

City of Keene
New Hampshire

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE MEETING AGENDA

Monday, April 5, 2021 at 5:00 PM
ZOOM Invite, Online Meeting

- Due to the COVID State of Emergency, this meeting will be conducted using the online meeting platform, Zoom. The public may view the meeting online at www.zoom.com and click on “Join A Meeting” enter Meeting ID 838 4094 3157
- To listen to the meeting, please dial (646) 876-9923 and when prompted enter Meeting ID 838 4094 3157
- If you encounter issues accessing this meeting, please call (603) 757-1835 during the meeting

Members:

William Hay, Chair
Dr. Dottie Morris
Janis Manwaring
Dr. Mohammed Saleh
Nancy Salwen
Sofia Cunha-Vasconcelos
Dr. Shaun Filiault
Ritu Budakoti
Marti Fiske

Staff:

Andy Bohannon, PRF Director

Guests:

Agenda:

1. Welcome and Call to Order
2. Approval of March 1, 2021 Minutes
3. Finance Report
4. Pride Month
5. Juneteenth
6. Library ALA Grant
7. New, Other Business
8. Adjourn – Next Meeting Monday, May 3, 2021 at 5:00 PM

More Time: Keene State College Outreach

1 City of Keene
2 New Hampshire

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4
5 HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE
6 MEETING MINUTES
7

8 **Monday, March 1, 2021**

5:00 PM

Remotely via Zoom

Members Present:

William Hay, Chair
Dr. Shaun Filiault
Jan Manwaring, Councilor
Ritu Budakoti
Sofia Cunha-Vasconcelos
Nancy Salwen
Marti Fiske

Staff Present:

Andy Bohannon, Parks, Recreation, and
Facilities Director

Members Not Present:

Dr. Mohammed Saleh, Vice Chair
Dr. Dottie Morris

9
10
11 Chair Hay read a prepared statement explaining how the Emergency Order #12, pursuant to
12 Executive Order #2020-04 issued by the Governor of New Hampshire, waives certain provisions of
13 RSA 91-A (which regulates the operation of public body meetings) during the declared COVID-19
14 State of Emergency.

15
16 **1) Welcome and Call to Order**

17
18 Chair Hay called the meeting to order at 5:04 PM. Roll call was conducted.

19
20 **2) Approval of February 1, 2021 Meeting Minutes**

21
22 Councilor Manwaring made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of February 1, 2021. Ms.
23 Salwen seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

24
25 **3) Finance Report**

26
27 Mr. Bohannon stated that there has been no change. Chair Hay stated that this is accepted as
28 informational.

29
30 **4) Keene State College Alumni Outreach**

31 Mr. Bohannon stated that he has been playing phone tag with Dr. Morris; he knows there is a lot
32 going on at the college right now. He continued that heard Keene State College (KSC) President

33 Treadwell's recent presentation and they mentioned something about doing community outreach in
34 Dr. Morris's remarks, so he will wait for that to come back. As far as the alumni outreach, he has not
35 been able to connect with Dr. Morris on that front. The HRC can choose to keep this on the agenda
36 or bring it back when it is ready to move forward. Chair Hay replied that they can keep it and see
37 what happens next.

38

39 **5) Pride Month**

40

41 Dr. Filiault reported that they are still working with MONIFF to finalize the film list and determining
42 what the films will be. He continued that unfortunately there is not a lot of progress yet to report.

43

44 Chair Hay asked if there is information about any kind of pre-screening. He continued that they had
45 talked about having a few committee members screen the movies. Mr. Bohannon replied that he
46 posed that question to MONIFF and has not had a chance to follow up about this, because two thirds
47 of the month of February he is so engrossed in his budget and then playing catch up with everything
48 else that this slipped through the cracks. Chair Hay replied that they have time to work on this. Mr.
49 Bohannon replied that he will definitely be following up with this and will have information for the
50 committee.

51

52 Dr. Filiault stated that he reached out to an organization that he works with on these issues and has
53 not heard back from them yet, but when he does, he will let the committee know. He continued that
54 he also could speak to these issues (as part of the film screenings), since gay men's health is what he
55 did his PhD on.

56

57 Mr. Bohannon stated that he just looked at the email he sent to MONIFF and that he received a reply
58 to, and MONIFF is waiting to hear back from people to get information about the costs of screening
59 the movies.

