

Town of Hartford Committee on Racial Equity & Inclusion
Wednesday, May 1st, 2019
6pm to 7:30pm

In Attendance: John Hall (Chair) Sara Campbell (Vice Chair), Kim Souza (Clerk), Ann Reynolds, Allene Swienckowski, Jameson Davis (left at 7pm), Michelle Boleski + community member, Peggy Richardson

Review and pass minutes from the previous meeting. Jameson made motion to pass minutes, Allene seconded. Vote unanimously passed.

New Business/Membership

It was brought to our attention that some HCOREI terms had expired. Members can serve a maximum of (3) terms and each term is (2) years in length. Because some members began their term during the formation of the ad-hoc 'HCORI' version of the group, those terms began on April 4, 2017, even though there were large lapses of time during which the committee was not able to meet.

Member Term Expiration Dates:

John Hall, April 4, 2019

Sara Campbell, April 4, 2019

Allene Swienckowski, April 4, 2019

Ann Reynolds, February 1, 2020

It is our understanding that School Board & Selectboard members, Michelle Boleski, Nancy Russell, Jameson Davis & Kim Souza will serve the committee as liaisons to the respective boards and, rather than apply for reappointment, would volunteer to serve at the organizational meeting following Town Meeting each year. We need to verify if there are term limits for liaisons as well.

Community members, John Hall, Sara Campbell and Allene Swienckowski, will submit their request for reappointment to the School Board & Selectboards via email ASAP.

According to the HCOREI charge, there is one vacancy for a community member. Some informal recruitment is being done and Jameson suggested that we might consider inviting a High School Student liaison to join the committee. Michelle will inquire with the Superintendent to look in to that as an option. We can consider adding a student as the last community member or consider ways in which to add a student in addition to another community member. Considering that we are approaching the end of the academic year, a student liaison may be something to pursue in the fall. Michelle will report back with any information she can gather.

Community & Sub-Committee Updates:

Education Sub Committee

Debrief on recent interactions with School District, staff & admins.

Michelle described a lesson from the curriculum which had been presented at a previous School Board meeting. It uses Martin Luther King, Jr.'s 'Letter from a Birmingham Jail' as content for a Socratic Method writing style exercise.

There was discussion around how teachers who are introducing topics that highlight diversity and oppression to light can be supported. Michelle hopes to collect more educational resources that can be shared with educators with approval/assistance from the Superintendent.

Public workshops, including the Toward Racial Healing events, are a great resource for teachers. SURJ hopes to do another presentation of the TRH workshop so there may be another opportunity to invite HHS teachers & administrators to participate.

Continue to discuss options for a parent advocacy group and the development of educational advocates to work with parents & families.

John had a good meeting with Superintendent, Tom Debalsi. It will be important for the school to consider integrating any of the Strategic Plan directives with the many other systems and training obligations that are already in place within the School District.

A recommendation was made that we request the School Board members read through the recently enacted [H.3, An act relating to ethnic and social equity studies standards for public schools](#). It would also be useful for HCOREI members to periodically check in at the State level to monitor the progress in things like, establishing the Working Group by September 2019. The State has a history of creating programs, but having difficulty fulfilling the memberships to implement those programs.

RFP Sub Committee

Full RFP can be found [here](#).

Proposals Due: May 13, 2019

Anticipated Finalist Interviews: Week of May 27-31, 2019

Anticipated Award Date: June 28, 2019

Organizations that have been directly sent the RFP are:

Vermont Partnership for Fairness & Diversity

Equity Solutions

Justice for All

NAACP, Rutland, VT

uvDandelions

CQ Strategies

The Kirwan Institute

Ann will forward to Peace & Justice Center and Smart from the Start.

John noted that the Town Manager has already fielded some questions from organizations.

We will continue to report on the RFP status at each upcoming meeting.

Attorney General Forum Update

Kim followed up the AG TJ Donovan's office on the scheduled and canceled Hate Crimes Forum series. Tabitha Pohl-Moore of the NAACP, Rutland notified Kim that the forum was back in the hands of the AG's office and that they will be rescheduling the events. After numerous emails & phone calls to Natalie Silver in TJ Donovan's office, Kim was informed that they are beginning to reschedule the forums. First one is tentatively schedule for May 23 in Winooski and will include members from VT State Government, ACLU, NAACP, Black Lives Matter & Migrant Justice. More details to follow. Kim reiterated the request to host a subsequent forum/panel in the Town of Hartford. Natalie acknowledged that they would like to do one in Windsor County and will try to include Hartford. Kim offered to help with event planning logistics and will continue to follow up with the AG's office to ensure that these events do take place.

Next Steps & Closing Statements

She the People Presidential Forum can be viewed [here](#).

Allene made a motion that we **change the regular meeting time to 6pm**. Kim seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Committee members are encouraged to [read Act H.3](#) in its entirety for discussion during the next meeting agenda.

Upcoming meeting dates (beginning at 6pm) are:

May 1, 2019
May 15, 2019
June 5, 2019
June 19, 2019
July 3, 2019 (skip)
July 17, 2019

Michelle will confer with School Board members to determine if Weds meeting dates throughout the rest of July & August will conflict with their meeting schedule (or not) and report back to HCOREI so that we can schedule beyond July 17.

The motion to adjourn at 7:25pm was made by Allene.

Respectfully submitted by Kim Souza, Clerk.