

**City of Keene**  
**New Hampshire**

**HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE MEETING AGENDA**

Monday, December 5, 2022 at 5:00 PM  
Room 22 Upstairs, Recreation Center

This meeting will be conducted in person and via Zoom online platform. The public may view the meeting online at [www.zoom.com](http://www.zoom.com) and click on “Join” then enter the meeting ID when prompted. Meeting ID 867 3299 3658

**Members:**

Sofia Cunha-Vasconcelos  
Dr. Dottie Morris  
Janis Manwaring  
Dr. Mohammad Saleh  
Dr. Shaun Filiault  
Marti Fiske  
Hunter Kirschner  
Rabbi Daniel Aronson  
Councilor Catherine Workman

**Staff:**

Andy Bohannon, PRF Director  
Alyssa Bender, Youth Services Manager

**Alternates:**

Ritu Budakoti  
Heidi Schwieger

**Agenda:**

1. Welcome and Call to Order
2. Approval of November 7, 2022 Minutes
3. Finance Report
4. Budget Development
5. Monadnock Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging Coalition Updates
6. Acceptance of Committee Event Reports
7. Community Outreach
  - a. Martin Luther King Jr. Day
8. New Business
9. Adjourn – Next Meeting Monday, January 2, 2023 at 5:00 PM

*“In our efforts to create a more equal and just society, we move forward with the firm intention to value the voices, opinions, and experiences of all people. We choose to proceed with the awareness and humility that the statements and decisions we make will have a different impact for those with different life experiences.”*

1 City of Keene  
2 New Hampshire

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5 HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE  
6 MEETING MINUTES  
7

Monday, November 7, 2022

5:00 PM

Room 22,  
Recreation Center

**Members Present:**

Jan Manwaring  
Dr. Dottie Morris  
Dr. Mohammad Saleh  
Marti Fiske  
Hunter Kirschner  
Rabbi Daniel Aronson

**Staff Present:**

Andy Bohannon, Parks, Recreation & Facilities  
Director

**Members Not Present:**

Ritu Budakoti, Alternate  
Heidi Schwieger, Alternate  
Sofia Cunha-Vasconcelos, Chair  
Dr. Shaun Filiault, Vice Chair  
Councilor Catherine Workman

8  
9  
10 **1) Welcome and Call to Order**

11  
12 Mr. Bohannon called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM. He asked for someone to nominate an  
13 HRC member to serve as Chair tonight in the absence of Sofia Cunha-Vasconcelos and Dr.  
14 Shaun Filiault.

15  
16 Dr. Morris nominated Dr. Saleh for Chair for tonight's meeting. Ms. Manwaring seconded the  
17 motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

18  
19 **2) Approval of October 3, 2022 Meeting Minutes**

20  
21 Ms. Manwaring made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of October 3, 2022. Dr. Morris  
22 seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

23  
24 **3) Finance Report**

25  
26 Mr. Bohannon stated that an updated balance sheet is attached to the agenda. He continued that  
27 he went through and organized everything chronologically and everything is up to date with the

28 Keene International Festival (KIF), and everything should be up to date with the Juneteenth  
29 event. Upstream Sound was paid. Upstream Sound had not sent him an invoice until just after  
30 the KIF. He apologized to Jalissa (Rodriguez), but he did get that check out to her and she has  
31 been paid. He does not believe there was anyone else they owed money. He asked Dr. Morris if  
32 she recalls anyone else that they owe. Dr. Morris replied no.

33  
34 Chair Saleh asked what the second sheet is. Mr. Bohannon replied that since they will cross over  
35 to a new calendar year, the second sheet is the current fiscal year and the three-year projection.  
36 He continued that the current balance on hand is \$3,991.88. It is not shown on this month's  
37 finance report, but going forward, the HRC will see that he changed the spreadsheet to show the  
38 HRC's events in chronological order.

39  
40 Chair Saleh asked – accounting for future events' cost, is the projected balance at the end of  
41 2023 \$3,391? Mr. Bohannon replied that that is the current balance right now. He continued  
42 that the HRC has not spent anything this year.