60

61 Chair Hay asked if there is any information or clarification on whether they could have the films for
62 72 hours or a window of time. Mr. Bohannon replied that it is quite possible and just depends on
63 which movies they get.

64

65 **6) Juneteenth**

66

67 Councilor Manwaring stated that she and Ms. Cunha-Vasconcelos have been working hard and now
68 have a committee, including Beth Wood (who works for the City and previously was the Downtown
69 Coordinator) and Sarah Benning (who has come to some HRC meetings) and Councilor Workman.
70 They have decided the event will be 11:00 AM to 4:00 PM. She continued that they have questions
71 for the HRC. One of the things that came up was: Juneteenth is about the end of slavery, and
72 freedom. Do they want to totally focus on Juneteenth and that Black experience, or do they want to
73 make it more broad and include other minorities and other folks who have dealt with discrimination
74 and oppression?

75

76 Ms. Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that the event is being put together by the HRC and the committee
77 chooses the direction, but the Juneteenth subcommittee recognized that there is a problem in

78 representation, in that the five subcommittee members are white women. They would like to address
79 that. They discussed talking with UNH and affinity groups on campus, to get their input on the plan
80 so far, and see if someone from there would be willing to join the subcommittee. She understands
81 that they need to get an answer on (the question Councilor Manwaring posed) before they go much
82 further, but she recommends they wait for that input from UNH and affinity groups before they make
83 any decisions.

84
85 Councilor Manwaring stated that her concern is that the subcommittee does not meet again until
86 April, and they are looking at music, and food, and she is not having any luck yet tracking down
87 reenactors but is working on that, and time becomes important. She continued that she just would
88 like a sense of what the HRC members think, even if it is not a total decision here. The
89 subcommittee by itself should not make that recommendation.

90
91 Ms. Salwen stated that since it is Juneteenth, she thinks the main focus should be on Black people.
92 She continued that it does not mean that every single performer or food vendor has to be Black, but
93 they should try to go as much in that direction as possible. She asked, is this an opportunity to
94 support certain policies? For example, she is thinking about the movie Thirteen and issues with
95 voting rights. Would this be an opportunity to have a table that talks about making voting accessible
96 in NH? Are there ways to pull in educational, policy-change kinds of things?

97
98 Ms. Fiske stated that she agrees that the focus should predominantly be on the Black experience.
99 This is the reason for the holiday. She continued that she wonders if there are some things they can
100 do to set some parameters so exact items can be filled in later. If they know, for example, that it is
101 going to have two performance spaces, then they can work on filling those. Or they can determine
102 that they will have food vending in a particular area. That way, when it comes time for filling them
103 in, there is some structure and it can be done more quickly. It would also give them more
104 opportunity to tell people what they are looking for.

105
106 Councilor Manwaring stated that she agrees, and something they are thinking about, food-wise, is
107 asking restaurants/vendors to have one meal that is representative of the Black experience – not
108 necessarily all 1860s food, though. She bought some Juneteenth flags and thought they could put the
109 flags out at the restaurants that are doing that and it would let people know. Also, some might want
110 to do cooking demonstrations. The food is coming along much nicer than any other part so far.

111
112 In response to the question of whether they have spoken with the owner of the Jamaican restaurant on
113 Main St., Councilor Manwaring and Ms. Cunha-Vasconcelos replied no, but the subcommittee
114 member who is focusing on food has, and they are excited to participate in community events and it
115 is on the agenda to make sure to include the Jamaican restaurant in this.

116
117 Mr. Bohannon stated that Mary Jensen is an attendee at this Zoom meeting, from the Historical
118 Society, so if there is something the Historical Society could help the Juneteenth subcommittee with,
119 Ms. Jensen is the “Jonathan Daniels curator” and might be a great resource. When Jenna Carroll left
120 the HRC she expressed that if there are events the Historical Society can help with, they would be
121 glad to, if the HRC reached out. That is kind of their specialty. They might be able to help connect

122 the group with the Black Heritage Trail from Portsmouth, for example. Councilor Manwaring
123 replied that she is meeting with Ms. Carroll tomorrow.

124

125 Ms. Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that she likes Ms. Salwen's idea of tying in some modern voting
126 rights activity and information; that was something the group had not talked about. Their next
127 meeting is March 15 and she will be sure to include that in the discussions. Others are welcome to
128 attend.

