

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

**HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE MEETING AGENDA**

Monday, April 3, 2023 at 5:00 PM  
Room 22 Upstairs, Recreation Center

Members:

Sofia Cunha-Vasconcelos  
Dr. Dottie Morris  
Janis Manwaring  
Dr. Mohammad Saleh  
Dr. Shaun Filiault  
Marti Fiske  
Hunter Kirschner  
Rabbi Daniel Aronson  
Councilor Catherine Workman

Staff:

Andy Bohannon, PRF Director  
Alyssa Bender, Youth Services Manager

Alternates:

Ritu Budakoti  
Tedd Benson

Agenda:

1. Welcome and Call to Order
2. Approval of March 6, 2023 Minutes
3. Finance Report
4. Monadnock Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging Coalition Updates
5. Todd Horner – Multimodal Transportation
6. Acceptance of Committee Event Reports
  - a. Juneteenth
7. Racial Justice Community Safety Report
8. Community Survey <https://tinyurl.com/DiscrimSurvey>
9. New Business
10. Adjourn – Next Meeting Monday, May 1, 2023 at 5:00 PM

*“In our efforts to create a more equal and just society, we move forward with the firm intention to value the voices, opinions, and experiences of all people. We choose to proceed with the awareness and humility that the statements and decisions we make will have a different impact for those with different life experiences.”*



1 City of Keene  
2 New Hampshire

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5 HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE  
6 MEETING MINUTES  
7

Monday, March 6, 2023

5:00 PM

Room 22,  
Recreation Center

Members Present:

Sofia Cunha-Vasconcelos, Chair  
Hunter Kirschner, Vice Chair  
Jan Manwaring  
Dr. Dottie Morris (until 5:50 PM)  
Dr. Mohammed Saleh  
Marti Fiske  
Rabbi Daniel Aronson

Staff Present:

Andy Bohannon, Parks, Recreation & Facilities  
Director  
Alyssa Bender, Youth Services Manager

Members Not Present:

Dr. Shaun Filiault  
Councilor Catherine Workman  
Ritu Budakoti, Alternate

8  
9  
10 **1) Welcome and Call to Order**

11  
12 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos read the HRC's statement: *"In our efforts to create a more equal and*  
13 *just society, we move forward with the firm intention to value the voices, opinions, and*  
14 *experiences of all people. We choose to proceed with the awareness and humility that the*  
15 *statements and decisions we make will have a different impact for those with different life*  
16 *experiences."*

17  
18 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM. Roll call was conducted.

19  
20 **2) Approval of February 6, 2023, Meeting Minutes**

21  
22 Mr. Aronson made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of February 6, 2023. Ms.  
23 Manwaring seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

24  
25 **3) Finance Report**  
26

27 Mr. Bohannon reported that he has not had a chance to reflect the Till event. He continued that  
28 they received some of the funding but not all of it. He will update that and pass along the  
29 invoice total as well. He has not received a bill from Vicky Pitman. He will send her a reminder  
30 about that.

31  
32 **4) Monadnock Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Coalition (MDEIB) Updates**

33  
34 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that Dr. Morris and Councilor Workman are both members of  
35 the MDEIB and the HRC. She asked if they had an update. Dr. Morris replied that she did  
36 attend the most recent MDEIB meeting but does not have much to update the HRC on today.  
37 Mr. Aronson asked if she was at the meeting with the high school administrators. Dr. Morris  
38 replied yes, and it was very good. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos asked her to share more about that  
39 during the “New Business” agenda item.

40  
41 **5) Todd Horner – Multimodal Transportation**

42  
43 Mr. Bohannon reported that Todd Horner is ill and thus not joining the meeting today. He  
44 continued that he would like to come in April, if appropriate. Mr. Horner works for the  
45 Southwest Regional Planning Commission (SWRPC). He asked Mr. Horner to come related to  
46 the Downtown Infrastructure Project that is happening and talk about access availability for all of  
47 the multimodal transportation options that should be part of the conversation and what the HRC  
48 might be able to offer the City in relation to issues of human rights, access, and equitable  
49 opportunities. He will put this on the HRC’s April agenda. Mr. Horner will talk for about 20  
50 minutes but wants a conversation with the HRC, not just to give a presentation. The HRC can  
51 ask questions and hear about the input the SWRPC has been able to provide to the Downtown  
52 Infrastructure Project.

