

City of Keene
New Hampshire

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE MEETING AGENDA

Monday, September 12, 2022 at 5:00 PM
Room 22 Upstairs, Recreation Center

Members:

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

Staff:

Andy Bohannon, PRF Director

Alternates:

Ritu Budakoti
Heidi Schwieger

Agenda:

1. Welcome and Call to Order
2. Approval of July 11, 2022 Minutes
3. Finance Report
4. Monadnock Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging Coalition Updates
5. Acceptance of Committee Event Reports
6. Community Outreach
7. Racial Justice and Community Safety Report
8. New Business
9. Adjourn – Next Meeting Monday, October 3, 2022 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, July 11, 2022

5:00 PM

Rm 22, Rec Center

Members Present:

Heidi Schwieger, Alternate
Jan Manwaring
Hunter Kirschner
Sofia Cunha-Vasconcelos, Chair
Dr. Shaun Filiault
Marti Fiske
Catherine Workman, Councilor (arrived
around 5:17 PM)

Staff Present:

Andy Bohannon, Parks, Recreation & Facilities
Director

Members Not Present:

Dr. Dottie Morris
Dr. Mohammed Saleh, Vice Chair
Ritu Budakoti, Alternate
Daniel Aronson

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

11
12 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM. She stated that today Ms.
13 Schwieger is a voting member.

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

20
21 **2) Approval of Minutes**

22 **A) May 2, 2022**
23

24 Ms. Fiske made a motion to approve the HRC meeting minutes of May 2, 2022. Ms. Manwaring
25 seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.
26

27 **B) May 9, 2022**

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29 Mr. Kirschner made a motion to approve the minutes of May 9, 2022, from the special meeting
30 about the Racial Justice and Community Safety report. Ms. Fiske seconded the motion, which
31 passed by unanimous vote.

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33 **C) May 23, 2022**

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35 Ms. Fiske made a motion to approve the minutes of May 23, 2022, from the special meeting
36 about the Racial Justice and Community Safety report. Mr. Kirschner seconded the motion,
37 which passed by unanimous vote.

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39 **D) June 6, 2022**

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41 Ms. Manwaring made a motion to approve the HRC meeting minutes of June 6, 2022. Mr.
42 Kirschner seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

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44 **3) Finance Report**

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46 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that there have been changes to the finance report, since some
47 of the HRC's funds were spent on the Juneteenth event. Mr. Bohannon replied that those
48 invoices are not yet reflected in the finance report, but what has changed is the increase in
49 funding from the City of Keene. He continued that what was typically \$500 is now \$1,000 from
50 the City Council.

51
52 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that this is not on the agenda and could be addressed under New
53 Business or next time, but the HRC needs to be intentional about how they divide funds between
54 the different events. She continued that until now it has been rather haphazard, and they need a
55 system.

56
57 **4) Monadnock Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Coalition (MDEIB) Updates**

58
59 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that the HRC members who are members of the MDEIB are not
60 present tonight.

61
62 Dr. Filiault made a motion to table this item until the next meeting. Mr. Kirschner seconded the
63 motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

64
65 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that the HRC had talked about having Ms. Fiske reach out to
66 the MDEIB's Education Subcommittee. Ms. Fiske replied that she has the person's contact
67 information and will reach out soon. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos added that the HRC had also
68 encouraged Rabbi Daniel Aronson to reach out to the MDEIB as well, but he is not here tonight,
69 so they will check in with him next time.

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5) Acceptance of Committee Event Reports

Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that there are no committee event reports.

Ms. Fiske asked how the Juneteenth event went. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos replied that it was well received. She and Mr. Bohannon gave a brief update. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos continued that there was a good turnout, considering the limited marketing. The Juneteenth subcommittee had a “lessons learned” meeting after the event and discussed how to make it even more successful next year.

6) Community Outreach

Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that the HRC is indeed a “well-kept secret,” which ties into how big the HRC wants their scope to be. She continued that she would like to find a way for people to join and share their concerns with the HRC, but she is not sure how. It is good to have this minimum of a one-hour meeting each month, which the public can join and give input at, and they can talk about whether to have more or longer meetings. But how do they get the word out?

Dr. Filiault stated that it is great to get public input at the meetings, but the HRC has to be mindful of its role, which is education and programming. He continued that when listening to concerns from members of the public, the HRC has no authority and cannot act. They do not want to open the doors and give the false impression of hope that the HRC can do something. The HRC does events, which can be powerful, and education is a powerful tool. It is good to get public input, as long as the HRC is careful and clear-eyed about its limitations. Public input will make the HRC more aware of what issues they need to educate the public about, but the only action they can take is to create events and they are short-handed and have a limited budget.

Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos replied that his points are well taken. She continued that her personal preference is to make it clear to the public that the HRC’s scope is limited but they want to hear about what is happening in the community and what the concerns are. She understands the pitfalls and knows the public might misunderstand and be frustrated.

