

City of Keene
New Hampshire

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE MEETING AGENDA

Monday, February 6, 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

Agenda:

1. Welcome and Call to Order
2. Approval of January 9, 2023 Minutes
3. Finance Report
4. Monadnock Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging Coalition Updates
5. Acceptance of Committee Event Reports
 - a. Black History Month – Movie “Till” February 15th & 16th 7:00 PM Colonial Showroom
 - b. Juneteenth
6. Racial Justice Community Safety Report
7. Community Survey <https://tinyurl.com/DiscrimSurvey>
8. New Business
9. Adjourn – Next Meeting Monday, March 6, 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, January 9, 2023

5:00 PM

Room 22,
Recreation Center

Members Present:

Sofia Cunha-Vasconcelos, Chair
Dr. Shaun Filiault, Vice Chair
Jan Manwaring (left at 5:51 PM)
Dr. Dottie Morris
Marti Fiske
Hunter Kirschner
Rabbi Daniel Aronson
Ritu Budakoti, Alternate
Councilor Catherine Workman (arrived at 5:05 PM)

Staff Present:

Andy Bohannon, Parks, Recreation & Facilities
Director

Members Not Present:

Heidi Schwieger, Alternate
Dr. Mohammed Saleh

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

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12 Ms. Cunha-Vasconcelos called the meeting to order at 5:02 PM. She read the HRC's statement:
13 *"In our efforts to create a more equal and just society, we move forward with the firm intention to value*
14 *the voices, opinions, and experiences of all people. We choose to proceed with the awareness and*
15 *humility that the statements and decisions we make will have a different impact for those with different*
16 *life experiences."*

17
18 Roll call was conducted. Ms. Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that Ritu Budakoti is a voting member
19 today. She continued that "feedback and decision on the draft of the executive summary of the
20 RJCS Report" should be on the agenda.

21
22 Ms. Fiske made a motion to amend the agenda to include feedback on the executive summary.
23 Dr. Morris seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote. Ms. Cunha-Vasconcelos
24 stated that it will follow Budget Development and be the new #6.

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26 Councilor Workman arrived at 5:05 PM.

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2) Elections

Ms. Fiske made a motion to re-elect the current slate, with Ms. Cunha-Vasconcelos as Chair and Dr. Filiault as Vice Chair. Dr. Morris seconded the motion.

Dr. Filiault stated that he cannot be the Vice Chair again. Ms. Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that she is happy to retain her seat as Chair.

Dr. Morris nominated Mr. Kirschner for Vice Chair. Ms. Fiske seconded the nomination. Mr. Kirschner accepted the nomination.

Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos asked if anyone else is interested in being considered for Chair or Vice Chair. (There was no response).

Ms. Fiske made a motion to elect Ms. Cunha-Vasconcelos as Chair and Mr. Kirschner as Vice Chair of the HRC. Councilor Workman seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

3) Approval of December 5, 2022 Meeting Minutes

Dr. Morris made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of December 5, 2022. Ms. Manwaring seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

4) Finance Report

5) Budget Development

Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that the Finance Report has a budgetary proposal for \$500 per event, other than the Keene International Festival (KIF), which is self-sustaining. She continued that the HRC has a balance on hand of about \$4,000. The recommendation was that each event be given a budget of \$500. If money does not get used for the event, it gets put back in the kitty for reallocation. The remaining \$2,000 would be for use at the HRC's discretion, but it would be a full-committee vote. They had talked about asking the City for a larger annual amount of money; Mr. Bohannon is handling that for the HRC. The HRC needs to vote on the proposal to have \$500 per event. If an event needs more than \$500, the event subcommittee would need to get sponsors and/or ask the HRC to use some of what is left.

Discussion ensued. Dr. Filiault stated that he does not think they could have sponsorships, because those donations would have to go through the City Council process, which complicates it. Mr. Bohannon explained the process for how monetary donations to the HRC (or other City boards or committees) are accepted through the City Manager and the City Council. He stated that the City Council would not say "no" to accepting the donations. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that she is fine with that (accepting donations to the HRC through the City process). Others agreed.

