

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

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

**Monday, October 5, 2020**

**5:00 PM**

**Remote Meeting via Zoom**

**Members Present:**

William Hay, Chair  
Dr. Mohammed Saleh, Vice Chair  
Dr. Dottie Morris  
Nancy Salwen  
Councilor Jan Manwaring  
Jennifer Carroll  
Dr. Shaun Filiault

**Staff Present:**

Andrew Bohannon, Parks, Recreation, and  
Facilities Director

**Members Not Present:**

Sofia Cunha-Vasconcelos  
Ritu Budakoti

Chair Hay read a prepared statement explaining how the Emergency Order #12, pursuant to Executive Order #2020-04 issued by the Governor of New Hampshire, waives certain provisions of RSA 91-A (which regulates the operation of public body meetings) during the declared COVID-19 State of Emergency.

**1) Welcome and Call to Order**

Chair Hay called the meeting to order at 5:14 PM. Roll call was conducted.

**2) Approval of September 14, 2020 Meeting Minutes**

Councilor Manwaring made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of September 14, 2020. Dr. Morris seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

**3) Finance Report**

Mr. Bohannon reported that nothing has changed. He continued that the current budget is \$4,597.43. The HRC approved the Finance Report.

**4) Mayor's Call for Board and Commission Nominations**

Mr. Bohannon stated that there is a meeting tomorrow with the Community Development Department and City Clerk Patty Little. He continued that the City Clerk has been out sick, and they wanted to make sure she could be part of that meeting. He will give an update there. Everything the HRC discussed at the last meeting was acceptable and that is how they want to go forward. He asked if there were any questions.

### **5) Monadvocacy Continued Discussion**

Mr. Bohannon stated that he had a phone call with Pastor Nic. He continued that she provided an outline - she will be able to do the game on Zoom, for a two-hour minimum, for \$150 per hour. Three two-hour sessions would be \$900. She is willing to do that any time online, but will not travel to Keene until it is safer to do so. She will do the game with a dozen to 20 people, maximum, for the Zoom format.

A'Ja Hall (from STAND NH) asked what Pastor Nic is going to be doing. Mr. Bohannon explained that Pastor Nic attended a virtual HRC meeting a few months ago to present the board game Monadvocacy that she created. He explained that Monadvocacy is based off of Monopoly but has a different game board, with different equity levels – you only get a certain amount of money, and your ability to buy properties is limited based on factors such as your race, where you live, your religion, your income, your status as a single parent, and so on and so forth. He continued that the game gives you the ability to put yourself in someone else's shoes to understand inequities. Pastor Nic facilitates discussions about the issues.

Ms. Hall asked if the people playing the game would be random community members, or if there are targeted people to play the game. She asked if other organizations are not capable of explaining the game. The cost seems high. This might be something other community organizations could be doing for free.

Mr. Bohannon replied that they could ask Pastor Nic to train the HRC so the game could be played in Keene more often. He continued that Pastor Nic's facilitation of the game would be open to the public and specifically aimed toward members of this committee, college students, the Keene Police Department, other City departments, local businesses, and schools. He continued that Dr. Morris has expressed that the game would be great at Keene State College and the HRC would pay for that.

Dr. Filiault stated that the cost is high and they would get more bang for their buck with "train the trainer." It would have a more lasting impact. Ms. Hall agreed.

Ms. Salwen spoke about how the immersion experience of playing the game and watching Pastor Nic run it and facilitating the subsequent conversation would be a great way to be trained in the game. She also spoke about the value in not just "preaching to the choir" and getting people who wouldn't necessarily volunteer to play the game to participate in it; they might be surprised by

what they learn. She continued that it would definitely be ideal to have people play the game/train in the game to become facilitators.

Dr. Morris stated that she does not remember all the details of the game, but she wants to know the level of expertise it would take to process the game. She continued that the key piece is the processing of the experience of playing the game. Her only concern for “train the trainer” is that a person would need to have not just the necessary facilitation skills, but also the content. How would the HRC assess a person’s capacity to become a facilitator of the game?

Dr. Filiault replied that the HRC members are in a good place to be able to be trained, since they have the basic knowledge and understand the language – e.g. about intersecting identities, multiple areas of privileges and under-privileges, etc. He continued that he agrees with Ms. Salwen that they have to play the game once themselves to even begin to do train the trainer. But for the game to have a lasting impact the HRC members or other community members need to eventually be the ones trained. They cannot call on Pastor Nic every time.

Mr. Bohannon stated that he understands and agrees that the model of success would be to bring Pastor Nic in to have her run the game with a group of people looking to be trainers, and facilitate a train the trainer session. He continued that would be money well spent, for community members to be trained. Then they could facilitate that through the schools and the community.

