

City of Keene
New Hampshire

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE MEETING AGENDA

Monday, September 13, 2021 at 5:00 PM
Vincent-Miller Room, Library

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 June 7, 2021 Minutes
3. Finance Report
4. Racial Justice and Community Safety Committee Report
5. Event Recaps
 - a. Pride Month
 - b. Juneteenth
 - c. International Festival
6. New, Other Business
7. Adjourn – Next Meeting Monday, October 4, 2021 at 5:00 PM

More Time: Keene State College Outreach

1 City of Keene
2 New Hampshire

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5 HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE
6 MEETING MINUTES
7

Monday, June 7, 2021

5:00 PM

Remote Meeting via Zoom

Members Present:

William Hay, Chair
Councilor Jan Manwaring
Dr. Dottie Morris
Dr. Mohammed Saleh
Sofia Cunha-Vasconcelos
Dr. Shaun Filiault
Marti Fiske, Ex-Officio
Ritu Budakoti, Alternate

Staff Present:

Andy Bohannon, PRF Director

Members Not Present:

Nancy Salwen

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10 **1) Welcome and Call to Order**
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12 Chair Hay read a prepared statement explaining how the Emergency Order #12, pursuant to
13 Executive Order #2020-04 issued by the Governor of New Hampshire, waives certain provisions
14 of RSA 91-A (which regulates the operation of public body meetings) during the declared
15 COVID-19 State of Emergency. He called the meeting to order at 5:04 PM. Roll call was
16 conducted.
17

18 **2) Approval of May 3, 2021 Meeting minutes**
19

20 Dr. Morris made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of May 3, 2021. Councilor
21 Manwaring seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.
22

23 **3) Finance Report**
24

25 Mr. Bohannon stated that he updated the Finance Report to reflect the most current budget. They
26 ordered Pride flags for \$104.85. Chair Hay asked if anyone had questions. Hearing none, he
27 stated that this is accepted as informational.
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29 **4) Pride Month**

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Dr. Filiault stated that the Pride subcommittee put out the letter to downtown businesses, explaining Pride month and the flags they are going to provide for downtown businesses. He continued that he has had some responses, and currently there are eight flags requested. That is less than the 50 they ordered but it is a good selection of businesses downtown. The plan is to deliver them at the end of this week.

Dr. Filiault continued that he is not sure where they are at with the movie. He has not received a response to his email to the Monadnock International Film Festival (MONIFF) about that. Mr. Bohannon stated that he has been working with MONIFF on other movies, but has not seen anything about the Pride movie. They can follow up with her and see what the status is.

Dr. Filiault continued that the Pride subcommittee was thinking about having a Library display of some LGBTQ-themed books. He asked Ms. Fiske if that can be done. Ms. Fiske replied yes, it has been up already for more than a week and the Library has a large selection ready to go onto the shelves as items are checked out. Dr. Filiault replied that is great.

Dr. Filiault continued that the last thing is to put some language before the Mayor and the City Council for a proclamation, which they have usually done in June. People have contacted him to say they hope they can do more, or they would like to try and plan something on their own. He thinks there is a real desire for Pride month events and particularly for them to expand what they are doing next year, which is good to hear. Planning this during COVID-19 meant they were not sure what they would be able to do.

Mr. Bohannon stated that the last communication from MONIFF seems to be May 21, asking if the HRC had any speakers to go with the film. He continued that he will forward that to Dr. Filiault. Dr. Filiault replied that unfortunately, he has been unable to get speakers, because apparently speaking engagements for Pride month fill up a year in advance, for expert speakers, and also because people have Zoom fatigue and no longer want to participate in a Zoom forum, or do not want to participate live, which is a catch-22. Thus, he will be speaking based on his PhD in the field of LGBTQ health. He will still keep looking for a speaker from a local group.

Dr. Morris asked if Dr. Filiault would like Hunter Kirschner's contact information to see if he is willing to help. Dr. Filiault replied yes.

Chair Hay asked what Dr. Filiault meant last month when he said they were really down to one film. Dr. Filiault replied that it just came out that way based on the rights to films. Netflix acquired the rights to one of the films they had been considering. The film they narrowed it down to is Cured.

