

Town of Hartford Committee on Racial Equity & Inclusion
Wednesday, May 15th, 2019
6pm to 7:30pm

In Attendance: John Hall (Chair) Sara Campbell (Vice Chair), Kim Souza (Clerk), Ann Raynolds, Allene Swienckowski, Jameson Davis (via phone), + Brannon Godfrey, Town Manger until 6:30pm.

A minor agenda change was made to discuss RFP process at the beginning of the meeting so that the Town Manager could share their recommendations with the committee.

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

RFP Process

The Town Manager has received 3 proposals from organizations who are interested in developing a Strategic Plan for Equity & Inclusion for the Town and Hartford School District.

Brannon has emailed all proposals to the School Board, Selectboard & HCOREI Chair. Brannon considers all organizations potentially qualified and worthy of interviews. Our RFP specified that interviews would take place during the last week of May. One of the organization leaders will be out of the country until June 10.

For scheduling, our hope is to have a recommended/chosen organization by the June 17 Selectboard & June 26 School Board meetings.

Target is to have an approved organization by the beginning of the 2019-20 fiscal year which begins on July 1, with the understanding that there may be necessary delays.

Brannon proposes that the selection / interview committee consist of the following members:

1. School Board Chair (or designee)
2. Selectboard Chair (or designee)
3. HCOREI Chair
4. School Superintendent
5. Town Manager

Brannon will take care of logistics including coordinating interviews.

Further discussion relating to representation of the proposed selection committee and whether other HCOREI members can observe interviews ensued. (See Further RFP Discussion notes following Updates.)

Community & Sub-Committee Updates:

Allene attended a School Board meeting at the request of a parent. Two students were making a presentation and one of them is in transition and Allene was pleased that the students were permitted to use their preferred pronouns.

John talked about following up with the School Superintendent &/or the School Board Chair regarding parental advocacy & 'chain of command' for students and parents experiencing issues with the least resistance for the parent & student(s). What is the current district perspective? What is the entry to the process? More parents will reach out to us over time. We should know more about how the administrators see the process.

Ann reiterated that helping a parent advocacy group form would be most helpful.

Kim noted that [The Root Justice Center](#) in Brattleboro is making plans to grow the Statewide People Of Color Caucus, (SPOCC). The BIPOC Caucus of the Root and the POC Caucus of Black Lives Matter Greater Burlington are traveling this spring to head to White River Junction area and the Bennington area to support the creation of more POC Caucuses and White Accountable Organizing Communities.

John noted that there will be a [Social Justice Symposium](#) in Rutland, VT featuring Kiah Morris as a Key Note Speaker, May 19th, 12:30-5pm.

Attorney General Forum Update

Kim has been in contact with Natalie Silver from AG TJ Donovan's office. Natalie is leaving that position but gave Kim a replacement contact to follow up with: David Scherr 802.558.6022.

Currently, the plan is in place for the first "Community Forum for a Hate-Free Vermont" to happen May 23 at 5:30pm at Winookski High School.

Natalie says there are no further details available. Once they see how the Winooski event goes, it will help them plan how the Hartford event will take shape on June 13 at the Hartford High School.

Kim & Jameson (who will be an intern in the Civil Rights Division of the AG's office over the summer) will stay connected and follow up with any more info on the forum(s) as it becomes available.

Further RPF Discussion

Once John has been assured that the received proposals have been shared with the School Board, he will forward them to all HCOREI members.

More representation is needed for the selection/interview committee. Allene pointed out that, as recommended by the Town Manager, there would be no women and only two POCs.

Could we include Allene & Jameson to the selection/interview committee in order to increase the representation of POCs & women?

Are other HCOREI members able to observe the interviews? If so, would that create quorum issues? HCOREI would like to meet post interviews and make the committee's recommendations to the selection/interview committee.

Could interviews be done via Skype/Zoom in a way that HCOREI members could observe, but not participate?

Kim made a motion that the Chair summarize the committee's preferences for the interview process and communicate it to the Town Manager & Superintendent, as well as the School Board & Selectboard. Sara Seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Next Steps & Closing Statements

Sara reminded the committee that we should review and discuss the recently passed H.3 (Act 1), an act relating to ethnic and social equity studies standards for public schools. Committee members are encouraged to [read Act H.3](#) in its entirety for discussion during the next meeting agenda.

Allene made a motion that we postpone determining the extended meeting schedule until the next meeting. Kim Seconded. There was discussion that we could also discuss the RFP interview and selection schedule at that meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

Upcoming meeting dates (**beginning at 6pm**) are:

June 5, 2019
June 19, 2019
July 3, 2019 (skip)
July 17, 2019

The motion to adjourn at 7:35pm was made by Allene.

Respectfully submitted by Kim Souza, Clerk.