

2024-2025 Human Rights Committee Highlights

1. Opening Statement & Structure

- Every meeting opens with the HRC's equity and inclusion statement.
- Alternates fill in when regular members are absent to ensure quorum.

2. Finance Updates

- HRC has a standing budget of \$2,000 annually, with some event-specific fundraising (e.g., Juneteenth, Pride).
- YMCA acted as fiscal agent for Juneteenth.
- Expenses and donations for events like Pride, Indigenous Peoples' Day, and MLK Day are periodically reviewed.

3. Racial Justice and Community Safety (RJCS) Report

- A major focus. The City's internal DEI Committee, chaired by Alyssa Bender-Jesse, is tasked with acting on HRC recommendations.
- Progress includes:
 - Implementation of a bias-reducing hiring platform.
 - Paid internships becoming the norm.
 - City Library praised for DEI-focused collections.
 - Ongoing work on equitable outreach, DEI evaluation in contractors, and internal employee climate surveys.
- Debate over whether to ask all city bodies to start meetings with an inclusion statement (Recommendation 1.A.)—ultimately not pursued due to legal and political constraints.

4. Monadnock DEI & Belonging Coalition (MDEIB)

- Continual turnover and redefinition of goals.
- Organized community conversations on bullying, inclusion, and future planning.
- Discussions of a potential interim executive director and need for regional engagement.
 - Hired a part-time Executive Director

5. Community Events & Subcommittees

- **MLK Day:** Well-attended event with student participation and an interfaith panel. Plans to start organizing earlier for future years.
- **Black History Month:** No event in 2025 due to time constraints, with possible future collaboration with local institutions.
- **Juneteenth:** YMCA is the fiscal agent. HRC continues supporting it.
- **Pride Month:** Art crawl event planned; donations and support from various organizations. Meeting set up to review event and how to improve.
- **Keene International Festival:** Ongoing support. Event is planned for September 27th, 2025.

- **Indigenous Peoples' Day:** Planning includes an academic lecture by Dr. Meghan Howey; emphasis on including voices from federally recognized tribes amid ongoing controversy over tribal recognition. Event is planned for Oct. 18th, 2025.
6. **New Business**
- **Welcoming Declaration:** City Councilor Phil Jones presented an updated “Welcoming City” statement to be adopted before Pride Month.
 - Ongoing debate about how to best communicate DEI progress to the public (e.g., more than just posting minutes online).