70
71 Dr. Filiault spoke of how Keene Pride will be doing multiple Pride events in 2023 so he does not
72 see the need for the HRC to do a Pride Month event or use \$500; maybe it could be \$250 to co-
73 sponsor an event. Discussion ensued. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that for the sake of
74 equity, she would not want to reduce one event's budget. She continued that no one knows how
75 long Keene Pride will continue for. She would rather leave the \$500 for Pride Month in the
76 HRC's budget, and put it back in the kitty if not used. Mr. Kirschner agreed. He continued that
77 he thinks there is space for the HRC to do an educational event because the HRC's and Keene
78 Pride's missions are different.

79
80 Mr. Kirschner made a motion to accept the proposed budgetary numbers. Ms. Fiske seconded
81 the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

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83 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that next on the agenda is feedback on the executive summary
84 that Dr. Filiault drafted regarding the Racial Justice and Community Safety (RJCS) Report, and
85 how to move forward with it. Discussion ensued. Mr. Bohannon stated that in thinking more
86 about this, the HRC probably should not discuss it today since it was not publicly noticed on
87 today's agenda. They should distribute the draft through next month's agenda packet. He
88 continued that if anyone has comments about the document they can send those to him, and he
89 will forward them to Dr. Filiault for review. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos asked that people send
90 their comments only to Mr. Bohannon, not the whole HRC, because that would create a quorum
91 and be in violation (of RSA 91-A).

92
93 **6) Monadnock Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Coalition (MDEIB) Updates**

94
95 Councilor Workman reported that when the MDEIB last met, they reviewed the Rapid Response
96 statement. She continued that the Law Enforcement Subcommittee developed it, regarding how
97 to get out in front of events in the Monadnock region, such as the hate messages in
98 Westmoreland and church vandalism. The statement will go to the YMCA board of directors for
99 approval, and once approved, the MDEIB can move forward with it. The MDEIB is still looking
100 for an executive director, and are always looking for new members for the subcommittees as
101 well. The MDEIB now has a Facebook page. Brief discussion ensued.

102
103 **7) Acceptance of Committee Event Reports**

104
105 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that they do not have any committee event reports. She
106 continued that it would be good for the chairs of the subcommittees/working groups, including
107 herself, to get into the habit of submitting event reports – even if it is just a couple lines. They
108 also need to identify a chair for each working group, so they know who is responsible for each
109 event.

110
111 **8) Community Outreach**

112 **A) MLK Jr. Day – January 16th 10:00 AM Cheshire County Historical Society**

113 Mr. Bohannon stated that the HRC is co-sponsoring the event with the Cheshire County
114 Historical Society. He continued that it is Monday at 10:00 AM at the Historical Society.
115 Jennifer Carroll will be hosting a conversation/presentation. People can RSVP to the Facebook
116 event, which has a glitch that the City's IT Department is addressing. Discussion ensued about
117 how the event is in-person only and will not be recorded or streamed online. Chair Cunha-
118 Vasconcelos encouraged people to spread the word about the event and share the Facebook
119 event.

120

121 **B) Black History Month – movie “Till” February 16th 6:30 PM Colonial Showroom**

122

123 Mr. Bohannon stated that at a previous meeting, Dr. Morris spoke about wanting the HRC to be
124 involved with showing the movie “Till” at The Colonial or Keene Cinemas but that neither
125 theater had plans to show it. He continued that he ran into Vicky Pittman (from The Colonial) at
126 an event and shared what Dr. Morris had envisioned. After a lot of back and forth, the bottom
127 line is that “Till” will come to the Colonial Showroom, February 16 at 6:30 PM. The movie will
128 start at 7:00. Dr. Morris is working on getting a speaker related to the movie to introduce it at
129 6:30 and host a related discussion. Following the movie will be a Q&A session. There is a cost
130 to the HRC. He knows a couple people who may be interested in sponsoring the event. The
131 Colonial is working on a promotional package the HRC can do. The film itself is \$250 and the
132 fee for the space is \$1,000. Thus, the HRC owes The Colonial \$1,250. Dr. Morris replied that
133 they are going to split that, so it is \$650 for the HRC and \$650 for Keene State College. Mr.
134 Bohannon stated that tickets will be \$5 each, because if they show the movie for free, people will
135 get tickets and then not show up. Only approximately 118 people can be in the theater.

136

137 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos asked what Mr. Bohannon needs from the HRC. She asked if they
138 need to vote to commit those funds. Mr. Bohannon replied that the HRC has the money, because
139 there is no fee for the MLK Jr. event at the Historical Society, so they could use some of that
140 money for this purpose. He spoke of how this event (showing “Till”) fits well with the HRC's
141 mission and is something new for them.