43  
44 Chair Saleh asked if anyone else had questions. Hearing none, he stated that since the finance  
45 report is informational, no vote is needed.

46

47 **4) Budget Development**

48

49 Chair Saleh stated that they discussed this at the last meeting, and he believes that Mr. Bohannon  
50 and Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos were working on it. He asked Mr. Bohannon for an update.

51

52 Mr. Bohannon stated that he does not want to go too far with this tonight without Chair Cunha-  
53 Vasconcelos being here, but he and Alyssa Bender met recently and discussed it. At this time,  
54 the City will be providing \$1,000 to the HRC annually. He recommends to the HRC that if they  
55 want more, they can direct him, as the HRC's staff liaison, to write a memorandum to the City  
56 Manager asking for additional funding. The HRC has the events for Martin Luther King, Jr.  
57 Day, Juneteenth, Pride month if they continue to do something for that, and Indigenous People's  
58 Day, and the KIF is self-sustaining. How the HRC would divvy up the money from the City  
59 would be approximately \$500 per event, and for anything beyond that, the  
60 subcommittee/working group for each event would have the responsibility of raising that money.

61

62 Discussion ensued about the budget. Mr. Aronson proposed the HRC request another \$1,000,  
63 given the four events. Ms. Fiske asked if the committee loses money that they do not spend. Mr.  
64 Bohannon replied no. Ms. Fiske questioned whether they can ask for \$2,000 per year given their  
65 current balance. Mr. Bohannon replied that he thinks they can, because it is specifically for  
66 events, and the committee could use the small balance it has for something like bringing in a  
67 speaker whose fees are beyond the committee's typical capabilities. Their current balance is not  
68 big, compared to ten years ago, when the committee had \$14,000 in its account.

69

70 Chair Saleh stated that Mr. Bohannon and Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos have put a lot of thought  
71 into this and she may have other ideas, so he thinks the committee's discussion about the details  
72 of the proposal should wait until Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos is here. Mr. Bohannon replied that  
73 they have time for that. He continued that he wants budget requests before early January. Chair  
74 Saleh replied that unlike other committees that often skip their December meetings, the HRC  
75 meets early in the month so they should have a quorum for their December meeting and can  
76 discuss this more then.

77

78 **5) Monadnock Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Coalition (MDEIB)**

79

80 Dr. Morris stated that the MDEIB has been meeting at a time that conflicts with her teaching  
81 schedule, so she will rejoin the MDEIB [later].

82

83 Mr. Bohannon stated that he sent an email asking about the newsletter, which someone from the  
84 MDEIB sent to him, and they wanted to meet with him to go over their agenda. He continued  
85 that they received \$7,500 for marketing materials and are still looking for additional funding.  
86 They are looking to broaden their campaign a little. He is now on the board of the Chamber of  
87 Commerce, and the Chamber will also be doing some things related to DEIB. Chair Cunha-  
88 Vasconcelos has been asking about him connecting with Luca Paris, and now is a good time for  
89 that. The focus is on the Racial Justice and Community Safety (RJCS) Report. He hopes they  
90 can get more information from Councilor Workman at the next meeting and start to collaborate  
91 more.

92

93 Chair Saleh asked if the DEIB work the Chamber is doing is independent of the YMCA's work  
94 or in collaboration. Mr. Bohannon replied independent.

95

96 Chair Saleh stated that the HRC had talked about having someone from the Chamber come talk  
97 with them. Mr. Kirschner stated that he suggests inviting someone from the Chamber to one  
98 meeting and someone from the MDEIB to another, to give the HRC first-hand updates. Mr.  
99 Bohannon replied that Councilor Workman is the Chair of the MDEIB, so having her here would  
100 be helpful. He continued that it might be a good idea to have Councilor Workman and someone  
101 from the Chamber here together.

102

103 Chair Saleh stated that he is a member of the MDEIB and is also having problems with the  
104 meeting time. He continued that he has attended a few meetings and is glad they are moving  
105 forward.

