



## **HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE MEETING AGENDA**

Monday, November 2<sup>nd</sup>, at 5:00 PM  
Room 22 Upstairs, Recreation Center

### **Members:**

Ritu Budakoti  
Rabbi Daniel Aronson  
Debra Bowie, Vice Chair  
Councilor Bettina Chadbourne  
Julie Odato  
Marti Fiske  
Gina Burke  
David Morrill  
Gregg Kleiner, Chair

### **Staff:**

Alyssa Bender-Jesse, Youth Services Manager

### **Alternates:**

Dr. Mohammad Saleh  
Sofia Cunha-Vasconcelos  
Jennifer Porschitz  
Thomas White

### **Agenda:**

1. Welcome and Call to Order
2. Approval of October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2026 Minutes
3. Finance Report
4. Monadnock Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Coalition Updates
5. Acceptance of Committee Event Reports
  - a. Martin Luther King Jr. Day
  - b. Black History Month
  - c. Juneteenth
  - d. Pride Event
  - e. Keene International Festival
  - f. Native American Heritage
6. New Business
7. Adjourn – Next Meeting December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2026 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.”*

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

**HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE**  
**MEETING MINUTES**

**Monday, October 5, 2026**

**5:00 PM**

**Room 22,  
Recreation Center**

**Members Present:**

Gregory Kleiner, Chair  
Debra Bowie, Vice Chair  
Marti Fiske  
Gina Burke  
David Morill  
Jennifer Porschitz, Alternate  
Dr. Mohammad Saleh, Alternate (remote)  
Sofia Cunha-Vasconcelos, Alternate  
Julie Odat (5:04 PM)

**Staff Present:**

Alyssa Bender-Jesse, Youth Services Manager /  
JCC Coordinator

**Members Not Present:**

Ritu Budakoti  
Rabbi Daniel Aronson  
Councilor Bettina Chadbourne  
Thomas M. White, Alternate

**1. Welcome and Call to Order**

Chair Kleiner called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM. He read the HRC's statement: "*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.*"

Participating remotely, Dr. Saleh stated that he was at home due to illness, and no one was in the room with him.

**2. Approval of September 14, 2026 Minutes**

Mr. Morrill noted corrections to the September 14, 2026 minutes:

Line 56 - "...to help loosen the artwork from the Art Crawl..." should be "...to relocate some of the artwork to a new location."

**5. Acceptance of Committee Event Reports**

Ms. Bender-Jesse stated that the agenda packet has reports from the working groups. HRC members have an extra sheet about Keene International Festival (KIF), because she received it after the agenda packets were already printed and stapled.

In response to a question, Ms. Bender-Jesse clarified that the goal is for the chair of each working group to submit a written report ahead of the HRC meeting, even if they plan to be present at the meeting. She recommends the meetings include working group chairs giving a one-sentence blurb to summarize their report, if HRC discussion about it is not needed. The intention was that if a working group needed to give a lengthy report, it would be more efficient to have that in writing in the agenda packet and just give brief highlights at the meeting.

**a. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day**

Ms. Burke stated that she reached out to the Community Kitchen about hosting the breakfast and has not heard back yet. She assumes it will be fine. She reached out to Rabbi Aronson to compare notes and ask him to brief her on what he has done for this event in the past, and how. The working group meets in a week or two.

**b. Black History Month**

Ms. Porschitz stated that she and Ms. Burke connected and reached out to groups to potentially partner with, such as Keene State College (KSC), Dr. Dottie Morris, the Keene School District (KSD), and the Historical Society of Cheshire County (HSCC). She continued that some people in the KSD have concerns about funding DEI-related projects not already in the curriculum. She will continue reaching out to other teachers. The idea she and Ms. Burke had was to gather student art, in December and January, around Black History month and diversity, to then display in a public space.

Ms. Burke stated that Dr. Morris told them about the great choir at the school she is now working at. Dr. Morris thought maybe the choir could perform at the HRC's event, so they are talking about that. She has been talking with Jenna Carroll of the HSCC, which has the BIPOC Monadnock Initiative. She and Ms. Porschitz were thinking of having a series of different things for Black History Month. Maybe they could involve students in a different way, if not through the schools.

Ms. Fiske stated that they could consider connecting with students through youth programs at the YMCA or the Rec Center. Discussion ensued about student involvement and other possible connections, such as alternative schools, and possibly having an event on a day other than the actual holiday, since many schools and City buildings are closed that day.

Ms. Odato stated that as a public school employee, she personally does not shy away from DEI topics, but the state of New Hampshire's anti-DEI legislation means teachers could be held accountable for introducing "inappropriate" themes. That could be a problem for some people. If

Porschitz could potentially become a full member instead of an alternate. Thomas White has told her he will be resigning from the HRC due to personal reasons. If HRC members have names of people who might want to join, they can let her know. They might know someone with an interest in a specific HRC event, which the person could eventually chair, keeping in mind that no one works in isolation. The HRC works together and has many conversations about all the events.

Ms. Odató asked, regarding finding replacements for Rabbi Aronson and Ms. Budakoti, if they were HRC members as interested individuals, or as representatives of specific groups. For example, Ms. Fiske is a Library representative and will be replaced by another Library representative. Ms. Bender-Jesse replied that she is not sure, but she will find out.

Mr. Morrill stated that at Keene Pride, someone came up to the HRC's table and asked him about the different groups the HRC has. She asked him what there is for people with disabilities. That is something the HRC does not have a working group for. Vice Chair Bowie replied that is something for the HRC to consider.

**7. Adjourn – Next Meeting November 2, 2026 at 5:00 PM**

Ms. Bender-Jesse stated that she will be traveling on November 2, 2026. She is working on finding another staff member to cover the meeting for her, since having a staff liaison is a meeting requirement. She will let the group know.

There being no further business, Chair Kleiner adjourned the meeting at 5:31 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Britta Reida, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by,  
Alyssa Bender-Jesse, Youth Services Manager

## FY 27 Human Rights Committee Budget

### Revenue

| Item                    | Budget       |
|-------------------------|--------------|
| City of Keene           | \$ 5,000.00  |
| Donations               |              |
| HRC                     |              |
| KIF                     | \$ 6,000.00  |
| Fundraising             |              |
| Pride                   | \$ 32.10     |
| Rollover Balance 7/1/26 |              |
| HRC                     | \$ 2,969.01  |
| KIF                     | \$ 2,980.00  |
| Total Revenue           |              |
| HRC                     | \$ 8,001.11  |
| KIF                     | \$ 22,748.01 |

### Expenses

| Item                     | Budget      | YTD Used     | Remaining   |
|--------------------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|
| Martin Luther King Day   | \$ 800.00   |              | \$ 800.00   |
| Black History Month      | \$ 800.00   |              | \$ 800.00   |
| Juneteenth               | \$ 800.00   |              | \$ 800.00   |
| Native American Heritage | \$ 800.00   | \$ 785.00    | \$ 15.00    |
| Pride                    | \$ 800.00   | \$ 100.01    | \$ 732.09   |
| Miscellaneous            |             |              |             |
|                          | \$ 1,000.00 |              | \$ 1,000.00 |
| Total Expenditures       |             |              |             |
| HRC                      |             | \$ 885.01    |             |
| Balance Remaining        |             | \$ 7,116.10  |             |
| Total Expenditures       |             |              |             |
| KIF                      |             | \$ 933.48    |             |
| Balance Remaining        |             | \$ 27,814.53 |             |