Dr. Morris stated that she wants to again caution them about what she said earlier. Who will assess who would be the best people to be trained? Especially when you talk about going in the schools. These type of activities can trigger a lot of things for people, and if there is not a highly skilled/trained facilitator, it makes it worse. She would not take this too lightly. Ms. Salwen replied that she agrees and that is such a good point. She continued that it would help to get Pastor Nic’s advice about this topic.

Mr. Bohannon stated that this is all good discussion. He continued that Pastor Nic spoke with the HRC in July or August on Zoom. He will send her proposal to everyone so they can read her thoughts. He asked if the HRC wants him to give her this feedback and invite her to the next Zoom meeting for this follow-up discussion. Chair Hay, Dr. Morris, and others replied yes.

Dr. Saleh asked if the game is played online via software that might not be open, and/or whether there are intellectual property issues here. Mr. Bohannon replied that there is no software. He continued that it is a homemade game. He will ask Pastor about intellectual properties.

Discussion continued.

Dr. Morris made a motion for the Human Rights Committee to allow Mr. Bohannon to follow up with Pastor Nic and invite her to appear at the next meeting so the committee can get

clarification around what it would take for people to facilitate the game. Chair Hay seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

**6) Martin Luther King, Jr. Breakfast**

Dr. Filiault stated that the HRC spoke about this two months ago and he spoke with Mr. Bohannon on the phone last week. He continued that the subcommittee decided to do this event online. It is unlikely that they will be able to have a live event by January. The aim of the Facebook Live event would be to have a speaker, the author of an antiracism book, talk about the text and then have a breakout Zoom/Facebook Live session to talk about the themes brought up by the book, hopefully with a panel of speakers. Their book ideas were How To Be an Antiracist or How to Be a Better Ally. They would also have the Mayor give a proclamation and there is potential for a song or other celebratory event. There would be breakout groups to have participants talk about the themes brought up by the speaker. Having it organized around a book would keep the theme clear for the online event.

Ms. Salwen stated that those were just two ideas/examples for books and they welcome other ideas. Dr. Filiault replied yes, they need to pick a book so they can talk to authors. He continued that an author could give a pre-recorded statement if they cannot be there and then a panel could speak to that statement, on the day of the event.

Dr. Morris asked what the budget is. Mr. Bohannon replied that in the past the HRC has spent between \$1,000 and \$2,000 for an individual, but given that the person this time does not need money for travel, lodging, or food, the money spent should be no higher than \$1,000. That is his recommendation but it is up to the committee. The HRC no longer receives the donation from St. James thrift shop, so the money is down to \$500 per year.

Ms. Salwen asked if Dr. Morris had book suggestions. Dr. Morris agreed with the idea of the author of How to be an Antiracist, and suggested also: Debbie Irving (Waking Up White), or Jennifer Harvey (Raising White Kids). Chair Hay stated that he read and enjoyed a recent book about James Baldwin, by [Eddie] Glaude.

Mr. Bohannon stated that he and Dr. Filiault talked about making sure an author's talk is followed by a facilitated discussion, either by the author, Dr. Morris if she is willing, another HRC member, or someone else. He continued that it would be more meaningful if people could engage in discussion instead of just listening to someone speak.

Chair Hay asked if they should have a committee to select the book. Mr. Bohannon suggested they just write to all of the authors they have thought of so far and check on their interest, availability, and costs, and present that information at the next meeting. Dr. Filiault replied yes, if they reach out to get information about costs and availability, the book might select itself. He continued that they need to select a book soon, so he suggests they allow the subcommittee to make the decision.

Discussion continued. Ms. Salwen asked if a Saturday or Sunday event would be better than the Monday, if the authors are too busy on the Monday. Chair Hay and Mr. Bohannon replied that the author could give a pre-recorded address. Ms. Carroll stated that they should ask the potential speakers if they are comfortable with Facebook Live or Zoom. Brief discussion ensued about the logistics and technology considerations.

Motion for the HRC to ask the subcom to continue their efforts to contact authors and see if they can find people willing to come talk with us, and bring it to the HRC at the next meeting.

Ms. Salwen lists the books and authors. Jennifer Irving – Dr. Morris will contact or give the subcom her info. Debbie Irving. Ms. Salwen – Dr. Filiault, let us email and pick a time.

Dr. Morris seconds the motion. Passed by unanimous vote.

- 7) **June Events**
- 8) **Board Terms**
- 9) **New Business**

Dr. Morris stated that Indigenous People's Day is coming up next week. She asked, did the Mayor do a Proclamation around that? What happened in the City Council in July? What will the City do to recognize this? She missed the last meeting.