72 **5) Juneteenth**

73 Councilor Manwaring stated that the Juneteenth subcommittee has been meeting. Mr. Bohannon
74 showed the flyer and clarified that it is a previous version; the committee has since updated it.
75 Councilor Manwaring stated that the Juneteenth event will be 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM [on June
76 19]. They hoped for 3:00 PM, but that did not work out. The program is such that they will
77 begin with singing This Little Light of Mine, followed by Steve Cook (America the Dream), and
78 then the Mayor will do his proclamation. Pierre Morton will then read the General Order
79 (emanicipation of slaves) and do some poetry, and he has some folks with him who will speak
80 also. Next is Julissa, who will be drumming, and then Edwin Owusu, motivational speaker and
81 rapper. This is at Railroad Square and people should bring their own chairs. The new flyers will
82 be out soon.

83
84 Councilor Manwaring continued that the subcommittee is also working with restaurants. They
85 provided a list of foods that would be typical of Juneteenth, and asked if they would offer
86 something from the list that would appeal. Ms. Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that as of last week,
87 they had four or five restaurants, and are waiting to hear from a couple more.

88
89 Ms. Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that regarding the budget, they have not had to pay for as much as
90 they had expected to. She continued that they have also had a lot of turnover in the program.
91 She put together a budget based on giving each person who plans to speak or present a \$200
92 honorarium and they are still only at \$1,800. The budget maximum was \$2,000. She does not
93 think they will necessarily be offering everyone \$200; there are people who are volunteering. It
94 is not clear how it will all go, but worst-case scenario, they are still under budget.

95
96 Ms. Cunha-Vasconcelos continued that there is an open question about the sound system. Steve
97 Cook will not only be a presenter but has joined the planning committee, and he brought to their
98 attention that the City's sound system is not enough for the music they are trying to present. He
99 may have a sound system he is willing to provide but it is an outdoor event and there are more
100 risks around that and the long extension cords could be problematic. Those details need to be
101 worked out and she does not know if they will need to spend some money on the sound system.
102 That is the only variable that is still hanging out.

103
104 Councilor Manwaring added that Yves Gakunde is the emcee for the event.

105
106 Mr. Bohannon stated that when he spoke with Mr. Cooke, he said he would be bringing the
107 sound system and was fine with setup and the logistics. Power-wise he would be in one general
108 location. They will talk more at tonight's subcommittee meeting about setup and what that will
109 look like. It is a small but important logistic.

110
111 Councilor Manwaring stated that the subcommittee has a question for the HRC. June 19 is the
112 Keene High School graduation, all day. Mr. Bohannon replied that the evening of June 18 is
113 graduation and if it rains, it goes into June 19. Regardless of whether graduation goes into June
114 19, Project Graduation and the prom occur, which will not really affect the Juneteenth event for

115 anyone except him, since he has a child walking this year. He has two people who will be
116 helping with the Juneteenth event, so they will be in good hands that day. Councilor Manwaring
117 replied that it would still be nice to have someone who could help get people seated, greet
118 people, and so on and so forth. She and a friend are designing/making nametags for volunteers.
119 She asked for HRC members to let the subcommittee know if they are available to help at the
120 event, either the whole thing or just part of it. They can email her or Ms. Cunha-Vasconcelos.
121

122 **6) Racial Justice and Community Safety Report**

123 **a) Speaker – Mr. Bryan Stevenson**

124

125 Mr. Bohannon noted that due to a typo, Bryan Stevenson’s name is spelled incorrectly on the
126 agenda. He continued that Dr. Morris was a Co-Chair for the Ad Hoc Racial Justice and
127 Community Safety Committee (RJCS Committee), which met for almost a full year. At the
128 same time, Sandra MacDonald has come forward and wants to bring [Mr. Stevenson to Keene
129 as] a collaborative effort. There are two pieces of this conversation. One, the HRC needs to dive
130 into the RJCS Report and identify which items the HRC can latch onto, be aware of, advocate
131 for, and so on and so forth. The RJCS Committee did an amazing job. He hopes the HRC
132 members have read the report so they can move forward. He continued that Ms. MacDonald can
133 talk about her initiative and thought process, if Chair Hay wants to have her speak.
134

135

135 Chair Hay stated that the RJCS Report is comprehensive and amazing and represents so much
136 work and assiduous attention. He welcomed Ms. MacDonald and asked her to speak.
137