53  
54 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos thanked Mr. Bohannon. Mr. Bohannon stated that the reason he  
55 brought this to the HRC’s Chair and Vice Chair is because the current downtown corridor has the  
56 Cheshire Rail Trail, and Hundred Nights is moving to Water St. but will still be connected to the  
57 rail trail, and there is a lot of infrastructure changing with various improvements and amenities.  
58 It is a major thoroughfare for individuals who utilize the shelter as well as individuals coming  
59 into Keene and looking to find where to go, and they want to make sure that whatever the City  
60 builds is a successful model for all. That is part of Mr. Horner’s conversation.

61  
62 Ms. Fiske asked if there has been conversation about sidewalk levels for the (downtown) stores  
63 that have steps leading up. Mr. Bohannon replied that that has been part of the conversation, yes,  
64 but the challenge is that those are private property. Access into various storefronts is definitely a  
65 concern. For example, a few years ago, Citizen’s Bank had steps, and they made a ramp. Some  
66 people were asking how big the ramp would be and how much it would “infringe on the existing  
67 sidewalk,” but they came to a fair solution. Discussion continued. Mr. Bohannon stated that this  
68 is a good question they should be asking.

69

70     **6) Acceptance of Committee Event Reports**  
71             **A) Black History Month – Movie “Till”**

72  
73 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos congratulated Dr. Morris and Mr. Bohannon. She continued that this  
74 was a wonderful event and a wonderful example of partnering with others in the community.  
75 Mr. Bohannon reported that there were 72 attendees the first night and 92 the second night, very  
76 good representation. He continued that Harvey Keye presented after the movie on the second  
77 night and it was an engaging, moving conversation. The pre-conversation on the first night was  
78 dynamic as well. He, Mark Belden, and Dan Smith from the YMCA met the morning after and  
79 talked about how well it went. Dr. Saleh spoke positively about the event and shared that the  
80 theater location was a little hard to find/confusing to some people. Others agreed. Ms. Fiske  
81 stated that a comment she heard from a member of the public was that she “didn’t think there  
82 was a dry eye in the place.”

83  
84             **B) Juneteenth**

85  
86 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that the agenda packet includes the Juneteenth subcommittee  
87 report, but there is nothing in particular to highlight or for the HRC to discuss today. She  
88 continued that if anyone has questions, they can let her know. Ms. Fiske asked what “first pass  
89 program identified” means. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos replied that the subcommittee has  
90 identified what they would like the program to be (like a “rough draft”), and then they will be in  
91 communications with the various people they are hoping can participate, to see who is actually  
92 available and who is not. They probably will have to come back to the drawing board, e.g., if  
93 they find out someone cannot participate, they will try someone else.

94  
95 Dr. Morris stated that a topic that came up in the MDEIB meeting was whether Juneteenth was  
96 coordinating more with the YMCA this year. She continued that that will be discussed more at  
97 the next meeting – how to align better with the YMCA and any other groups doing something for  
98 Juneteenth. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos replied that the HRC’s Juneteenth subcommittee has also  
99 been discussing this, as someone from Badger Balm has joined the subcommittee and Badger  
100 Balm is also doing a Juneteenth event after the one the HRC is doing. They discussed that it  
101 makes more sense to tie all these things in and work together to make it a broader/all community  
102 set of events, rather than working in silos. The subcommittee meets tomorrow. She asked if Dr.  
103 Morris is the correct liaison between the Juneteenth subcommittee and the MDEIB. Dr. Morris  
104 replied no, Councilor Workman is, because she is the MDEIB chair.

105  
106 Mr. Bohannon stated that in his meeting with Mr. Smith and Mr. Belden, he proposed facilitating  
107 a better opportunity marketing-wise. He continued that each group could do their own thing but  
108 market the events together. Feedback they received in the past was that promoting events  
109 together would help the community understand that the groups are unified and give the public  
110 options for which event(s) to attend based on their availability. He heard from Mr. Smith that  
111 the YMCA had not started planning a Juneteenth event yet and told Mr. Smith the HRC would

112 have a Juneteenth plan in place by April 1, and at that time, they could begin to collaborate on  
113 the marketing efforts. Mr. Smith and Mr. Belden are happy about that.

