause in the meeting for the Mayor and Commission Members to get a picture.

**Adopt Agenda:**

Corey-Gruenes made the motion to approve the agenda for tonight's meeting and Olson seconded the motion. The commission voted in favor of said motion 6-0, Hernandez was absent. Motion carried.

**Approval of Minutes:**

Olson made the motion to approve the minutes from the September 11, 2025 meeting and Corey-Gruenes seconded the motion. The commission voted in favor of said motion 6-0, Hernandez was absent. Motion carried.

**Old Business:**

**Review Student Board Member Applications:**

Application received by Rice Boettcher was reviewed by commission members. Commission members comments were that his experience is well-rounded, good activity involvement, good variety of activities and he currently volunteers at the History Center of Freeborn County. Corey-Gruenes said that Rice is an exceptional student and he was happy to see his application.

Motion made by Hanson to approve Rice's application and Corey-Gruenes seconded the motion. The commission voted in favor of said motion 6-0, Hernandez was absent. Motion carried.

Hanson questioned if another student applied if there would be another position. After discussion, it was determined that if another student did apply, their application would be reviewed and voted on. There is the potential for up to 2 student representatives on the Commission.

**New Business:**

None

**Board Member Items:**

**Peggy Hanson – Flavor Without Borders Event**

She stated she was happy with the turnout at the Flavors Without Borders event at the Farmers Market. It went really well and there was a number of people that stopped to try the samples. Based on the caterer's count there was about 120-125 samples taken. It was a positive outcome for this event.

**Jeremy Corey-Gruenes – Climate Action Plan**

Corey-Gruenes said that he had reviewed the climate action plan as requested by City Manager Rigg at the last HRC meeting, stating it is very expansive. Corey-Gruenes asked who administers this plan and provides updates on the progress. Rigg explained the City has a Green Team and staff members have different responsibilities in relation to the action plan. Each month they meet and cover different topics in relation to the Climate Action Plan. Rigg gave different examples of what the City is doing, this includes when vehicles need replacing, to look for an electric vehicle option. He noted we will have 4 electric vehicles in our fleet by the end of this year. A fun event coming up will be giving away reusable bags to residents to help reduce plastic bag waste and these will be given out at grocery stores. This is in conjunction with Freeborn County and the Shell Rock River Watershed District. The City is looking to add solar panels to 4 different buildings to help with peak demand. Rigg continued to give different examples of what the city is doing to achieve its Climate Action Plan.

On a follow up question on the locations of the EV charging stations, both Rigg and Zelenak listed the locations. There is one in the North Broadway parking lot, Trails Travel Center, behind Casey's on E. Main and behind McDonalds on N. Bridge Ave. Rigg also stated that the city will be laying the conduit into the municipal lots that are being resurfaced. While the charging stations won't be installed right away, the ground work will be there for when they are installed.

Corey-Gruenes asked for an update on the trail that is supposed to go to Hartland. Rigg gave an update, noting the City would be asking for a sales-tax referendum to help pay for this. The trail will then be completed from Hartland to Albert Lea, covering the path of this trail through Albert Lea and that it will be called the Song Bird trail. Stating the first phase will start next year. To Hanson's question on when the referendum sales tax will be voted on, Rigg answered it needs to be passed by January 31st, 2026. He explained it's to replace the current sales tax that will be expiring, it won't be a new added sales tax.

Corey-Gruenes gave an update on the Story Show explaining that they are in the process of finding a new charity to work with. He stated they have narrowed down the theme of the next Story Show to either, We Belong or Why I'm Here. He will have answers for who the charity will

be and what the Story Show's theme will be at the next meeting in November. He added that Irasema has submitted a story idea for the next story show.

**Rev. Charles Alkula – Roberts Rules of Order – Simplified**

Alkula provided a copy of a simplified version of Roberts Rules of Order. Stating that it is more for reference for commission members.

**Staff Communications:**

Rigg followed up on the Air Quality issue from last month's meeting. Stating he hasn't had time to meet with Dan DeBoer at Pro Manufacturing, but said he and the Mayor are looking at a time when they can meet. Before assumptions are made, they want to meet with him to discuss.

Rigg spoke on the information he had sent out in regards to ICE agents. The City's decision is to follow any lawful orders from the Federal Government. The steps would be to identify they are actual ice agents and they have a lawful warrant. Call the Police Department to confirm there's a legitimate warrant. There was additional questions and dialog regarding hypothetical situations. Ian will partner with Police Chief Hanson on getting answers to any questions Chief Hanson would be better suited to answer.

**Adjournment:**

Motion to adjourn was made by Corey-Gruenes and seconded by Victorino at 6:59pm. On a voice vote, all members present voted in favor of said motion 6-0, Evenson was absent. Meeting adjourned. Next meeting will be Thursday, November 13<sup>th</sup> at 6:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,

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Karla Tukua  
Human Rights Commission Secretary

Approved:

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Aruna Evenson  
Human Rights Commission Co-Chair