

**City of Keene**  
**New Hampshire**

**HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE**  
**MEETING MINUTES**

**Monday, January 6, 2020**

**5:00 PM**

**Keene Public Library,  
Booras Room**

**Members Present:**

William Hay, Chair  
Sophia Cunha-Vasconcelos  
Jennifer Carroll  
Mohammed Saleh  
Nancy Salwen  
Dottie Morris

**Staff Present:**

Andrew Bohannon, Parks, Recreation &  
Facilities Director

**Members Not Present:**

Jan Manwaring  
Pamela Knight

**George S. Hansel, Mayor**

**1) Call to Order and Roll Call**

**a. Honorable George Hansel, Mayor of Keene**

Chair Hay called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM and welcomed Mayor Hansel. Mayor Hansel thanked him, and stated that he wanted to come today and introduce himself and express his support for the committee. He continued that this committee's work is very important and he wants to encourage it. He is looking for creative thinking and supports broadening the conversation, opening it up to groups of people not at the table now or who have not been in the past. He would like advice from this committee on where to go. Part of his role is appointing people to all of the City's committees, and he would appreciate guidance from this committee. Also, Keene State College (KSC) students expressed interest in doing Pride in Keene, which Keene does not have, although other communities in NH do. He is interested in pursuing that in partnership with KSC, and this group could contribute. His ears are open. Diversity and inclusion is something everyone should be working on, and it is one of his top priorities.

Chair Hay asked what some of his other priorities are. Mayor Hansel replied housing and economic development, and a good relationship with the college.

Dr. Saleh stated that he is not familiar with all of the committees that the City has that need members, so if Mayor Hansel can give them more information about that, it would help. Mayor Hansel replied yes, and he himself is still getting to know all of the committees. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Bohannon stated that for a bit of background, this committee has historically been event-driven and its one of the few committees that has the ability to fundraise. They collaborated on the International Festival this year and plan to host some other events. They are taking over the Martin Luther King, Jr. breakfast/celebration, and they are definitely looking for more ways to collaborate within the community. They also have a couple membership vacancies, which he will work with Mayor Hansel on. This committee also worked with former Mayor Lane on the LGBTQ Proclamation and will continue that. Having Council support on issues is always good.

Mayor Hansel stated that the International Festival was great; it was one of his favorite events of the year. He thanks everyone for their work on that.

Chair Hay stated that Indigenous People's Day is also something the committee is working on. Mayor Hansel stated that something else he would put on the committee's radar is brainstorming how to address anti-Semitism, which affects our community, and is concerning to him. There were several anti-Semitic events/incidences last year locally. He would appreciate any support and ideas the committee has for addressing that. Dr. Saleh spoke of what the committee learned about this from a Police Officer who spoke with the committee, regarding the difficulties of responding to incidents when they are not always hearing about them. Some incidents are not reported or tracked, because the threshold is high for what counts as a hate crime. Discussion continued.

Chair Hay thanked Mayor Hansel for coming today, and wished him luck. Mayor Hansel thanked the group for their work, reiterating that it is very important, and he welcomes the committee's help and ideas.

## **2) Approval of Meeting Minutes of December 16, 2019**

Dr. Morris asked that the reference to "Sodexo" on page 6 be changed. Mr. Bohannon suggested "college catering service" instead.

Dr. Morris made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of December 16, 2019, as amended. Ms. Carroll seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

## **3) Finance Report**

Mr. Bohannon reported that it is the same report as last month. The balance is \$5,074.70.

Ms. Carroll made a motion to accept the Finance Report. Ms. Salwen seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

**4) Committee Discussion**  
**a. MLK Breakfast**

Mr. Bohannon stated that he put together a flyer and wanted the committee's approval before it goes out to the public. He asked them to look at it. Committee members asked about the wording "performance by local artists," suggesting alternate language, such as "Music by Annie Patterson and Peter Blood, authors of the Rise Up Singing songbook." Also, they should add a reference to "refreshments will be served." Discussion continued about the details of the event. Mr. Bohannon clarified that the "reflection" at the end will be brief. Per the committee's feedback, Mr. Bohannon added the detail "Welcome by Dr. Dottie Morris." Discussion ensued about where the flyer will be distributed, including on social media. Mr. Bohannon stated that he will send it to the committee members so they can help spread the word. He hopes committee members who are able to attend arrive around 9 or 9:30 when the caterers are coming.

**b. Future Events: Colonial - "We Shall Overcome"**

Chair Hay stated that two days before the MLK event, the Colonial Theatre has "We Shall Overcome." The committee has a deal on tickets. Mr. Bohannon stated that it is at 8:00 PM. Discussion ensued.

**c. February Events**

Mr. Bohannon stated that February is Black History Month, and he put this on the agenda to see if there is anything going on that the committee can be involved with.

Ms. Carroll stated that on February 28, it is not yet confirmed, but the "Shadows Fall North" film will be shown at KSC. Dr. Morris replied that it is really good, and gave more information about it. Discussion ensued. Dr. Saleh asked what percentage of Keene's population are people of color. Others replied that it is very low, such as 2%. Discussion continued.

Dr. Morris spoke about a speaker/author, Dr. Bettina Love, who wrote "We Want to Do More Than Survive" and is coming to the college in March.

Mr. Bohannon stated that the committee should, as Mayor Hansel suggested, be involved with/support/promote a few events throughout the year. Pulling off a Pride parade would take some work, regarding logistics, and protocol meetings would have to be done around March. Discussion ensued about timing and what protocol meetings would involve. Mr. Bohannon stated that they do not necessarily have to have a parade this year; it could be a different event, or this year they could begin the conversation in preparation for having a Pride parade next year. Discussion continued. Dr. Filiault spoke of the possibility of supporting the National Day of

Silence instead, and explained what it is, and how it is connected to National Coming Out Day and honoring Matthew Shepard, who was killed. Ms. Carroll stated that regarding anti-Semitism, the Rabbi's wife Dale Rosenberg recently gave a talk related to the LGBTQ community and Judaism. She might be a good person to connect with. Mr. Bohannon agreed to reach out to the KSC Pride group to let them know the committee is looking for ways to possibly collaborate or promote events, and will report back at the next meeting.

**5) New Business**

**a. Green Dot Process**

Mr. Bohannon stated that Lesley Johnson called him earlier, wanting to bring this training to the community. He continued that she realized she missed the last meeting, and said she was attending this meeting. He asked what the committee wants to do. Do they want to put it on a future agenda? Or just let it be? Chair Hay stated that he went to a Green Dot meeting years ago but does not remember much about it – it is about not being a bystander. Mr. Bohannon stated that it is the committee's call, whether or not they want to pursue this. Discussion ensued. Committee members stated that this does not need to go on the next agenda, but if Ms. Johnson shows up at a future meeting they could talk about it.

Brief discussion continued about the promotion of the MLK event.

Chair Hay asked if there was any other new business. Mr. Bohannon replied yes, there is a thank you note from Walldogs. He continued that it says, "Thank you for the generous contribution to the mural project. Jonathan sure does look great on the wall." The book was included and committee members can take a look. Ms. Carroll added that you can buy a copy at the Historical Society, too. Mr. Bohannon stated that the Walldogs also sent prints of the murals. Discussion ensued.

**6) Adjourn – Next Meeting Monday, February 3, 2020**

There being no further business, Chair Hay adjourned the meeting at 5:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Britta Reida, Minute Taker

Edits respectfully submitted by,  
Andy Bohannon, Staff