114

115 **7) Racial Justice and Community Safety Report**

116

117 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that the HRC members were going to send any edits they had  
118 (for the executive summary of the HRC's recommendations regarding the RJCS report) to Mr.  
119 Bohannon. Mr. Bohannon replied that he received them. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos asked if the  
120 edits are in the process of being incorporated. Mr. Bohannon replied that he did not get to it yet,  
121 due to having been in budget mode, but he can make that turnaround time. He received edits  
122 from Mr. Kirschner. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that if anyone has edits, they had not sent  
123 in yet, they still have time.

124

125 **8) Community Survey <https://tinyurl.com/DiscrimSurvey>**

126

127 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos asked Mr. Bohannon about this. Is this about the work Lebanon, NH  
128 is doing? Mr. Bohannon replied that the plan had been for him to reconnect with the folks in  
129 Lebanon, with HRC members invited to (the meeting/conversation) that was set up, but that  
130 conversation did not happen. He continued that he can try again to make this happen.

131

132 **9) New Business**

133

134 Alyssa Bender, Youth Services Manager, stated that April is Genocide Awareness Month, and  
135 the Cohen Center is having Omar (Ndizeye), a survivor of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, come  
136 do a discussion, talking about his history and his book. She continued that the day after, the  
137 Cohen Center wants to do a community group presentation around restorative justice. The  
138 director of the Cohen Center reached out to her and others in the community who do restorative  
139 justice work. They have been meeting, planning a two-part event for April 13, a panel  
140 discussion with Mr. Ndizeye in the morning, then lunch, and community building circles in the  
141 afternoon. She and the Cohen Center want to know if the HRC would be interested in helping  
142 out and/or being part of a supporting group. She will have more details for the HRC after she  
143 attends another meeting tomorrow with the others who are involved.

144

145 Discussion ensued. HRC members asked Ms. Bender questions about the details and logistics.  
146 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos asked if HRC members are interested in getting more information  
147 about this. Others replied yes. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos asked Ms. Bender if she can email  
148 more information to the HRC. Ms. Bender replied yes.

149

150 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos asked if there was any other new business.

151

152 Dr. Morris reported that she, Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos, Mr. Bohannon, and others from the  
153 community, such as Dan Smith from the YMCA, and Rick Van Winkler, who was a co-chair of  
154 the RJCS Committee, met with Keene High School principal Dr. Gallagher in regard to more

155 concerns she (Dr. Morris) had heard from some parents about Racism within the school. It was a  
156 meeting to find out more information and offer support. She continued that the meeting went  
157 well, and Dr. Gallagher was able to talk about the variety of things going on at the high school.  
158 It seems like there is a lot going on, and many people are approaching her and asking to help.  
159 Thus, there is a great awareness that things are not shaping up in the way we would want for our  
160 young people to be experiencing in high school. It was helpful to hear Dr. Gallagher talk about  
161 the various initiatives, and she was open to doing whatever people felt like they could contribute  
162 to creating a better environment for the students. They are all meeting again tomorrow to pin  
163 down some actions to take between now and the close of the academic year, and the plan for next  
164 year. Dr. Gallagher mentioned that she wishes there were more mentors of color for high school  
165 students, which is something to think about. When some LGBTQ folks stepped forward, they  
166 soon formed an organization with many students involved, but the same thing does not exist for  
167 other students. That was a great request for Dr. Gallagher to make.

168  
169 Mr. Bohannon asked if Dr. Morris thinks the HRC might be able to help facilitate (finding  
170 mentors of color). Dr. Morris replied yes, she thinks they could. Mr. Bohannon asked if the  
171 KSC would be a resource. Dr. Morris replied that a while back, a parent of a child of color was  
172 seeking other children/families of color for her family to connect with, and she created a  
173 Saturday morning program that was quite successful. She continued that some KSC students  
174 attended/supported it. The program dwindled once summer came. They were thinking of  
175 starting it up again, but the parent who had created it, who had great connections in the  
176 community, passed away suddenly. A program like this could potentially be restarted and there  
177 are other people who would want to help support children of color. The high school could have  
178 a similar model.