Mr. Kirschner stated that he agrees with Dr. Filiault about specificity and clarity. He spoke of how people are looking for specific ways to engage, and suggests inviting the public to volunteer to help with event coordination.

Ms. Manwaring spoke of the need to start by updating the HRC’s website, which currently is not inviting and barely has any information about the HRC’s work or the events. Mr. Bohannon replied that the City is going through a website refresh and has a new Communications Director. He will talk with Rebecca Landry. Ms. Fiske stated that they are also doing a graphics refresh, and it would be great to have photos of past events the HRC has done.

HRC Meeting Minutes
Month Date, Year

113 Ms. Fiske stated that writing a letter to the editor would be a good way to get the word out about
114 the HRC's work. She continued that they could carefully craft something that invites people to
115 attend and share their thoughts and concerns, so they can help build events or educational
116 programs that address them. They could put this message on the Facebook page, too, to reach
117 different audiences. Yes, they need to be mindful of their scope and ask the public, "Educate us
118 about the issues so we can help educate others."

119
120 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos replied that she likes the idea, and asked if Ms. Fiske would be willing
121 to draft something that the HRC could then edit together.

122

123 Councilor Workman arrived around 5:17 PM.

124

125 James Rinker of 34 Cottage St., Community Engagement Journalist from the Keene Sentinel,
126 stated that a letter to the editor can only have one or two authors. He continued that something
127 written to promote the HRC's work would be for the "community news" section, which would
128 carry the same weight. He encourages the HRC to draft something. Discussion continued.

129

130 Ms. Fiske asked when she should have the draft completed by, and when the HRC is meeting
131 again. She asked if the Pride event is happening in October. Dr. Filiault replied that he and Mr.
132 Kirschner believe that in the interest of not stepping on the toes of the Keene Pride group, and of
133 not confusing things by having multiple Pride events, it is better to let Keene Pride spread their
134 wings and do their event. Then the HRC could revisit whether to have a Pride event next year.
135 Discussion continued.

136

137 Ms. Manwaring asked if Ms. Fiske is still leading the charge for Indigenous People's Day. Ms.
138 Fiske replied yes, but she does not have much to report right now. Gail has been trying to reach
139 out to Dartmouth College and UVM to do something on the legal sovereignty of indigenous
140 peoples, and is having a hard time reaching anyone. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos asked Dr. Filiault
141 if he knows of anyone at UNH to contact. Dr. Filiault replied that he would recommend the
142 ACLU instead; indigenous sovereignty law is such a narrow area of law that it is hard to find
143 experts. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that if Ms. Fiske needs an extra set of hands for
144 anything related to the Indigenous People's Day event, she would be happy to help. Ms. Fiske
145 replied that they have enough people helping, but the topic was something they thought was
146 important, because there is unfortunately a lot of animosity around the whole idea of sovereignty.
147 It seemed like an important educational point. Discussion continued.

148

149 Ms. Fiske stated that she can try to complete a draft (of the community outreach piece) by the
150 end of the month, but she will not be here for the August HRC meeting. She could send it to
151 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos agreed. She stated that as she has shared
152 in the past, she is interested in expanding the scope beyond issues of race, religion, and so on and
153 so forth, and a good, organic way of doing that is for people in the community to share their
154 concerns with the HRC. That is better than the HRC trying to invent new directions to go in.

155

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

157
158 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that Ms. Fiske had suggested everyone read the previous
159 meeting minutes, and she herself has not had a chance to review the last two sets. Dr. Filiault
160 stated that he has a suggestion – they could create an Executive Summary, and move it on to
161 Mayor Hansel, who can choose what to do with it. For example, he could submit the material to
162 department heads or whatever committee he wants. The HRC does not have any authority to do
163 anything with what they have created, so creating a one- or two-page Executive Summary is
164 probably the best they can do. He continued that he has probably just volunteered himself to
165 write it.

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167 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos replied that it sounds like a good, straight-forward path. Others
168 agreed.

169
170 Mr. Kirschner made a motion for the HRC to direct Dr. Filiault to draft a one- or two-page
171 Executive Summary of the HRC’s recommendations regarding the Racial Justice and
172 Community Safety Report. Ms. Manwaring seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous
173 vote.

174
175 Discussion ensued about when Dr. Filiault should complete the draft by, and the HRC’s meeting
176 schedule. They chose October 3, 2022. Noting that the first Monday in September is a holiday,
177 Mr. Bohannon asked when the HRC wants to meet next. They agreed on Monday, September
178 12.

179
180 8) **New Business**

181
182 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that a reasonable and intelligent request was made for the HRC
183 meetings to be run a little differently – going forward, anyone who wants to speak is asked to
184 raise their hand and wait for the Chair to recognize them. She continued that this makes the
185 meetings more organized and gives everyone the chance to speak.