142

143 Lengthy discussion ensued about the venue; the HRC's budget; the ticket price of \$5; whether to
144 charge money for the event or not; and if so, how much; and if not, how to prevent people from
145 reserving their (free) tickets and then not showing up, so the seats actually are filled; and so on
146 and so forth. Discussion ensued about how much money is owed to The Colonial, and what the
147 cost would be to the HRC if they did not charge people for tickets. Councilor Workman noted
148 that 118 tickets times \$5 equals \$590, and asked if the HRC could get a sponsor to cover the
149 \$590. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos replied that the HRC and KSC could split it. She continued
150 that there is only one more HRC meeting before the event. She asked if the HRC is willing to
151 assume that the HRC and KSC will each cover half the full cost, including half the cost of the
152 tickets. Seating will be “first come, first served.” Discussion continued, and the HRC
153 determined that their half of the cost, including tickets, would be approximately \$945.

154

155 Dr. Filiault made a motion to allot up to \$1,000 for the showing of “Till” at the Colonial
156 Showroom on February 16, 2023. Ms. Fiske seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous
157 vote.

158
159 Mr. Bohannon stated that he will reach out to some sponsors to see if they can reduce that cost.
160 Discussion ensued about the possibility of having more than one showing of “Till,” potentially at
161 another venue, via KSC. Mr. Bohannon stated that they would have to work that out with Ms.
162 Pittman. Dr. Morris replied that she will check in with her.

163
164 **C) Community Survey**

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166 Mr. Bohannon stated that at the last meeting they brought forward the opportunity for the HRC
167 to send out a ‘community pulse’ survey. He continued that this is something Lebanon, NH did.
168 After the last meeting, he had two large grants due and then got the flu, which was followed by
169 the holidays, so he did not get the HRC the information about this survey as he had planned to.
170 He can have it ready for February for everyone to review.

171
172 Ms. Manwaring left at 5:51 PM.

173
174 **9) New Business**

175 **A) 2023 Meeting Dates**

176
177 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that some of the HRC’s meeting dates for 2023 need to be
178 rescheduled due to holidays. Discussion ensued.

179
180 Dr. Filiault made a motion to cancel the July meeting. Ms. Fiske seconded the motion, which
181 passed by unanimous vote.

182
183 Dr. Filiault made a motion to move the September meeting to September 11. Mr. Kirschner
184 seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

185
186 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos asked if there were any other dates to change. Hearing none, she
187 stated that they will accept the rest of the calendar as is.

188
189 **10) Adjourn – Next Meeting Monday, February 6, 2023 at 5:00 PM**

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191 There being no further business, Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos adjourned the meeting at 5:56 PM.