179  
180 Discussion ensued. Mr. Bohannon stated that the Rec Center could potentially host it. Ms. Fiske  
181 replied or the Library, if it was open to the general public. Dr. Morris stated that she would like  
182 to do focus groups with the students who meet the demographic and knows an 11<sup>th</sup> grade student  
183 who could probably help her pull together some students. She was one of the original kids in  
184 that group she just spoke of, when she was younger.

185  
186 Discussion continued about the importance of Keene being a supportive, welcoming community.  
187 Dr. Morris stated that she is asked a lot, by people considering moving to Keene, "How are the  
188 schools?" She does not have personal experience with the Keene schools and thus refers people  
189 to parents with school-aged children. Her former physician in Keene was a man of color, and  
190 when he and his wife decided to move out of Keene, he told her, "I can't sacrifice my children  
191 anymore." Those were his exact words. It was heartbreaking to hear.

192  
193 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos asked Dr. Morris to continue updating the HRC on all of this, and to  
194 let the HRC know how they can help. Mr. Bohannon replied that they try to facilitate this  
195 through the MDEIB. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos replied that they are trying to strengthen the  
196 connection between the HRC and the MDEIB. Mr. Bohannon replied yes, the survey is part of  
197 that. He continued that the Lebanon survey was to gather people's experiences within their

198 community, and the information goes to a neutral location, not a city staff person. The  
199 committee fosters the process, so there is no bias attached to it.

200

201 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos asked if there was more new business.

202

203 Ms. Manwaring stated that this might be in the category of “old business,” but at a previous  
204 meeting, the HRC had talked about possibly needing to address anti-Semitism. She continued  
205 that Mr. Aronson was going to think about it and get back to the HRC. There was an incident in  
206 Portsmouth a week or two ago. What if anti-Semitism comes to Keene and they are not  
207 prepared?

208

209 Mr. Aronson stated that on April 23 there will be a panel discussion at the synagogue, with a  
210 keynote speaker from the Anti-Defamation League (ADL). He continued that he would  
211 moderate that discussion and is part of the planning committee for it. The gist of it is that it will  
212 be a reality check about anti-Semitism in the region. Some people are in denial that there are any  
213 issues, and there are also people who have an exaggerated sense of threat. There is not a lot  
214 happening here; they are not seeing swastikas on every stop sign, but it does exist. He  
215 encouraged the chair of that program to submit a letter asking the HRC to help fund this  
216 program, but he (the chair of the program) may or may not do that. There is a parent at the high  
217 school who is very involved (in anti-Semitism work), working with the administration and  
218 making sure people do not jump on the bandwagon and make things more complicated than it  
219 needs to be. A couple people in his synagogue think they should be reaching out to/meeting with  
220 the principal and the superintendent, but that is not necessary. He hears from the school, this  
221 parent, Dr. Morris, and others, that the high school is on top of things. They care and they are  
222 going through a process, and do not need “outside agitators.” People with children are as  
223 involved as they want to be, and do not need random people from the community knocking on  
224 their door saying, “This is what you should do.”

225

226 Ms. Manwaring stated that what she was thinking, which is in agreement with what Mr. Aronson  
227 is saying, is that the HRC could write some sort of statement or letter acknowledging that if there  
228 were an incident, they would be prepared and have been thinking about it and are concerned  
229 about it. She continued that she is not sure people actually read the HRC’s meeting minutes.

230

231 Dr. Saleh stated that if someone had not posted about the incident in Portsmouth on Facebook, he  
232 would not have known there were anti-Semitic incidents like that happening in NH. He  
233 continued that he guesses that many people do not know. Anything the HRC can do to facilitate  
234 awareness may be helpful, although others argue against bringing attention to such things so as  
235 not to “glorify” them, so it is complicated.

