

CITY OF BARRE
PUBLIC BODY DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

Committee/board: Diversity and Equity Committee

Date of meeting: Monday, February 21, 2022, 6:00 PM

Location of meeting: Zoom Videoconference with Call-in Option

Board/committee members in attendance:

- William Toborg
- Joelen Mulvaney
- Christopher Roberts
- Danielle Owczarski
- Svetlana Zhexembeyeva
- Ellen Kaye

Board/committee members absent:

- JD Fox

Others in attendance:

- Rep. Tommy Walz
- Rep. Peter Anthony
- Attorney General Rory Thibault

Topic(s) Discussed

1. Call to order at 6:03 PM.
2. Chris read the Acknowledgement
 - a. We acknowledge that Barre City was developed on Sokoki Abenaki land, which the Western Abenaki nation never ceded, made treaty for, nor were they conquered. We aspire to create a space in our meetings that is inclusive, participatory and equitable. We acknowledge we all come from different experiences and that our experiences may be affected by racism, sexism, classism, homophobia, ableism and many other systems of oppression. We are here to address equity within the systems of our city in order to inform the City Council of our findings. We acknowledge that systemic inequities exist and do not debate the personal experiences of marginalized and underrepresented community members. With that in mind, it is important that we are thoughtful of the impact of our words on each other in this space.
3. Protocol for meeting interlopers
 - a. Joelen provided an overview of protocol for the meeting
4. Adjustments to the Agenda - Review January minutes for approval at March meeting
5. Participants/visitors open mic - none
- ~~6. Approval of Minutes for January~~
 - a. William recommended that we approve January minutes at the March meeting
7. Old Business
 - Working group reports:
 - a. Community Education – Chris

- i. Potential new member for the education working group - Gale Mears. The workgroup will meet with youth and are working on developing a play
 - b. Barre City Equity Assessment Impact Tool – Ellen
 - i. The workgroup is continuously fine tuning the tool process
 - ii. Meeting with Housing Task Force fell through for February and rescheduled to March
 - iii. Conversation with other committees - Cow-pasture Committee - received a grant wants to meet with the group and Ellen is the contact with Janette Shaffer
 - iv. Police Advisory Committee - Reviewed Citizen Complaint Policy and they will follow up with any questions they have
 - v. Next workgroup meeting is Monday, February 28
 - c. Community Needs Assessment - Joelen
 - i. Someone from the City Council and Homelessness Committee have committed to join the workgroup
 - d. Liaison Reports
 - i. Need to reconnect with schools after losing the connection
 - e. Other Connections
 - i. Hired Chief of Police - Braedon S. Vail and will be introduced at the City Council meeting tomorrow.
 - ii. VLCT Equity Committee - Ellen - Working on defining what they are doing and what they can provide to municipalities. What types of groups should they convene? They are aware of the work that our committee is doing with the EIAT and interested to learn more about how Barre City is employing it. VLCT Equity Committee hopes to employ their skills to encourage municipalities on how to embark on this work and make real change.
 - f. Strategic Planning - carry over from last meeting, not discussed
- 8. New Business
 - a. Response to Antisemitism – Peter Anthony, Tommy Walz
 - i. Both representatives received a postcard that contained rubber stamped messages. Both messages included antisemitic messages.
 - ii. Important to understand that a Barre resident is expressing this sentiment publicly
 - iii. Forwarded these messages to VT Equity Committee in the legislature
 - iv. The group discussed the issue. A resolution recommendation to City Council was identified as an option. This was not supported by all the committee. Some members feel that white supremacy is the issue that needs to be addressed instead of only putting the focus on the marginalized group
 - v. Peter recommended that we wait to see who the leaders of Barre City will be and then reach out to those folks.
 - vi. Committee members thanked the representatives for their inclusive response to the issue.
 - b. How can the State’s Attorney assist us in our mission – Rory Thibault
 - i. Joelen invited Rory to talk to the group about his work.

- ii. Was glad to see Joelen on the Police Chief Hiring Committee to provide a perspective that is not often heard
 - iii. Serves as Schoolboard Chair of Cabot School District. First experience was brought on by students. Navigating these issues in a town with differing perspectives was important work that resulted in policies.
 - iv. Working on a Bill on the enhanced penalties for threats against election workers.
 - v. Committee member asked where we should focus our work to be most effective
 1. Employment practices and policies - hiring - work to try to find people who don't fit the traditional profile to diversify - in law enforcement and municipal hiring - work with legislative delegation on high level systems
 - vi. Svetlana is interested in looking at the demographic data for Barre - Rory recommended reaching out to folks in the probation and parole office - he hopes to have a summer intern to look at county data for racial disparities and socioeconomic disparities.
 - vii. VT has a good record with public defender qualifications - taking the co-pay (VT has a widely available system that is highly utilized).
 - viii. Looking at the historical past - past policies is important to not make the same mistakes and mitigation current impacts.
 - ix. Joelen will send Rory's contact to the Committee.
9. Set next meeting date: March 21, 2022, at 6:00 PM
10. Round Table
- a. Danielle thanked Ellen for sharing her knowledge as a member of the Jewish community on Front Porch Forum.
 - b. Ellen was appreciative for receiving support and being able to share her voice to speak to issue at hand and not divert away from it with political issues.
11. Adjourned at 7:24 PM.

Action items

1. Joelen - Send Rory's contact information to the committee.

Meeting adjourned:

Mover/Second: Danielle/William

Time: 7:24 PM

Next meeting date/time/location: Monday, February 21, 2022 at 6PM via Zoom



Danielle Owczarski