

REIB City Council Committee July 16th 5:30pm – 7:00pm

Sharon Bushor Room, 149 Church St, City Hall, Burlington VT

Attendees:

Councilor Melo Grant
Councilor Becca Brown McKnight
Councilor Gene Bergman
Phet Keomanyvanh (REIB)
Christian Berry (REIB)
Katie Greene (REIB)
Destinee Pierce (REIB)
Christine Hughes (Richard Kemp Center and Member of Reparations Task Force)
Mark Hughes (Vermont Racial Justice Alliance)
Roy V Hill II (Community Member and Member of Reparations Task Force)

Minutes by Destinee Pierce (REIB)

Meeting Convened at 5:43pm

Agenda

1. Motion to approve the agenda

Councilor Melo Grant motioned to approve. Councilor Gene Bergman seconded. Unanimous pass.

2. Motion to approve the meeting minutes from May 21, 2024

<https://burlingtonvt.portal.civicclerk.com/event/7074/files/agenda/10871>

Councilor Melo Grant motioned to approve. Councilor Gene Bergman seconded. Unanimous pass.

3. Public Forum

- Mark Hughes (Community Member) addressed his concern about the lack of updates and enabling language regarding the REIB charter that establishes a commission and then about one that would codify the department, suggesting a public statement about the work REIB will be doing.
- Hughes expressed frustrations around the Reparations Task Force report not reflecting true representations of their work. Councilor Melo affirms it will be reviewed and will schedule a meeting with the mayor to get a report review timeline.
- Hughes voiced urgency to implement a commission that allows BIPOC engagement with the City.
- Councilor Gene recommends putting Charter/Commission/REIB on the next agenda that involves the administration.

4. REIB Updates

- Phet Keomanyvanh (REIB) discussed her new role as REIB Interim Director.
- Councilor Gene agreed to collaborate with REIB to review and borrow charters from other departments.

• **Juneteenth and Embrace & Belonging Event Highlights**

- Phet Keomanyvanh celebrated that each event was a success. Claims lessons were learned from both events.

• **REIB Administration Staff position**

- Phet Keomanyvanh announces a new full-time, limited-service position opening to help with administrative office needs. This position will involve customer service, financial administration, and other additional support.

• **Empowerment Fund grant update and FY 25 process**

- Christian Berry (REIB) updated the group on the Empowerment Fund granting process. Proposed a Town Hall or Community Forum to make sure the community is educated on the grant and how to apply.
- Councilor Bergman recommends showing recognition of the positive impacts past grants have had and how they have impacted communities.

• **Israel/Gaza**

- Christian Berry shared a potential partnership with CJC after being contacted by member Rachel Jolly. The goal is to facilitate three (3) community dialogues. Councilors Bergman and Grant verbally agreed that it's a conversation that needs to be had.

5. BIPOC Community Engagement

- Councilor Melo Grant leads with 1) Info from Gunfire Task Force and 2) Presentation/discussion focus on Congolese community and relationships with the Police Department. Grant stressed issues around autopsies and the lack of cultural understanding/empathy. Aims to sponsor these conversations and increase engagement with BIPOC communities. Katie Greene (REIB) announced that the REIB is seeking funding sources to support long-term community conversation series.
- Councilor Gene underscored the need to have call-to-actions with these with the events.

6. Community Forums

- Christian Berry clarified the differentiation of Public Forum vs Community Forum. Addressed the need to have intentionality when inviting community to these meetings and more planning for particular topics to be discussed.
- Mark Hughes announced upcoming community event Vermont First African Landing Day.
- The meeting concluded with Phet suggesting a consistent meeting date to ensure a more consistent availability from community and committee members.

Next Meetings: August Wednesday 28th. September Tuesday 17th October for the 3rd Tuesday at 5:30-7pm

7. Motion to Adjourn

Council Grant motioned to adjourn. Councilor Bergman seconded. Unanimous pass.

Please click the link below to join the webinar:

<https://zoom.us/j/96748219917?pwd=RWpYY2x3TTlZM2Y1RmlleUhWRmwxUT09>

Meeting ID: 967 4821 9917