236

237 Dr. Morris replied that she had not known about the Portsmouth incident, either, until she was in  
238 Portsmouth and people were about to have a rally in response. She continued that there were  
239 several incidents’ people were concerned about. Mr. Aronson stated that there were a couple  
240 incidents of graffiti at a Portsmouth synagogue, and that same week, vandalism to storefronts



241 that are somehow associated with people of color, LGBTQ people, progressive values, and so on  
242 and so forth. In Manchester and Concord there have been other incidents of anti-Semitism and  
243 other types of hate, over the past couple of years, things that Keene has not experienced. Last  
244 weekend, there was online chatter about a “National Day of Hate.” The Jewish community was  
245 very aware of this. He thought it was focused on not just anti-Semitism, but other forms of  
246 hatred, but when he called the Police Chief to ask that the Police keep an eye out during the  
247 synagogue’s programming, the Police Chief told him he had only heard about the “National Day  
248 of Hate” the day before. The Jewish community had been hearing about it for weeks. As it turns  
249 out, nothing happened on that day, in the state or in the country, as far as he is aware. Dr. Morris  
250 replied that it (announcing the impending “National Day of Hate”) is itself a form of terrorism.  
251 She continued that she heard a lot about it, too, from her family in the south. Discussion  
252 continued.

253

254 Dr. Morris left at 5:50 PM.

255

256 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos asked if the April 23 event at the synagogue is open to the public. Mr.  
257 Aronson replied that he will find out. He continued that if HRC members want to come, they are  
258 welcome, whether it is a public event or not. He likes the idea of it being a public event. He  
259 does not feel there is a great sense of interest, or urgency, from the community.

260

261 Dr. Saleh asked what the goal of the program is. Mr. Aronson replied that that is still being  
262 defined, but his understanding is that it will be a reality check, information sharing, so that  
263 everyone has the same information with which to gauge the extent of anti-Semitism in Keene  
264 and the surrounding area. Ms. Fiske replied that if it is a public event, they can post it on the  
265 bulletin board at the Library, if he sends her the flyer/information.

266

267 Dr. Saleh stated that he has an idea – if people were spreading the idea of a “day of hate,” even if  
268 nothing resulted from it, what if the HRC started a “day of solidarity”? It could highlight the  
269 importance of everyone being connected and that there is no place for hate. Keene could have a  
270 “day of love.” It is something to think about. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that she likes the  
271 concept.

272

273 Mr. Aronson stated that another item of new business is that on April 27, the Monadnock  
274 Interfaith Project will have an interfaith Passover Seder. He continued that he is working on this  
275 with Reverend Sandra Whippie of the Walpole Unitarian Universalist church. They hope to  
276 have the event on the KSC campus. People can register to attend and are asked to give a  
277 donation to help cover the costs. There may be a request coming to the HRC from the MIP to  
278 co-sponsor this.

279

280 Ms. Manwaring stated that when you enter City Hall, there are panels, and the City Clerk’s  
281 Office put together a (display) for Black History Month, which will stay up longer than that. She  
282 continued that the Clerk’s Office asked her to help with it. It has Jonathan Daniels, Dr. (Albert)  
283 Johnston (a Keene physician in the 1940s, subject of the movie “Lost Boundaries”), and George

HRC Meeting Minutes  
Month Date, 2023

284 Miller. A sad story is that Mr. Miller one day went to Dr. Johnston's office to give blood, and  
285 the nurse asked Dr. Johnston, "What do I do with this?" Dr. Johnston told her to put it with all  
286 the other blood. The nurse could not deal with that and instead dropped it. Mr. Miller died in  
287 1978 and just had one little line in the Keene Sentinel saying that he died. She is glad this  
288 display is in City Hall. It was done with the help of the Cheshire County Historical Society. She  
289 encourages everyone to go take a look.

290

291 **10) Adjourn – Next Meeting Monday, April 3, 2023, at 5:00 PM**

292

293 There being no further business, Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos adjourned the meeting at 5:55 PM.

