

City of Keene
New Hampshire

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE MEETING AGENDA

Monday, November 2, 2020 at 5:00 PM
ZOOM Invite, Online Meeting

- Due to the COVID-2019 State of Emergency, this meeting will be conducted using the online meeting platform, Zoom. The public may view the meeting online by visiting: <https://zoom.us/join> with Meeting ID 859 9346 6891.
- If you encounter issues accessing this meeting, please call (603) 757-1835 during the meeting.

Members:

Bill Hay, Chair
Jennifer Carroll
Dr. Dottie Morris
Janis Manwaring
Dr. Mohammed Saleh
Nancy Salwen
Sofia Cunha-Vasconcelos
Dr. Shaun Filiault
Ritu Budakoti

Staff:

Andy Bohannon, PRF Director

Guests:

A'ja Hall
Samuel Webb

Agenda:

1. Welcome and Call to Order
2. Approval of October 5, 2020 Minutes
3. Finance Report
4. Keene State College Community Email
5. Monadvocacy Continued Discussion
6. MLK Breakfast
7. Pride Month
8. Juneteenth
9. Stand NH
10. New Business
11. Adjourn – Next Meeting Monday, December 7, 2020

1 City of Keene
2 New Hampshire

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5 HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE
6 MEETING MINUTES
7

8 **Monday, October 5, 2020**

5:00 PM

Remotely via Zoom

Members Present:

Dr. Dottie Morris
Nancy Salwen
William Hay, Chair
Councilor Jan Manwaring
Jennifer Carroll
Dr. Shaun Filiault
Dr. Mohammed Saleh, Vice Chair

Staff Present:

Andrew Bohannon, Parks, Recreation, and
Facilities Director

Members Not Present:

Sofia Cunha-Vasconcelos
Ritu Budakoti

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10
11
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.

16
17 **1) Welcome and Call to Order**

18
19 Chair Hay called the meeting to order at 5:14 PM. Roll call was conducted.

20
21 **2) Approval of September 14, 2020 Meeting Minutes**

22
23 Councilor Manwaring made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of September 14, 2020.
24 Dr. Morris seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

25
26 **3) Finance Report**
27
28

29 Mr. Bohannon reported that nothing has changed. He continued that the current budget is
30 \$4,597.43. The HRC approved the Finance Report.

31

32 **4) Mayor's Call for Board and Commission Nominations**

33

34 Mr. Bohannon stated that there is a meeting tomorrow with the Community Development
35 Department and City Clerk Patty Little. He continued that the City Clerk has been out sick, and
36 they wanted to make sure she could be part of that meeting. He will give an update there.
37 Everything the HRC discussed at the last meeting was acceptable and that is how they want to go
38 forward. He asked if there were any questions.

39

40 **5) Monadvocacy Continued Discussion**

41

42 Mr. Bohannon stated that he had a phone call with Pastor Nic. He continued that she provided
43 an outline - she will be able to do the game on Zoom, for a two-hour minimum, for \$150 per
44 hour. Three two-hour sessions would be \$900. She is willing to do that any time online, but will
45 not travel to Keene until it is safer to do so. She will do the game with a dozen to 20 people,
46 maximum, for the Zoom format.

47

48 A'Ja Hall (from STAND NH) asked what Pastor Nic is going to be doing. Mr. Bohannon
49 explained that Pastor Nic attended a virtual HRC meeting a few months ago to present the board
50 game Monadvocacy that she created. He explained that Monadvocacy is based off of Monopoly
51 but has a different game board, with different equity levels – you only get a certain amount of
52 money, and your ability to buy properties is limited based on factors such as your race, where
53 you live, your religion, your income, your status as a single parent, and so on and so forth. He
54 continued that the game gives you the ability to put yourself in someone else's shoes to
55 understand inequities. Pastor Nic facilitates discussions about the issues.

56

57 Ms. Hall asked if the people playing the game would be random community members, or if there
58 are targeted people to play the game. She asked if other organizations are not capable of
59 explaining the game. The cost seems high. This might be something other community
60 organizations could be doing for free.