106

107 **6) Acceptance of Committee Event Reports**

108

109 Ms. Fiske reported on the Indigenous People's Day event at the Library, which had about 77  
110 attendees, some in person and some online. She continued that the event started late due to  
111 technical problems but it ultimately turned out very well, and there was a nice article in the  
112 newspaper about it.

113

114 Mr. Bohannon stated that the letter to the editor has been published recently. He continued that  
115 he has not yet received any communications as a result of it. Chair Saleh stated that a Keene  
116 Sentinel journalist who knows him reached out to him for some clarification, and he told the  
117 journalist to contact Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos. He continued that the journalist did not follow  
118 up with him and he hopes to get an update from Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos.

119

120 Mr. Bohannon stated that on November 1, the Sentinel published an article from Hunter Oberst.  
121 Chair Saleh replied that that is the journalist he was referring to. Mr. Bohannon replied that  
122 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos did connect with the Sentinel, and that article was published from that.  
123 Chair Saleh asked if Mr. Bohannon could share the article with the committee. Ms. Fiske stated  
124 that the Sentinel published the letter and then a short article the very next day. Chair Saleh  
125 replied that they have good support from the Sentinel, generally speaking.

126

127 **7) Community Outreach**  
128 **A. Outside Agency Networking**  
129 **i. Kristallnacht**

130

131 Chair Saleh reported that Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos communicated with Tom White. He asked  
132 if Dr. Morris could speak to this.

133

134 Dr. Morris stated that Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos will be representing the committee, but she  
135 hopes the rest of the committee attends. Chair Saleh stated that the event's agenda is not public,  
136 but Mr. White sent it to him. Part of the agenda is to give credit to local organizations that are  
137 working to represent human rights, including the HRC. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos will read the  
138 HRC's mission statement. He, Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos, and Dr. Morris have been allocated  
139 seats. If anyone else wants to participate, they can ask the organizers. It is not a walk-in event.  
140 Mr. Bohannon added that it is this Wednesday at 7:00 PM. Mr. Aronson stated that he is part of  
141 the event. He continued that he did not think people needed tickets to attend.

142

143 Discussion ensued about whether the event is open to all or requires tickets or registration. Ms.  
144 Fiske noted that it appears to be open to all, given what is stated on the website. Chair Saleh  
145 replied that he stands corrected. Discussion continued about the event. Chair Saleh encouraged  
146 the committee to attend.

147

148 Mr. Bohannon stated that Ritu Budakoti will be representing the KIF and is listed in the program  
149 as a member of the HRC. They are well represented.

150

151 **8) New Business**

152

153 Mr. Bohannon stated that the Martin Luther King, Jr. Day event is coming up. He continued that  
154 previously, Ms. Manwaring had suggested the HRC might work with the Cheshire Historical  
155 Society. Jenna Carroll was going to be working on the history of Cheshire County's Black

156 population. Ms. Manwaring has been working on this project alongside Ms. Carroll, who has  
157 offered to host the event at the Historical Society. The HRC can be a co-sponsor. He asked how  
158 the committee feels about that, and if Ms. Manwaring has additional information. This will not  
159 be fully completed by January, but it would be Ms. Carroll's research up until that point. There  
160 are several people working on this project. Ms. Manwaring replied yes, and they all send their  
161 materials to Ms. Carroll, who is putting it all together. There are many interesting stories.

162  
163 Chair Saleh stated that since there is only one meeting before the event, it would be helpful to  
164 discuss the event now. He continued that he would like to hear more about the layout and the  
165 plan for the event other the presentation of the historical documentation. Ms. Manwaring stated  
166 the Historical Society has a big hall, and parking. Mr. Bohannon replied that the Historical  
167 Society can host about 100 people, which is a good amount of space. He continued that he  
168 thinks there would be another exhibit there at the same time, which coincides with the theme, art  
169 on the walls, and so on and so forth. Ms. Carroll is still waiting to hear from the HRC but is  
170 ready to move this project forward. Ms. Fiske added that the Historical Society has installed  
171 grant-funded equipment that will allow them to do live streaming, which would be wonderful for  
172 this event to increase the turnout. Others agreed. Ms. Manwaring added that downstairs at the  
173 Historical Society is the Jonathan Daniels Center, and they might be involved somehow as well.