294

295 Respectfully submitted by,  
296 Britta Reida, Minute Taker

297

298 Reviewed and edited by,  
299 Andy Bohannon, Parks, Recreation and Facilities Director

7/1/22- 6/30/23	HRC	KIF	7/1/23- 6/30/24	HRC	KIF	7/1/24- 6/30/25	HRC	KIF
<b>Balance 7/1/22</b>	\$ 2,991.88	\$ 3,985.44	<b>Balance 7/1/23</b>	\$ 2,921.33	\$ 5,651.74	<b>Balance 7/1/24</b>	\$ 2,921.33	\$ 3,985.44
<b>Income</b>			<b>Income</b>			<b>Income</b>		
City of Keene	\$ 1,000.00		City of Keene	\$ -		City of Keene	\$ -	
donations TILL	\$ 775.00							
Donations KIF		\$ 8,012.00	Donations KIF		\$ -	Donations KIF		\$ -
subtotal	\$ 1,775.00	\$ 8,012.00	subtotal	\$ -	\$ -	subtotal	\$ -	\$ -
<b>Total Income</b>	\$ 1,775.00	\$ 8,012.00	<b>Total Income</b>	\$ -	\$ -	<b>Total Income</b>	\$ -	\$ -
<b>Expenses</b>			<b>Expenses</b>			<b>Expenses</b>		
Martin Luther King Day	\$ 45.55		Martin Luther King Day	\$ -		Martin Luther King Day	\$ -	
Black History Month TILL	\$ 1,800.00		Pride Month	\$ -		Pride Month	\$ -	
Juneteenth	\$ -		Juneteenth	\$ -		Juneteenth	\$ -	
International Festival		\$ 6,345.70	International Festival		\$ -	International Festival		\$ -
Indigenous Peoples Day	\$ -		Indigenous Peoples Day	\$ -		Indigenous Peoples Day	\$ -	
<b>Total Expenses</b>	\$ 1,845.55	\$ 6,345.70	<b>Total Expenses</b>	\$ -	\$ -	<b>Total Expenses</b>	\$ -	\$ -
<b>Net 22-23</b>	\$ (70.55)	\$ 1,666.30	<b>Net 23-24</b>	\$ -	\$ -	<b>Net 24-25</b>	\$ -	\$ -
<b>Balance on hand</b>	\$ 2,921.33	\$ 5,651.74	<b>Balance on hand</b>	\$ 2,921.33	\$ 5,651.74	<b>Balance on hand</b>	\$ 2,921.33	\$ 3,985.44



**To: Mayor George Hansel and Keene City Council**  
**From: City of Keene Human Rights Committee**  
**Re: Racial Justice and Community Safety Committee Report**  
**Date:**

In 2020, Mayor Hansel formed the Racial Justice and Community Safety Committee. He tasked the Committee to provide a report of racial equity in Keene and provide recommendations for what will create a more long-term, effective approach for improving racial justice and social equity in the City.

In March 2021, the Committee released the *Racial Justice & Community Safety Community Safety Committee Report*. The Committee made four key observations concerning racial justice and social equity in Keene: (1) Racism exists in Keene; (2) Implicit bias must be identified; (3) Open dialogue requires significant expansion; and, (4) Community education is essential.

To that end, the Committee released recommendations for five broad domains: (1) Government Leadership; (2) Public Input and Community education; (3) Public Safety; and (4) City and Community; and (5) Education. Within each domain, the Committee made recommendations about how to improve racial justice and social equity in the City.

In 2022, Human Rights Committee reviewed the Racial Justice and Community Safety Committee Report regarding the Report's recommendations for actions to be taken by City of Keene. The Human Rights Committee identified actionable steps the City may take to implement the *Racial Justice and Community Safety Committee Report* into practice, where possible. Below is a high-level summary of the Human Rights Committee's findings from its review of the *Racial Justice and Community Safety Committee Report* and the Human Rights Committee's suggested steps for the City to implement the Report.

The Report's recommendation is in bold face. The Human Rights Committee's assessment of the recommendation is located immediately below.

**1.A: It is recommended that the City of Keene take a position against racism starting with a strong anti-racism statement.**

The Human Rights Committee recognizes the City already posts such a declaration in City Hall and other City buildings. However, the Human Rights Committee also notes it submitted a two-sentence statement to Mayor Hansel which the Committee recommended be read before City meetings; Mayor Hansel expressed concern reading such statement would add an unnecessary burden to those meetings. A compromise position may be to have this statement printed at the bottom of the agendas of City meetings. The Human Rights Committee believes this statement is important as it expresses the City's commitment to racial justice, diversity, equity, inclusion, and human rights in all City endeavors.

This statement reads: "*In our efforts to create a more equal and justice society, we move forward with the firm intention to value voices, opinions, and experiences of all people. We choose to proceed with the awareness and humility that the statements and decision we make will have a difference impact for those with different life experiences.*"

**1.B: It is recommended that the City work with community stakeholders to establish clear community racial equity and inclusivity goals and that the goals be widely adopted by the City and Keene agencies and businesses.**

The Committee recommends the City may consider appointing a “Diversity Ombudsman” as a point-person for communication with community stakeholders about diversity issues.