138

138 Ms. MacDonald thanked the committee for all of the work that they do. She stated that she
139 appreciates the work of the RJCS Committee as well, which resulted in many things to think
140 about, one of which was her idea to invite Bryan Stevenson to the area for a speaking
141 engagement. He is a noted civil rights attorney and the founder of the Equal Justice Initiative
142 and the Legacy Museum. The Equal Justice Initiative is an organization that involves itself in
143 trying to overturn cases where people have been wrongly adjudicated as guilty. The Legacy
144 Museum is dedicated to the history of lynchings in the country. Mr. Steven has also written
145 books, such as Just Mercy, which left quite an impression on her. He is very involved in issues
146 of social justice and restorative justice. He would be a great speaker to invite to the area.
147

148

148 Ms. MacDonald continued that she would like to involve the HRC in that effort. Having the
149 HRC’s input and expertise would be critical. To date, others on board with this effort are
150 Franklin Pierce University, Pierre Morton, and John Greabe, Director of the Warren B. Rudman
151 Center for Justice at the University of New Hampshire (UNH). Mr. Greabe’s wife, Martha
152 Madsen, is the Director of the NH Institute for Civics Education, and she is on board, too,
153 because one of the components they are hoping to see by inviting Mr. Stevenson is to get
154 information/literature to the college, high school, middle school, and elementary students. That
155 aspect of it is very important to her, personally. The overall focus of this project is to have a
156 conversation around social justice and restorative justice, and the division in the country that has
157 deepened over time. That overall theme is large. They want to have that go along the lines of

HRC Meeting Minutes

158 having this conversation, bringing the surrounding Monadnock area into the conversation, which
159 would align with what the RJCS Committee had been doing and align with what the HRC is
160 tasked to do. She would like feedback about how the HRC members feel about it, and whether
161 they are willing to be involved. There will be a Zoom meeting at 1:30 PM on June 11. The next
162 step is to form a planning committee, and they would like some or all HRC members involved in
163 that. She is not well versed in this type of thing. This was just an idea she had and she wants to
164 see it come to fruition but definitely needs help. The June 11 Zoom will include Mr. Stevenson's
165 representative who handles his speaking engagement requests and she can answer people's
166 questions.

167
168 Ms. MacDonald continued that she also wants to involve Keene State College (KSC) and had
169 reached out to Tom White and Peter McBride when he was still the head of the Cohen Center.
170 Mr. White was very enthusiastic but she understands that Mr. McBride has resigned and there is
171 a new Interim Director. She has not spoken with Mr. White in a while. They would love to have
172 KSC on board. They want this to be as inclusive as possible. Dr. Morris replied that she can
173 definitely count KSC in. She continued that this goes hand-in-hand with the conversation she
174 was just having with the person who has taken over for Mr. McBride in the interim position. She
175 asked Ms. MacDonald to send her (Dr. Morris) the Zoom link, which she will pass along to the
176 Cohen Center staff.

177
178 Ms. MacDonald asked for further feedback from the HRC. She continued that the event is in the
179 very preliminary stages, and again, she hopes they can engage the schools in the area with this
180 speaking engagement. There was some talk about maybe even having a field trip down to the
181 Legacy Museum at some point. It would be great for education and a great way to open up the
182 conversation. She is open to suggestions.

183
184 Dr. Morris stated that several of her family members went to the museum and said it was
185 amazing. She continued that they were comparing it to the African American Museum in
186 Washington, DC, and said both museums were great but the Legacy Museum in particular was
187 remarkable. She likes the idea of a potential field trip there. She is planning to go this summer.

188
189 Ms. MacDonald stated that probably many local high school and middle school students are not
190 familiar with the topics Mr. Stevenson speaks about, and our collective history. She thinks that a
191 lot of history has been pushed under the rug. We cannot move forward and solve issues without
192 knowing what the issues are and being able to speak about them and learn about them. This
193 could be a way to get that conversation rolling.

194
195 Chair Hay stated that as he was reading the RJCS Report, one thing that kept coming up for him
196 was that it is like preaching to the choir, in the sense that people who have some notion of history
197 are the least of need of the information/education. He continued that a good example is the Tulsa
198 Massacre – it is a good thing the centennial of that came up so more people learned about it. He
199 is pretty woke, but he did not know about it until about 14 months ago. He does not know any
200 white person who knew about it before he did. What are schools teaching? Some of what he

201 learned in school in PA was completely wrong. One of the jobs of education is to say, “No, that
202 is just not true” and prove it, and reeducate in a gentle way so people stop operating on bad
203 information.

