

Hartford Committee on Racial Inequality

Meeting Minutes 2/6/18

In attendance: Ann Reynolds, Becca White, John Hall (Chair), Sara Campbell (Vice-Chair), Simon Dennis (Clerk), Michelle Boleski.

Absent, Nancy Russell (This meeting was moved to a night that Nancy is not available.)

- **Meeting Opening**

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm
We discussed the past meeting and group norms.

- **Education Sub-Committee Report**

Allene Swienckowski presented on her meetings with the efforts being made by the Hartford School District. She was favorably impressed with all of the different ways that awareness of difference was addressed and developed and with the level of diversity consciousness that she encountered. Allene suggested that perhaps students could present to the Selectboard. The kids are making up cartoons and plays. She is pleased about where they are.

John Hall asked about how we could find out about instances of racial disparity in our Hartford School District. Allene said that this information may be hard to learn. John said he felt it would be worth it to get an answer from the Superintendent of Schools as to what constraints there are in gathering statistical information about number of racially driven incidents, and instances of disciplinary action broken down by race. This information could be compared to the racial breakdown in the school.

Michelle Boleski shared her concerns about a tension she perceives between her role on the Education Sub-Committee and her role on the School Board. She shared that the School Board's adherence to the Carver Model of Policy Governance precludes Board members from investigating the work of staff. She also reported that Dr. Rosemary Allen is keynote at VT Dept. of Ed. Conference on the subjects of cultural humility, implicit bias and racial diversity.

Simon Dennis moved that the board recognize that Michelle Boleski is withdrawing from the Education Sub-Committee due to a tension between that committee investigative work and the John Carver Model of Policy Governance that the School Board observes. Becca White seconded. The motion passed with four votes in favor and two abstentions.

Michelle Boleski made a motion to put the issue of implicit Bias on a future agenda. Anne Reynolds seconded it. All were in favor and the motion passed.

- **Policy Discussion**

Becca White reported that she and Simon had met and worked up a rough draft of a potential Hartford Policy on Equity and Inclusivity. This draft had been vetted by the Town Manager and was projected up onto the big screen. Becca discussed the proposed policy. There was general support.

Becca also reported the Policy Sub-Committee's recommendation that the path towards Selectboard training should include a Request For Proposals. And that the HCORI should creating an RFP. Again there was general head nodding.

- **New Charge**

John read from the Act 54 regarding race disparity in Vermont. Allene said that she felt that this committee should expand its charge to include other forms of diversity. Anne said that this could dilute the power of the committee. Sara Campbell expressed a similar sentiment. Simon Dennis said that he felt that this was the central issue in the discussion of the Charge and that he favored the narrower version of the committee charge.

The language and strategy presented in the Act 54 was discussed. It was agreed that HCORI members would read this document. It was agreed that this would play an important role in the formation of a new charge.

- **Next Steps & Closing Statements**

The Chair observed that we did not get a timeline for taking on new members. Simon observed that we were working to accomplish four deliverables over the next three meetings. These are: the Recommended Policy, the Education Recommendation, the RFP Outline regarding Selectboard and School Board Training, the Recommended Future Charge. So we will need to be fairly focused.

Becca White moved to adjourn at 9:00. Sara Campbell seconded. All were in favor and the motion passed.