See also the recommendations in point 4.I, below.

**4.B: It is recommended that the City and Keene employers regularly conduct diversity, equity and inclusion for employees that fosters an open and welcoming workplace culture for all people.**

*and*

**4.C: It is recommended that the City and Keene employers review employee recruitment, retention, pay and promotion policies to achieve improved diversity and equity amongst applicants and throughout organizational personnel at all levels.**

The Committee recommends the City’s Human Resources Department regularly sponsor staff trainings regarding best practices in racial justice, diversity, equity, inclusion, and human rights. These trainings should be regularly updated, as appropriate.

The Committee is cognizant of the state and federal guidelines and regulations relating to hiring practices and knows the City must always operate within those laws when hiring new employees. Appreciating those limitations, the Committee recommends the City advertise vacancies through avenues likely to reach racially diversity applicants so as to potentially increase the diversity of the applicant pool from which the City selects candidates. Further, the Committee recommends the City consider implementing a “trailing spouses” program similar to that adopted by Keene State College and consult with the College in developing such a program.

**4.D: It is recommended that the City and Keene employers expand and regularly provide internship positions that specifically attract underrepresented populations and create career opportunities.**

*and*

**4.E: It is recommended that the City and Keene employers identify where skills are transferrable amongst potential applicants to help provide opportunities and widen the applicant pool (military to law enforcement, for example).**

The Committee recommends the City coordinate internship positions with Keene High School, Keene State College, and River Valley Community College, thus capitalizing on the wealth of educational institutions in the City. These internships ought to focus on transferrable skills. Because working without pay would pose economic challenges for many students – especially racially diverse student, who are historically socio-economically disadvantaged – these internships ought be paid when possible.

The Committee recommends the City, in developing internships, focus on skills transferrable to the workforce and jobs in demand. Further, internships ought focus on skills and knowledge required by licensing boards and examinations in relevant occupations, when possible. The Committee recommends the City coordinate with the relevant educational institutions in developing these internships so that they are educationally and occupationally meaningful for students and for the City.

**4.G: It is recommended that the City and Keene employers seek and generate incentives to promote equity in employment.**

The Committee identifies the need to define “incentives” within this statement, as incentives in some arenas may be appropriate while others may not. The Committee recommends one incentive may be the City only considers bids from contractors which include a diversity, equity, and inclusion statement in their bids.

**4.I: It is recommended that the City intentionally factor diversity into community driven development projects such as the arts corridor and the skate park, for example.**

The Committee recommends the City intentionally and deliberately solicit feedback from the diverse communities when in the planning stages of City projects. The City may work, for example, with leaders from organizations serving racially and linguistically diverse people in order to solicit feedback from those organizations about how projects may impact those groups.

Further, the Committee recommends the City develop a means of factoring the impact of non-profits’ commitment to diversity and social justice in the City’s non-profit funding formula, which the City uses when allocating funds to non-profits in the City budget.

Finally, the Committee recommends the City create a means of soliciting community feedback to the Human Rights Committee. For example, creating an online form on the Human Rights Committee’s Web page would help improve communication between the community and the diverse stakeholders the Human Rights Committee serves.

**4.J: It is recommended that the Keene Public Library as well as school libraries expand collection diversity, that feedback be sought from the community for this purpose, that the Keene Public Library facility reading groups to promote diversity within its collection, and that libraries seek financial donations to help expand the collection diversity.**

The Committee notes the Keene Public Library accomplished this goal and regularly works to maintain this goal. The Library requires 30% of new purchases reflect diversities. Further, the Library is auditing its collection to determine what titles may be needed for the future.

**4.K: It is recommended that the City review Cheshire TV programming and encourage additions and changes that promote diversity and inclusion.**

Since the time of the report, Cheshire TV went off the air. The Human Rights Committee recommends that the City consider making minimum requirements for inclusive and diverse programming a condition of future contracts with public access television providers.

*“In our efforts to create a more equal and justice society, we move forward with the firm intention to value voices, opinions, and experiences of all people. We choose to proceed with the awareness and humility that the statements and decision we make will have a difference impact for those with different life experiences.”*