129

130 Ms. Budakoti asked if there is a way they could put information out to the local schools. She
131 continued that it would be good to inform people, and hopefully increase turnout for the event. If the
132 subcommittee agrees, she can take on coordinating with the schools and providing a flyer or other
133 form of information. Chair Hay and Councilor Manwaring replied that is a great idea. Councilor
134 Manwaring asked when school ends. Ms. Budakoti replied June 23. Mr. Bohannon stated that the
135 flyer would have to go through the Superintendent's Office, which takes about two weeks, so they
136 should keep that in mind. The distribution could take about two weeks after that. They should make
137 sure the flyer gets in their hands well before the event.

138

139 Councilor Manwaring stated that she met today with Gail Zachariah, who had some suggestions
140 about a movie, aimed at students, that people could stream through the Library. She continued that
141 there are a lot of tentacles out there. Ms. Fiske stated that the Library could also help with displays
142 on topics such as southern cooking, history, and children's books as well. They could easily tie that
143 in with reading lists online, and so on and so forth.

144

145 Ms. Salwen stated that she recently came across a traditional African dance ensemble group out of
146 NH and will email the information to Councilor Manwaring.

147

148 Ms. Fiske asked if the group is amenable to reaching out across the border, since they are so close to
149 VT and MA. Some of their best resources might be just across the border. Ms. Cunha-Vasconcelos
150 replied that regarding music, they have already discussed reaching out to the Boston area and the
151 Pioneer Valley. Ms. Fiske added that the Boston area has historical reenactors.

152

153 Chair Hay stated that they should inform libraries in the area that they are doing this Juneteenth
154 event. He continued that certainly as far as schools are concerned, there is a dreadful lack of
155 information. There is so much history that people have no idea about. The Thirteenth Amendment
156 was just the very beginning of it and it goes on from there. The Nazi regime studied the US's caste
157 system to nail down what they wanted to do, and ruled out some things that they thought were too
158 outrageous for them to do. Our State Representatives are trying to not even teach the fact that there
159 is racism in the country, and are saying it is not there. Education is needed, and they need to double
160 up on efforts.

161

162 Mr. Bohannon stated that another idea is that Sandra Neil Wallace might be able to read one of her
163 historical books for children, because her books are based on that. They could have a children's
164 reading session with her, maybe, or have someone read one of her books. She has a couple related to
165 Black history, and that could be really powerful for the community to see what an amazing author we

166 have right here in our own community highlighting these subjects. He will get the information to
167 Ms. Fiske. Ms. Fiske stated that might easily fit with a library program – an author visit.

168
169 Ms. Salwen asked about the idea of having a Drum Circle. She continued that the group she sent
170 them information about does drum and dance. It might be more performance, but if they are
171 interested in having a facilitated drum circle, there is someone else she knows of who might be a
172 possibility. Ms. Fiske stated that there is an African dance group in the Burlington, VT area as well
173 and they might be willing to come down. Discussion continued.

174
175 Ms. Budakoti stated that as a member of the Keene International Festival (KIF) committee, she can
176 see this being done in June and then the KIF is planned for September, so that is great. She is happy
177 this is coming along. She thinks they should look at volunteers and start thinking about that. There
178 may be people who want to be part of this event, share their stories, or perform, and they need a way
179 to be able to find this information. It would help if they could share the information on the HRC's
180 Facebook page or the City website, and HRC members could start spreading the link so the
181 information gets out as early as possible. Also they can make an announcement for people to come
182 together and be part of this. The more people can gather for this, the better.

183
184 Ms. Fiske asked about Facebook events for City events. Mr. Bohannon replied that they did that for
185 the Martin Luther King, Jr. event, so they can certainly create a Facebook event for Juneteenth and
186 post it on various platforms. He continued that if they do an event they can tag the KIF, and share it
187 with the Historical Society, and KSC and the KPL can share it, too. There are multiple ways for
188 them to spread the word. He asked if the subcommittee has someone with graphic design abilities to
189 create a flyer. If not, City staff could work on it a bit as soon as the subcommittee has more details.
190 The sooner they get information out, the better.

191
192 Councilor Manwaring replied that they do have someone who can do the graphic design, once the
193 subcommittee figures out more details. She continued that one website she saw had “the three Es”
194 for Juneteenth – “Education, Entertainment, and Empowerment.” She thought that was a good way
195 to go. They will talk about it on March 15, and maybe they can get something out – she is a big
196 believer in save-the-date. Ms. Budakoti suggested a 4th E – “Equality” or “Equity.”

