

Town of Hartford Committee on Racial Equity & Inclusion
Wednesday, June 19th, 2019
6pm to 7:30pm

In Attendance: John Hall (Chair), Sara Campbell (Vice Chair), Kim Souza (Clerk), Ann Raynolds, Allene Swienckowski, Michelle Boleski, Dan Fraser (Hartford Selectboard Member), Kevin Coach Christie (Hartford School Board Member & VT State Legislator)

Review and pass minutes from the previous meeting.

Ann proposed the following amendments to the June 5th minutes:

Correct typo of missing T in Hartford within FIPP notes.
Add the phrase “and to obtain legal counsel” to waiting to hear opinions of Chief Kasten as an outcome of SB’s FIPP discussion.
Add description of the member criteria for the Ethnic & Social Equity Standards Advisory Working Group as described in Act 1.

Sara moved the motion to pass the June 5 minutes, as amended. Allene seconded. Kim will edit and forward amended minutes to Lana. Vote unanimously passed.

Attorney General Forum Update

Extensive discussion around the Attorney General’s Forum for a Hate-Free Vermont which was held at Hartford High School on June 13, 2019.

Most HCOREI members were in attendance at the forum.

Consensus was that the format was not clear and not ideal for what seemed to be a desire to collect information from affected community members. It’s likely that the planning group within the AG’s office is somewhat aware of the format flaws.

HCOREI members were disappointed that AG, TJ Donovan, did not speak more. The group didn’t get a sense of his ideas on how to address issues of bias incidents in Vermont.

HCOREI had forwarded some suggested topics. Members who attended felt as though the AG and their representatives were not entirely prepared to answer many questions that were asked during the forum.

If the goal is to collect stories from impacted people, Allene suggested that some sort of ombudsman be established to carry those stories so that individuals are not tasked to relive their trauma over and over again.

Allene agreed to draft a summary of feedback to share with the AG's office as a tool for them to use in planning future forums. Once HCOREI has had an opportunity to add to Allene's comments/recommendations, the forum feedback will be emailed to:

TJ Donovan, Attorney General: ago.info@vermont.gov
David Sherr, Asst. AG: David.Scherr@vermont.gov
Julio Thompson, Civil Rights Unit, AG's Office: julio.thompson@vermont.gov
Abbie Leve, AGs Office: Abigail.Lever@vermont.gov
Tabitha Pohl-Moore: president@naacprutland.org
Etan Nasreddin-Longo, Forum Facilitator: sarnnidde@gmail.com

Ann made a motion to create a Data & Reporting Sub-Committee to consider how to propose a data collection system on non-criminal hate speech, physical and psychological threats, repetitive harassment and intimidation within the Attorney General & States Attorney Offices with the assistance of a 3 person, volunteer, civilian review group.

Motion discussion included: Model language on sexual harassment bill. Process should include current [Bias Reporting Protocol](#) which the AG introduced this year. We're not sure who is using the bias reporting protocol and it has been noted that no impacted people were involved in creating it. We will want the efforts of the sub-committee to be public and transparent and will invite Windsor County States Attorney, David Cahill to participate. Sub-committee will also reach out to James Pepper in his capacity to connect with all States Attorneys and Sheriff Depts.

Sara seconded the motion to create a Data & Reporting Sub-Committee. It passed unanimously. Sub-Committee members are: John Hall, Allene Swienckowski & Ann Reynolds.

Further discussion around the forum included: Parents need resources to help them navigate the channels for complaints. Consider a brochure or fridge magnet that might simplify a process if complaints are not addressed sufficiently. Within the school, and within the State. i.e. The Human Rights Commission is an agency willing to help direct complaints to the appropriate recipient. Police departments are not the only resource when filing a complaint.

Community member, Dan Fraser, suggested that HCOREI might serve as an advocate for parents feeling that their concerns are not being adequately addressed within the school. HCOREI continues to support the idea of a parent advocacy group.

Group discussed the recent Vermont State Police [reporting of the disproportionate](#) traffic stops and violations for Black and Hispanic drivers. Michelle had tried to attend the June 3rd meeting, but had difficulty finding anything about it online. Ann will contact the organizers to find out if the meeting is subject to open meeting laws and where information about upcoming reporting meetings can be found.

Fair & Impartial Policing Policy

Kim made the motion to table the FIPP agenda item until our next meeting due to time constraints. Information about the 2 previous Selectboard meetings are available via the meeting minutes for [June 4](#) and [June 18](#) and can be viewed on CATV8.

Act 1 Update from Education Subcommittee

Ann attended a June 8 Community Forum on School Equity and Ethnic Studies in Montpelier. Ann notified the group that HCOREI would be interested in being part of the coalition. Allene is working toward being nominated to join the Working Group and there is some ambiguity around how one becomes a Working Group member. Allene and Ann will continue to reach out to this group for a response.

Kim was approached by a HMS History Teacher who was interested in HCOREI's work and may want to attend an upcoming meeting. Kim will send her contact info to Allene to follow up directly via the Education Sub-Committee and will forward information about the '[Teaching Tolerance](#)' website with the teacher as one of the tools available to public school teachers via the Southern Poverty Law Center.

RFP Process

John gave an update on the interview process. The selection committee has met with one of the 3 organizations thus far. The remaining 2 interviews will take place on June 24th. The committee will deliberate after the last interview. If there is a clear decision, the committee will move forward with a recommendation to both boards. If the decision is not clear, the group may need to hold additional interviews which could extend the schedule. Coach Christie noted that, if a special meeting was required for the Schoolboard to receive the Strategic Plan recommendations, he will try to make that happen.

Next Steps & Closing Statements

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

Wed July 17
Wed Aug 7
Wed Aug 21
Wed Sept 4
Wed Sept 18
Wed Oct 2
Wed Oct 16
Wed Nov 6
Wed Nov 20
Wed Dec 4
Wed Dec 18
Wed Jan 15

The motion to adjourn at 7:45pm was made by Kim. Seconded by Allene.

Respectfully submitted by Kim Souza, Clerk.