Ms. Salwen stated that she would love to have a moment to hear from the people from STAND.

Mr. Bohannon asked Chair Hay to recognize that the committee is tabling the agenda items about the June Events and Board Terms. Chair Hay agreed.

Chair Hay stated that A'ja Hall and Samuel Webb are here. He continued that he was talking to them and Katie. Katie spoke at an event at Central Square and was one of many young people who are from Keene who talked about the racism they encountered from the get-go in the school system and it got him thinking about what teachers are doing about this. It seems like a great teaching moment and maybe teachers would be more willing to jump in if the bullying was about something else, but a lot of people are not good at dealing with [racism]. It is also about ignorance, which can be addressed better at age 8 instead of 68. He was thinking what is lacking is a curriculum. It seems like it is the HRC's job to get something going like this.

A'ja Hall stated that she is the Executive Director of STAND NH. She introduced Samuel Webb, Director of Education and Research. She continued that they are a non-profit organization based in Keene, definitely dedicated to combatting racism through outreach to the community, education, and support.

Dr. Morris left at 5:55 PM.

Ms. Hall continued that STAND NH's primary focus is to organize community initiatives to dismantle systemic racism and to come up with a curriculum. Because of everything that is going on, the presence of truth needs to be addressed within America. Teaching and education needs to be addressed within America. Her organization is coming up a curriculum to address the fact that there is no such thing as "Black history." She calls it "melanated history," which includes Black, African, Latino, Mexican, and Brazilian people, and anyone else who has melanin in their skin. Melanated history is American history. You cannot talk about America and what it represents without comprehending that there is a horrible past that has to be addressed truthfully. To develop a curriculum STAND NH is partnering with the Tenement Museum in NY and the Smithsonian Museum. Both museums are supporting them with a curriculum that will get them started with grades 9 to 12. The Smithsonian's Becoming Us curriculum includes Melanated History. In NH you can offer any curriculum, but it is up to the district to accept it. Each of STAND's directors are going to school board meetings and asking if teachers would teach it. They have to get teachers, school boards, and principals on board. Then STAND NH would hand them this curriculum they have. Schools could add, delete, edit, etc., to see how they think it would be best learned.

Dr. Filiault left at 5:59 PM.

Ms. Hall continued that STAND NH has a Teachers Advisory Board to assess and make recommendations about the curriculum, because of course, every child has a different learning style. STAND NH also focuses on the way in which information is taught, because if something is taught and not retained, it means nothing. If it is taught and retained, the person has an awareness, and can take what they have learned and has a responsibility to share it, so that the learning continues.

Ms. Hall stated that Mr. Webb has taken a lot of time and done a lot of work with the museums and other organizations, because they are not only developing the curriculum for middle and high school, but also starting at Kindergarten. That is what we have to do. It is important to start young, to make sure children are able to have conversations, instead of being told, "No, we don't talk about that." She continued that she has 3 kids. One time her son encountered a woman without an arm, and asked, "Where's your arm?" A mother behind them looked at her daughter like, 'No no, we don't talk about that.' But it is okay, because if we do not give children answers to their questions, they will formulate their own answers, and they will not understand the truth. Questions are not the problem. When children come at you with innocence and you shut it down, it breaks their spirits and makes them not want to question anymore, and they are more likely to conform to the system and the systemic racism that we have. We need more melanated teachers, yes, but if you are teaching biased information that does not matter, because you will continue breeding racism. You have to make sure that the education and curriculum you are teaching is not supporting a slave mentality, only teaching the truth that melanated people can identify with and be able to say, "I see you in this position and now I know that I can do more."

Councilor Manwaring left at 6:00 PM.

Ms. Hall asked Mr. Web to speak.

Mr. Bohannon stated that he apologizes but the meeting cannot continue because they no longer have a quorum of members. He continued that if it is okay with Chair Hay he would like add STAND NH into the agenda for next month's meeting, ahead of some of the other items, so they can have a bigger dialogue. What STAND is doing is really important and in the Zoom chat box, you can see that HRC members want to be connected with STAND and Ms. Hall and Mr. Webb are a great voice to this committee.

Ms. Hall thanked Mr. Bohannon and stated that she and STAND would love to continue with an open dialogue. They thank the HRC members who are reaching out. She will send the committee emails.

**10) Adjourn – Next Meeting is Monday, November 2, 2020**

There being no further business, Chair Hay adjourned the meeting at 6:02 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Britta Reida, Minute Taker

Edits respectfully submitted by,  
Andy Bohannon, PRF Director