197
198 Chair Hay stated that for the record, the Minute-taker took him seriously at the last meeting when he
199 said he was going to portray Frederick Douglass, but he really is not.

200
201 Councilor Manwaring asked Ms. Cunha-Vasconcelos if there was anything else to add. Ms. Cunha-
202 Vasconcelos replied that she thinks they covered everything.

203
204 **7) Library ALA Grant**

205
206 Mr. Bohannon stated that this is something they talked a little bit about last time and wanted to get on
207 the agenda. He continued that at the time, Ms. Fiske and Ms. Zachariah had just submitted a grant.
208 He asked Ms. Fiske for more information.

209

210 Ms. Fiske stated that she does not have any more information about it at this time. She continued
211 that she is meeting with Ms. Zachariah tomorrow, and this is one of the items they will discuss. She
212 is not sure where the grant falls right now. She knows Ms. Zachariah plans to do the discussions (on
213 race relations) no matter what, it is just a matter of how many she would end up doing, based on
214 funding available through the grant sources. She will have more information at the next HRC
215 meeting.

216

217 **8) New or Other Business**

218

219 Mr. Bohannon stated that the Ad Hoc Racial Justice and Community Safety Committee (AHRJCS) is
220 wrapping up their work and he has been told that many items from that committee might be coming
221 the HRC's way. He does not know what those items are, but the HRC will have an opportunity to
222 review the items when they come. The HRC has done a great job with an events focus, and he loves
223 the direction they are going in, trying to bring in the education component to everything. The HRC
224 has done one event here and there, and to have four events in a year is fantastic. At a time when they
225 really need it, it is happening, which he is so thankful for. He is looking forward to seeing what
226 comes their way from the AHRJCS.

227

228 Chair Hay stated that he feels kind of left out from that group. He continued that he thought the HRC
229 would be getting more of a heads up on things, to be able to attend the AHRJCS's meetings. He
230 always finds out about these things after they are done. Mr. Bohannon replied yes, it is a public
231 process, and he would not disagree with Chair Hay. It is just part of the nature of how things work.

232

233 Chair Hay stated that tomorrow at 10:00, WMUR is starting a series of race on NH, which should be
234 interesting if anyone else wants to check it out.

235

236 Chair Hay thanked the group for their great work. He continued that as their tendrils go out, he
237 thinks they are going to get a lot more participation from all over the place, and find even more
238 opportunities for them to jump into.

239

240 **9) Adjourn – Next Meeting is Monday, April 5, 2021, at 5:00 PM**

241

242 There being no further business, Chair Hay adjourned the meeting at 5:46 PM.

243

244 Respectfully submitted by,

245 Britta Reida, Minute Taker

246

247 Edits respectfully submitted by,

248 Andy Bohannon, Staff

7/1/19- 6/30/20	HRC	KIF	7/1/20- 6/30/21	HRC	KIF	7/1/21- 6/30/22	HRC	KIF
Balance 7/1/19	\$ 4,574.70	\$ -	Balance 7/1/20	\$ 4,097.43	\$ 3,411.00	Balance 7/1/21	\$ 4,597.43	\$ 3,411.00
Income			Income			Income		
		\$ 2,000.00						
City of Keene	\$ 500.00	\$ 2,500.00	City of Keene	\$ 500.00		City of Keene	\$ -	
	\$ -	\$ 1,000.00		\$ -			\$ -	
		\$ 500.00						
		\$ 247.83						
		\$ 100.00						
subtotal	\$ 500.00	\$ 6,347.83	subtotal	\$ 500.00	\$ -	subtotal	\$ -	\$ -
Total Income	\$ 500.00	\$ 6,347.83	Total Income	\$ 500.00	\$ -	Total Income	\$ -	\$ -
Expenses			Expenses			Expenses		
International Festival	\$ -	\$ 2,936.83		\$ -			\$ -	
Annie Patterson	\$ 500.00							
KSC Dining	\$ 477.27							
Total Expenses	\$ 977.27	\$ 2,936.83	Total Expenses	\$ -	\$ -	Total Expenses	\$ -	\$ -
Net 19-20	\$ (477.27)	\$ 3,411.00	Net 20-21	\$ 500.00	\$ -	Net 21-22	\$ -	\$ -
Balance on hand	\$ 4,097.43	\$ 3,411.00	Balance on hand	\$ 4,597.43	\$ 3,411.00	Balance on hand	\$ 4,597.43	\$ 3,411.00