174  
175 Dr. Morris asked if anyone knows if the movie "Till" will be showing anywhere nearby, because  
176 she was hoping to do an educational piece, if it was around during that timeframe. She will  
177 reach out to Keene Cinema. It is not yet being shown anywhere north of Greenfield, MA. She  
178 has heard that it is exceptional. Mr. Bohannon stated that something to think about is that he  
179 thinks this committee needs to dive a little deeper, and he sees this as a potential additional  
180 event. Dr. Morris replied that that is what she means. Mr. Bohannon replied that the more they  
181 can provide the community with educational opportunities, the stronger they will be. It is good  
182 to go beyond the same four events each year and do more to engage people in meaningful  
183 conversation. An event with this movie would be fantastic. Dr. Morris replied that she will  
184 check with the Colonial and Keene Cinema. Discussion continued.

185  
186 Mr. Bohannon stated that he thinks the HRC needs to give Ms. Carroll some direction this month  
187 so she can begin to prepare. He continued that he can take a lot of the onus for this, but the HRC  
188 has not done great marketing for its previous events. If they can tell Ms. Carroll soon, they can  
189 begin to get the word out through the holiday season and the beginning of the New Year. He  
190 asked Ms. Manwaring to explain the work she has been doing. Ms. Manwaring replied that she  
191 and others started looking at the census, starting with 1790 and going through 1940. She  
192 continued that they have not worked with the 1950 census yet because it was recently released.  
193 After the census, they look at other sources at the community level, like annual reports, personal  
194 writings, and so on and so forth. She has been focusing on Keene, while others are doing other  
195 towns in Cheshire County. Chair Saleh replied that it is an opportunity to have a forum  
196 discussion of the history the local African American community, how it is now, and how we as a  
197 community can make it a better community. He asked if there is an opportunity to talk about  
198 that, or if the information will just be presented factually. Ms. Manwaring replied that she is not

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199 sure what Ms. Carroll is going to do. She continued that her sense is that the community was not  
200 very friendly towards Black people, and she wonders but has not yet found information on  
201 whether Keene was a “sundown town” where Black people were expected to be inside by  
202 sundown. Some murders occurred. Ms. Fiske replied that it sounds like it will be a historical  
203 perspective of what has happened to date, although the research is not complete. Ms. Manwaring  
204 replied yes, it is the history of what has happened, and what we are carrying with us. Dr. Morris  
205 added yes, what we are carrying with us, and what impact it has on us today. Discussion  
206 continued. Chair Saleh stated that it looks like they have two decisions – one, whether the HRC  
207 wants to be at the Historical Society and be part of this; and two, the details to finalize. He asked  
208 for a motion.

209  
210 Ms. Manwaring made a motion to agree with the plan of having collaboration with the Cheshire  
211 County Historical Society for the Martin Luther King, Jr. Day event. Ms. Fiske seconded the  
212 motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

213  
214 Mr. Bohannon stated that he wanted to note, with much gratitude, that this is the first year during  
215 Dr. Morris’s time on this committee that this event has not been placed on her. He continued  
216 that for every year that the HRC has done something for this day, it has fallen on her shoulders,  
217 and he thanks her for all of her work. Others thanked Dr. Morris as well. Chair Saleh thanked  
218 Ms. Manwaring for her work.

219  
220 Chair Saleh asked if anyone else had new business. Hearing none, he stated that he has old  
221 business – there was a lot of discussion at the last meeting about the RJCS Report and the  
222 executive summary of it to the Mayor. He continued that Dr. Filiault was working on that. Mr.  
223 Bohannon replied yes, and he is working with Dr. Filiault to make that happen. He continued  
224 that he recognizes that Dr. Filiault is not here tonight due to running for State Representative,  
225 which is fairly consuming right now, but Dr. Filiault has told him he is committed to seeing that  
226 (executive summary) through. There will be an update at the next meeting. It is on the City  
227 Manager’s radar as well.