204

205 Ms. MacDonald replied that she had the same conversation with Martha Madsen, and they, too,
206 talked about not wanting to preach to the choir. They want to move the education and the
207 conversation out. They want to reach the people who have opposing views and ideals. That may
208 entail some backbreaking work, she knows. She really meant it when she said she wants to make
209 this inclusive, and figuring out how to do that is difficult. People sometimes are not willing to
210 engage the other side. However, it is hard to move forward without that. Keene and the
211 surrounding area is a great area to have this sort of thing go on in, and she sees this as on-going
212 work, not a one-time event.

213

214 Dr. Saleh stated that he would like to participate in the Zoom meeting on Friday. He continued
215 that he agrees with Chair Hay’s comments. He did not know about Tulsa, either, and did some
216 research. He is from an immigrant background. His research showed that in general, people are
217 ignorant about it. People sometimes dismiss it as “identity politics” and they should be ashamed
218 to say such things, because if anything, we are still not doing enough. He wanted to emphasize
219 that.

220

221 Chair Hay stated that he wants to join Friday, too. Mr. Bohannon stated that it is great that a few
222 HRC members are interested in joining the Zoom on Friday. This is something that certainly the
223 HRC is interested in. He does not think they can provide all of the heavy lift but it will take a lot
224 of people at the table. He suggests they give themselves some realistic timelines to work with,
225 because of course, there is going to be a cost to bring Mr. Stevenson here and they need to figure
226 out how to achieve that and start with that right up front. Those will be the two key pieces. He
227 personally is excited to see where this goes. He can put this on next month’s agenda if Chair
228 Hay wants him to. Chair Hay agreed.

229

230 Ms. MacDonald stated that that the items Mr. Bohannon mentioned are at the top of the list. She
231 continued that they are looking a little ways down the line at this. Next year seems to be most
232 likely, given the planning that needs to go into this as well as considering Mr. Stevenson’s
233 schedule, which she briefly looked at on the Equal Justice Institute’s website. He is very busy.
234 She will email the Zoom link to Mr. Bohannon to distribute to whoever is interested.

235

236 **7) New, Other Business**

237

238 Chair Hay stated that he was unable to attend the previous two meetings, and feels in the dark on
239 many things, since HRC members are not allowed to talk with each other individually about
240 what is going on. He continued that until the meeting minutes come out a few days before the
241 next meeting, he does not have any idea what is going on. He asked if there is a way to stay
242 informed without violating City procedures. Councilor Manwaring replied that they are allowed
243 to talk with each other individually; they just cannot talk in a group outside of meetings. Dr.

HRC Meeting Minutes

244 Morris replied that she thought they just were not allowed to create a quorum. Mr. Bohannon
245 replied that is correct. Councilor Manwaring replied that one-on-one conversations are fine.

246

247 Dr. Morris left at 5:55 PM.

248

249 Chair Hay asked if the Keene International Festival (KIF) is happening next month. Mr.
250 Bohannon replied that they meet tomorrow and they are ready to roll for September. He
251 continued that excitement is starting to build, especially after how successful the food festival
252 was downtown this past weekend. Ms. Budakoti and the crew really shine and have a lot of
253 things lined up. Ms. Budakoti stated that it will be September 18, if they want to put that on the
254 calendar.

255

256 **8) Adjourn – Next Meeting is Monday, July 5, 2021 at 5:00 PM**

257

258 Mr. Bohannon stated that July 5 is actually a City holiday. He continued that in previous years,
259 the committee has taken the summer months off, but they do not necessarily have to. They have
260 a lot on their plate, especially regarding trying to tackle issues from the RJCS Report. They
261 could reschedule the July meeting if they want. He will not be available for the August meeting.

262

263 Discussion ensued about the July meeting. The group decided on Monday, July 19, in person at
264 the Vincent Miller meeting room at the Library.

265

266 Dr. Saleh asked if it is possible to maintain a remote option, to make it more likely that they will
267 have a quorum, in case someone is out of town but could attend remotely. Ms. Fiske replied that
268 that would require equipment that the Library is currently not able to provide. She continued
269 that to have a good quality hybrid meeting system, they would need a remote camera and a good,
270 strong microphone to pick up everyone's voices. Her experience with trying to run it off of just
271 a laptop or conference telephone is that people on the opposite ends of tables will not be able to
272 hear what is being said by the person on the computer, and vice versa. It has been working for
273 the City Council because they have invested a lot of money into equipment, like individual
274 microphones for every person.