61

62 Mr. Bohannon replied that they could ask Pastor Nic to train the HRC so the game could be
63 played in Keene more often. He continued that Pastor Nic's facilitation of the game would be
64 open to the public and specifically aimed toward members of this committee, college students,
65 the Keene Police Department, other City departments, local businesses, and schools. He
66 continued that Dr. Morris has expressed that the game would be great at Keene State College and
67 the HRC would pay for that.

68

69 Dr. Filiault stated that the cost is high and they would get more bang for their buck with "train
70 the trainer." It would have a more lasting impact. Ms. Hall agreed.

71

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72 Ms. Salwen spoke about how the immersion experience of playing the game and watching Pastor
73 Nic run it and facilitating the subsequent conversation would be a great way to be trained in the
74 game. She also spoke about the value in not just “preaching to the choir” and getting people who
75 wouldn’t necessarily volunteer to play the game to participate in it; they might be surprised by
76 what they learn. She continued that it would definitely be ideal to have people play the
77 game/train in the game to become facilitators.

78
79 Dr. Morris stated that she does not remember all the details of the game, but she wants to know
80 the level of expertise it would take to process the game. She continued that the key piece is the
81 processing of the experience of playing the game. Her only concern for “train the trainer” is that
82 a person would need to have not just the necessary facilitation skills, but also the content. How
83 would the HRC assess a person’s capacity to become a facilitator of the game?
84

85 Dr. Filiault replied that the HRC members are in a good place to be able to be trained, since they
86 have the basic knowledge and understand the language – e.g. about intersecting identities,
87 multiple areas of privileges and under-privileges, etc. He continued that he agrees with Ms.
88 Salwen that they have to play the game once themselves to even begin to do train the trainer.
89 But for the game to have a lasting impact the HRC members or other community members need
90 to eventually be the ones trained. They cannot call on Pastor Nic every time.
91

92 Mr. Bohannon stated that he understands and agrees that the model of success would be to bring
93 Pastor Nic in to have her run the game with a group of people looking to be trainers, and
94 facilitate a train the trainer session. He continued that would be money well spent, for
95 community members to be trained. Then they could facilitate that through the schools and the
96 community.
97

98 Dr. Morris stated that she wants to again caution them about what she said earlier. Who will
99 assess who would be the best people to be trained? Especially when you talk about going in the
100 schools. These type of activities can trigger a lot of things for people, and if there is not a highly
101 skilled/trained facilitator, it makes it worse. She would not take this too lightly. Ms. Salwen
102 replied that she agrees and that is such a good point. She continued that it would help to get
103 Pastor Nic’s advice about this topic.
104

105 Mr. Bohannon stated that this is all good discussion. He continued that Pastor Nic spoke with
106 the HRC in July or August on Zoom. He will send her proposal to everyone so they can read her
107 thoughts. He asked if the HRC wants him to give her this feedback and invite her to the next
108 Zoom meeting for this follow-up discussion. Chair Hay, Dr. Morris, and others replied yes.
109

110 Dr. Saleh asked if the game is played online via software that might not be open, and/or whether
111 there are intellectual property issues here. Mr. Bohannon replied that there is no software. He
112 continued that it is a homemade game. He will ask Pastor about intellectual properties.
113

114 Discussion continued.

115
116 Dr. Morris made a motion for the Human Rights Committee to allow Mr. Bohannon to follow up
117 with Pastor Nic and invite her to appear at the next meeting so the committee can get
118 clarification around what it would take for people to facilitate the game. Chair Hay seconded the
119 motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

120

121 **6) Martin Luther King, Jr. Breakfast**

122

123 Dr. Filiault stated that the HRC spoke about this two months ago and he spoke with Mr.
124 Bohannon on the phone last week. He continued that the subcommittee decided to do this event
125 online. It is unlikely that they will be able to have a live event by January. The aim of the
126 Facebook Live event would be to have a speaker, the author of an antiracism book, talk about the
127 text and then have a breakout Zoom/Facebook Live session to talk about the themes brought up
128 by the book, hopefully with a panel of speakers. Their book ideas were How To Be an Antiracist
129 or How to Be a Better Ally. They would also have the Mayor give a proclamation and there is
130 potential for a song or other celebratory event. There would be breakout groups to have
131 participants talk about the themes brought up by the speaker. Having it organized around a book
132 would keep the theme clear for the online event.