186
187 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that she also wants to discuss the budget. She continued that
188 until now, the process has been that if there is money in the budget and an event is coming up,
189 money gets spent on that event. They have been lucky to usually have the money, due to people
190 generously giving their time without pay, but there are costs, and every event has a right to basic
191 infrastructure. She suggests that at the beginning of the fiscal year (July 1), the HRC divides the
192 money in the bank by the number of events. That gives each event a starting budget, and if an
193 event needs funds beyond that, they would have to do fundraising. She asked if that sounds fair.

194
195 Dr. Filiault suggested a subcommittee look at the budget and what has previously been spent on
196 events, to create a line item budget for each event, looking at previous years’ allocations. Mr.
197 Bohannon replied that the spreadsheet already does that, looking at a three-year window at a
198 time. He continued that he can print it off for the HRC going back to 2010, if they want him to.

HRC Meeting Minutes
Month Date, Year

199 In the past, the HRC has always received \$500 from the City, and this time they asked for an
200 additional \$500. He goes back to the conversation at last month's meeting – there is an
201 opportunity, if this is something they are going to dive into; it is not all that much to ask for
202 double for the next cycle. To make the request to the City Council they need to be clear about
203 what they are doing. He can follow up with that; they have a few months to figure it out.
204

205 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that it sounds like the first action is to examine what has been
206 spent historically on each event. Dr. Filiault replied yes, and to predict what events they have
207 coming forward. He continued that for example, if they are doing a Pride event in 2023, and/or
208 Holi Fest, they should put together a prospective budget for those. It sounds like they are
209 planning new events for next year. They also have had two years of Juneteenth events, so they
210 can start to get an idea for that. It would be nice to pay the event speakers. If they are going to
211 ask the City Council for an increased amount, they will at least have a reasonable proposal to say
212 why they need it. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos agreed. She continued that she knows everyone is a
213 volunteer with limited time, but in any event, they should have a proposal for what the event's
214 content will be and what its budget will be. That should be standard with every event. They can
215 create a template to make it as easy as possible, but they definitely need to be more rigorous
216 about this, going forward.
217

218 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos asked if anyone else had new business.
219

220 Mr. Rinker spoke about thinking about different ways to communicate with younger audiences.
221 He continued that he is a 20-something person who works at a newspaper and within social
222 media, he is unaware of a City of Keene social media presence and how the HRC could utilize
223 that to their advantage, and have younger voices involved with the educational programming.
224 He encourages partnering with a vast variety of people. They have his contact information and
225 he is happy to help, especially with connecting with people in the community who are
226 traditionally underserved and underrepresented in media.
227

228 **9) Adjournment – Next Meeting Monday, August 1, 2022**
229

230 Ms. Fiske made a motion to cancel the August 1, 2022 meeting of the HRC and to move the
231 September meeting to September 12, 2022. Ms. Manwaring seconded the motion, which passed
232 by unanimous vote.
233

234 There being no further business, Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos adjourned the meeting at 5:40 PM.
235

236 Respectfully submitted by,
237 Britta Reida, Minute Taker
238

239 Reviewed and edited by,
240 Andy Bohannon, Parks, Recreation and Facilities Director

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	\$ 4,574.00	\$ -	Balance 7/1/20	\$ 4,096.73	\$ 3,411.00	Balance 7/1/21	\$ 3,391.88	\$ 2,541.89
Income	This was entered at 4574.70		Income			Income		
City of Keene	\$ 500.00		City of Keene	\$ 500.00		City of Keene	\$ 1,000.00	
Donations KIF		\$ 6,847.83	Donations KIF		\$ -	DONATIONS KIF		\$ 5,000.00
subtotal	\$ 500.00	\$ 6,847.83	subtotal	\$ 500.00	\$ -	subtotal	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 5,000.00
Total Income	\$ 500.00	\$ 6,847.83	Total Income	\$ 500.00	\$ -	Total Income	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 5,000.00
Expenses			Expenses			Expenses		
International Festival		\$ 3,436.83	International Festival		\$ 869.11	International Festival		\$ 5,500.57
			Pride Flags - 15	\$ 104.85		Pride Month	\$ -	
			Juneteenth Presenters \$200	\$ 800.00		Juneteenth	\$ -	
			Steve Schuch					
			Hadi Lanceric					
			Jonah Wheeler					
			Jalissa Rodriguez					
			Amina Jordan-Mendez	\$ 300.00				
Martin Luther King Day			Martin Luther King Day	\$ -		Martin Luther King Day	\$ -	
Peter Blood	\$ 500.00		Dr. Jim Waller					
KSC Dining	\$ 477.27							
Total Expenses	\$ 977.27	\$ 3,436.83	Total Expenses	\$ 1,204.85	\$ 869.11	Total Expenses	\$ -	\$ 5,500.57
Net 19-20	\$ (477.27)	\$ 3,411.00	Net 20-21	\$ (704.85)	\$ (869.11)	Net 21-22	\$ 1,000.00	\$ (500.57)
Balance on hand	\$ 4,096.73	\$ 3,411.00	Balance on hand	\$ 3,391.88	\$ 2,541.89	Balance on hand	\$ 4,391.88	\$ 2,041.32