275

276 Councilor Manwaring stated that the City Council is looking at the question that Dr. Saleh has
277 raised. She continued that they are not sure where it will go; they are still exploring it. Mr.
278 Bohannon stated that the Recreation Center may be a "Zoom room site," so they would be able
279 to facilitate those types of meetings. He continued that for the time being, they will plan on
280 being in the Vincent Miller Room at the Library on July 19, but if technology provides, it may
281 get moved to the Recreation Center if they need to have a hybrid meeting. He fully agrees with
282 Dr. Saleh that this should be the way they go forward, so if someone is not able to be physically
283 present but they can attend remotely, there is no reason why technology cannot make that
284 possible. Councilor Manwaring stated that maybe they could think of doing a hybrid meeting at
285 the Recreation Center. Ms. Fiske replied that the Library is looking into grant funding, but it
286 would not be available until the winter.

HRC Meeting Minutes

287

288 Dr. Filiault asked if public meeting laws allow for hybrid meetings and for someone to be remote
289 while everyone else is [in person]. Mr. Bohannon replied that they are exploring that right now.

290 He continued that the City Attorney weighed in on that a little bit this afternoon, related to the
291 Zoning Board of Adjustment. They will get some clarification on that front. There are some
292 definite requirements and they will make sure not to break any State or local laws.

293

294 Ms. Fiske stated that her understanding is that as long as the quorum of the board is in person,
295 they could have the smaller amount of people attending remotely. She continued that they will
296 have to state why they are remote and where they are, and as long as the quorum accepts those
297 reasons, they can participate. There is still legislation in the legislature that has not gone through
298 yet, based off previous laws.

299

300 There being no further business, Chair Hay reiterated that the next meeting is Monday, July 19,
301 in the Miller Vincent Room at the Library and adjourned the meeting at 6:05 PM.

302

303 Respectfully submitted by,
304 Britta Reida, Minute Taker

305

306 Reviewed and edited by,
307 Andy Bohannon, PRF 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	\$ 2,034.00	Balance 7/1/21	\$ 3,691.88	\$ 2,861.89
	This was entered at 4574.70							
Income			Income			Income		
KIF - C&S		\$ 2,000.00						
KIF - Gallup	\$ -	\$ 2,500.00	City of Keene	\$ 500.00		City of Keene	\$ 500.00	
KIF - SBW	\$ -	\$ 1,000.00		\$ -			\$ -	
KIF- Alexander		\$ 500.00						
KIF - CC Literacy		\$ 247.83	KIF - Alexander		\$ 1,000.00	KIF		
KIF - Fenton		\$ 100.00						
City of Keene	\$ 500.00							
subtotal	\$ 500.00	\$ 6,347.83	subtotal	\$ 500.00	\$ 1,000.00	subtotal	\$ 500.00	\$ -
Total Income	\$ 500.00	\$ 6,347.83	Total Income	\$ 500.00	\$ 1,000.00	Total Income	\$ 500.00	\$ -
Expenses			Expenses			Expenses		
International Festival	\$ -	\$ 2,265.34	International Festival	\$ -	\$ 172.11		\$ -	
KIF - PD Detail		\$ 671.49						
			Pride Flags - 15	\$ 104.85				
KIF - Tents Deposit		\$ 697.00						
Kif - Elegant Settings		\$ 680.00						
			Juneteenth Presenters \$200	\$ 800.00				
			Steve Schuch					
			Hadi Lanceric					
Peter Blood	\$ 500.00		Jonah Wheeler					
KSC Dining	\$ 477.27		Nicole Young					
						KIF Expenses		\$ 764.15
Total Expenses	\$ 977.27	\$ 4,313.83	Total Expenses	\$ 904.85	\$ 172.11	Total Expenses	\$ -	\$ 764.15
Net 19-20	\$ (477.27)	\$ 2,034.00	Net 20-21	\$ (404.85)	\$ 827.89	Net 21-22	\$ 500.00	\$ (764.15)
Balance on hand	\$ 4,096.73	\$ 2,034.00	Balance on hand	\$ 3,691.88	\$ 2,861.89	Balance on hand	\$ 4,191.88	\$ 2,097.74