133

134 Ms. Salwen stated that those were just two ideas/examples for books and they welcome other
135 ideas. Dr. Filiault replied yes, they need to pick a book so they can talk to authors. He continued
136 that an author could give a pre-recorded statement if they cannot be there and then a panel could
137 speak to that statement, on the day of the event.

138

139 Dr. Morris asked what the budget is. Mr. Bohannon replied that in the past the HRC has spent
140 between \$1,000 and \$2,000 for an individual, but given that the person this time does not need
141 money for travel, lodging, or food, the money spent should be no higher than \$1,000. That is his
142 recommendation but it is up to the committee. The HRC no longer receives the donation from
143 St. James thrift shop, so the money is down to \$500 per year.

144

145 Ms. Salwen asked if Dr. Morris had book suggestions. Dr. Morris agreed with the idea of the
146 author of How to be an Antiracist, and suggested also: Debbie Irving (Waking Up White), or
147 Jennifer Harvey (Raising White Kids). Chair Hay stated that he read and enjoyed a recent book
148 about James Baldwin, by [Eddie] Glaude.

149

150 Mr. Bohannon stated that he and Dr. Filiault talked about making sure an author's talk is
151 followed by a facilitated discussion, either by the author, Dr. Morris if she is willing, another
152 HRC member, or someone else. He continued that it would be more meaningful if people could
153 engage in discussion instead of just listening to someone speak.

154

155 Chair Hay asked if they should have a committee to select the book. Mr. Bohannon suggested
156 they just write to all of the authors they have thought of so far and check on their interest,
157 availability, and costs, and present that information at the next meeting. Dr. Filiault replied yes,

158 if they reach out to get information about costs and availability, the book might select itself. He
159 continued that they need to select a book soon, so he suggests they allow the subcommittee to
160 make the decision.

161
162 Discussion continued. Ms. Salwen asked if a Saturday or Sunday event would be better than the
163 Monday, if the authors are too busy on the Monday. Chair Hay and Mr. Bohannon replied that
164 the author could give a pre-recorded address. Ms. Carroll stated that they should ask the
165 potential speakers if they are comfortable with Facebook Live or Zoom. Brief discussion ensued
166 about the logistics and technology considerations.

167
168
169
170 Motion for the HRC to ask the subcom to continue their efforts to contact authors and see if they
171 can find people willing to come talk with us, and bring it to the HRC at the next meeting.

172
173 Ms. Salwen lists the books and authors. Jennifer Irving – Dr. Morris will contact or give the
174 subcom her info. Debbie Irving. Ms. Salwen – Dr. Filiault, let us email and pick a time.

175
176 Dr. Morris seconds the motion. Passed by unanimous vote.

177
178

179 **7) June Events**

180

181 **8) Board Terms**

182

183 **9) New Business**

184

185 Dr. Morris stated that Indigenous People’s Day is coming up next week. She asked, did the
186 Mayor do a Proclamation around that? What happened in the City Council in July? What will
187 the City do to recognize this? She missed the last meeting.

188

189 Ms. Salwen stated that she would love to have a moment to hear from the people from STAND.

190

191 Mr. Bohannon asked Chair Hay to recognize that the committee is tabling the agenda items about
192 the June Events and Board Terms. Chair Hay agreed.

193

194 Chair Hay stated that A’ja Hall and Samuel Webb are here. He continued that he was talking to
195 them and Katie. Katie spoke at an event at Central Square and was one of many young people
196 who are from Keene who talked about the racism they encountered from the get-go in the school
197 system and it got him thinking about what teachers are doing about this. It seems like a great
198 teaching moment and maybe teachers would be more willing to jump in if the bullying was about
199 something else, but a lot of people are not good at dealing with [racism]. It is also about

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200 ignorance, which can be addressed better at age 8 instead of 68. He was thinking what is lacking
201 is a curriculum. It seems like it is the HRC's job to get something going like this.