228  
229 Mr. Bohannon stated that he has new business – there is an event coming up held by the  
230 Endowment for Health and Marnita’s Table. He continued that it will be a community  
231 conversation at the high school, with food involved; it might be worth exploring. He will send  
232 all of the details to the community.

233  
234 Mr. Aronson stated that he received an email today from the Monadnock Interfaith Project  
235 (MIP), who was forwarding something from Project Home, which he sent to Mr. Bohannon to  
236 email out to the HRC. He continued that asylum seekers are coming into the area and need hosts  
237 to live with for up to a year, to provide food and shelter, supported by a coordinated team of  
238 Project Home volunteers. The Project Home volunteers help with rides, tutoring, healthcare,  
239 shopping, and so on and so forth. Ms. Fiske asked where the asylum seekers are coming from.  
240 Dr. Saleh replied that he is part of Project Home, and most asylum seekers come from south of  
241 the border, such as Mexico, Honduras, and El Salvador. Some people are also coming from

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242 Afghanistan on a temporary status and are not technically in the category of asylum seekers. The  
243 asylum seekers from south of the border, while waiting for their cases to be decided, have a legal  
244 right to be here, but cannot work for the first year. If their cases extend beyond a year, they get  
245 work permits. Project Home has successfully hosted six families and a couple of them got legal  
246 status and became independent. He is happy to answer more questions.

247

248 9) **Adjourn – Next Meeting Monday, December 5, 2022 at 5:00 PM**

249

250 There being no further business, Chair Saleh adjourned the meeting at 6:00 PM.

251

252 Respectfully submitted by,  
253 Britta Reida, Minute Taker

254

255 Reviewed and edited by,  
256 Andy Bohannon, PRF Director



7/1/22- 6/30/23	HRC	KIF	7/1/23- 6/30/24	HRC	KIF	7/1/24- 6/30/25	HRC	KIF
<b>Balance 7/1/22</b>	\$ 2,991.88	\$ 3,985.44	<b>Balance 7/1/23</b>	\$ 3,991.88	\$ 5,651.74	<b>Balance 7/1/24</b>	\$ 3,991.88	\$ 3,985.44
<b>Income</b>			<b>Income</b>			<b>Income</b>		
City of Keene	\$ 1,000.00		City of Keene	\$ -		City of Keene	\$ -	
Donations KIF		\$ 8,012.00	Donations KIF		\$ -	Donations KIF		\$ -
subtotal	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 8,012.00	subtotal	\$ -	\$ -	subtotal	\$ -	\$ -
<b>Total Income</b>	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 8,012.00	<b>Total Income</b>	\$ -	\$ -	<b>Total Income</b>	\$ -	\$ -
<b>Expenses</b>			<b>Expenses</b>			<b>Expenses</b>		
Martin Luther King Day proposed \$500	\$ -		Martin Luther King Day	\$ -		Martin Luther King Day	\$ -	
Pride Month proposed \$500	\$ -		Pride Month	\$ -		Pride Month	\$ -	
Juneteenth proposed \$500	\$ -		Juneteenth	\$ -		Juneteenth	\$ -	
International Festival		\$ 6,345.70	International Festival		\$ -	International Festival		\$ -
Indigenous Peoples Day proposed \$500	\$ -		Indigenous Peoples Day	\$ -		Indigenous Peoples Day	\$ -	
<b>Total Expenses</b>	\$ -	\$ 6,345.70	<b>Total Expenses</b>	\$ -	\$ -	<b>Total Expenses</b>	\$ -	\$ -
<b>Net 22-23</b>	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,666.30	<b>Net 23-24</b>	\$ -	\$ -	<b>Net 24-25</b>	\$ -	\$ -
<b>Balance on hand</b>	\$ 3,991.88	\$ 5,651.74	<b>Balance on hand</b>	\$ 3,991.88	\$ 5,651.74	<b>Balance on hand</b>	\$ 3,991.88	\$ 3,985.44