192
193 Respectfully submitted by,
194 Britta Reida, Minute Taker

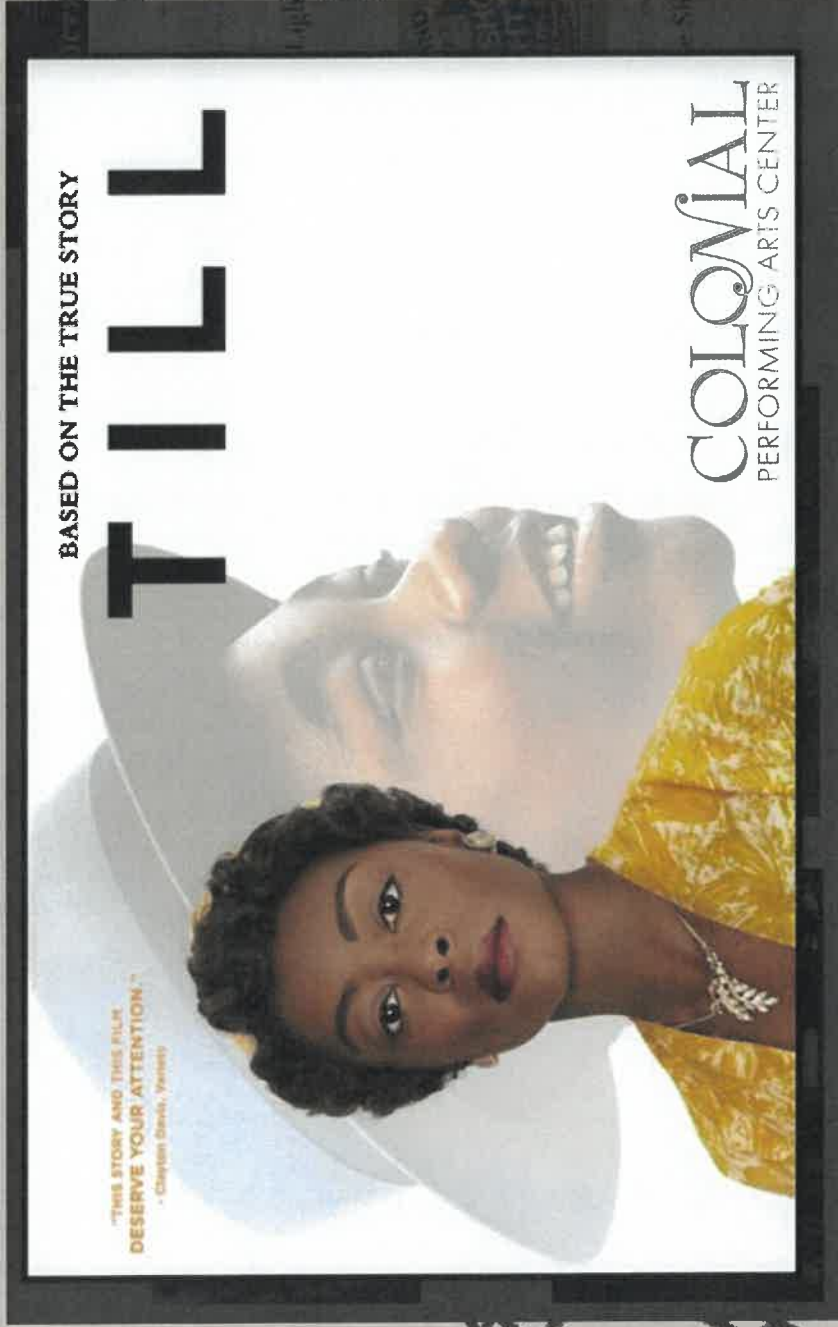
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196 Reviewed and edited by,
197 Andy Bohannon, Parks, Recreation and Facilities Director

7/1/22- 6/30/23	HRC	KIF	7/1/23- 6/30/24	HRC	KIF	7/1/24- 6/30/25	HRC	KIF
Balance 7/1/22	\$ 2,991.88	\$ 3,985.44	Balance 7/1/23	\$ 3,946.33	\$ 5,651.74	Balance 7/1/24	\$ 3,946.33	\$ 3,985.44
Income			Income			Income		
City of Keene	\$ 1,000.00		City of Keene	\$ -		City of Keene	\$ -	
Donations KIF		\$ 8,012.00	Donations KIF		\$ -	Donations KIF		\$ -
subtotal	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 8,012.00	subtotal	\$ -	\$ -	subtotal	\$ -	\$ -
Total Income	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 8,012.00	Total Income	\$ -	\$ -	Total Income	\$ -	\$ -
Expenses			Expenses			Expenses		
Martin Luther King Day	\$ 45.55		Martin Luther King Day	\$ -		Martin Luther King Day	\$ -	
Pride Month	\$ -		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	\$ -	
Total Expenses	\$ 45.55	\$ 6,345.70	Total Expenses	\$ -	\$ -	Total Expenses	\$ -	\$ -
Net 22-23	\$ 954.45	\$ 1,666.30	Net 23-24	\$ -	\$ -	Net 24-25	\$ -	\$ -
Balance on hand	\$ 3,946.33	\$ 5,651.74	Balance on hand	\$ 3,946.33	\$ 5,651.74	Balance on hand	\$ 3,946.33	\$ 3,985.44

FEBRUARY 15 & 16

THE COLONIAL THEATRE SHOWROOM

20 COMMERCIAL ST. KEENE, NH 03431



7:00PM SCREENING | FREE TO THE PUBLIC | @2022 MGM

Supported by:



Presented by:



Human Rights Committee

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 four broad domains : (1) Government leadership; (2) Public input and community education; (3) Public Safety; and (4) City and Community. 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 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 recommend 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.

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