202
203 A'ja Hall stated that she is the Executive Director of STAND NH. She introduced Samuel
204 Webb, Director of Education and Research. She continued that they are a non-profit
205 organization based in Keene, definitely dedicated to combatting racism through outreach to the
206 community, education, and support.

207
208 Dr. Morris left at 5:55 PM.

209
210 Ms. Hall continued that STAND NH's primary focus is to organize community initiatives to
211 dismantle systemic racism and to come up with a curriculum. Because of everything that is
212 going on, the presence of truth needs to be addressed within America. Teaching and education
213 needs to be addressed within America. Her organization is coming up a curriculum to address
214 the fact that there is no such thing as "Black history." She calls it "melanated history," which
215 includes Black, African, Latino, Mexican, and Brazilian people, and anyone else who has
216 melanin in their skin. Melanated history is American history. You cannot talk about America
217 and what it represents without comprehending that there is a horrible past that has to be
218 addressed truthfully. To develop a curriculum STAND NH is partnering with the Tenement
219 Museum in NY and the Smithsonian Museum. Both museums are supporting them with a
220 curriculum that will get them started with grades 9 to 12. The Smithsonian's Becoming Us
221 curriculum includes Melanated History. In NH you can offer any curriculum, but it is up to the
222 district to accept it. Each of STAND's directors are going to school board meetings and asking if
223 teachers would teach it. They have to get teachers, school boards, and principals on board. Then
224 STAND NH would hand them this curriculum they have. Schools could add, delete, edit, etc., to
225 see how they think it would be best learned.

226
227 Dr. Filiault left at 5:59 PM.

228
229 Ms. Hall continued that STAND NH has a Teachers Advisory Board to assess and make
230 recommendations about the curriculum, because of course, every child has a different learning
231 style. STAND NH also focuses on the way in which information is taught, because if something
232 is taught and not retained, it means nothing. If it is taught and retained, the person has an
233 awareness, and can take what they have learned and has a responsibility to share it, so that the
234 learning continues.

235
236 Ms. Hall stated that Mr. Webb has taken a lot of time and done a lot of work with the museums
237 and other organizations, because they are not only developing the curriculum for middle and
238 high school, but also starting at Kindergarten. That is what we have to do. It is important to start
239 young, to make sure children are able to have conversations, instead of being told, "No, we don't
240 talk about that." She continued that she has 3 kids. One time her son encountered a woman
241 without an arm, and asked, "Where's your arm?" A mother behind them looked at her daughter
242 like, 'No no, we don't talk about that.' But it is okay, because if we do not give children answers

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243 to their questions, they will formulate their own answers, and they will not understand the truth.
244 Questions are not the problem. When children come at you with innocence and you shut it
245 down, it breaks their spirits and makes them not want to question anymore, and they are more
246 likely to conform to the system and the systemic racism that we have. We need more melanated
247 teachers, yes, but if you are teaching biased information that does not matter, because you will
248 continue breeding racism. You have to make sure that the education and curriculum you are
249 teaching is not supporting a slave mentality, only teaching the truth that melanated people can
250 identify with and be able to say, "I see you in this position and now I know that I can do more."

251

252 Councilor Manwaring left at 6:00 PM.

253

254 Ms. Hall asked Mr. Web to speak.

255

256 Mr. Bohannon stated that he apologizes but the meeting cannot continue because they no longer
257 have a quorum of members. He continued that if it is okay with Chair Hay he would like add
258 STAND NH into the agenda for next month's meeting, ahead of some of the other items, so they
259 can have a bigger dialogue. What STAND is doing is really important and in the Zoom chat box,
260 you can see that HRC members want to be connected with STAND and Ms. Hall and Mr. Webb
261 are a great voice to this committee.

262

263 Ms. Hall thanked Mr. Bohannon and stated that she and STAND would love to continue with an
264 open dialogue. They thank the HRC members who are reaching out. She will send the
265 committee emails.

266

267 **10) Adjourn – next meeting is Monday, November 2, 2020**

268

269 There being no further business, Chair Hay adjourned the meeting at 6:02 PM.

270

271 Respectfully submitted by,

272 Britta Reida, Minute Taker

273

274 Edits respectfully submitted by,

275 Andy Bohannon, PRF Director

