

JOHNSON RACIAL JUSTICE AND SOCIAL EQUITY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
JOHNSON PUBLIC LIBRARY
THURSDAY, JUNE 9, 2022

Present:

Committee Members: Jeff Bickford, Offie Wortham, Adelle MacDowell, Shayne Spence, Raven Pfaff

Absent: Sophia Berard

Note: All votes taken are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

1. Call to Order

Jeff called the meeting to order at 6:37.

2. Approve Meeting Minutes from 5/5/22

Shayne moved to approve the minutes of May 5, 2022 and the motion was passed.

3. Review Agenda and Any Adjustments, Changes, Additions

Shayne asked to move the Frederick Douglass item to be next so it could be discussed before he had to leave.

4. Frederick Douglass Reading – Reports and Needs

Shayne read the language he had come up with for notices he would like to send out to the paper, radio station, Front Porch Forum, etc. The event is planned for July 9 at 3:00 p.m. at Legion Field. The committee thought the language sounded fine.

Jeff asked if Shayne has gotten a signed use agreement from the town. Shayne said not yet. Jeff said he will plan on submitting a facility use request at the next selectboard meeting after running it by Shayne and Offie. He suggested checking the town calendar to make sure that nothing else is scheduled for that day and time.

5. Juneteenth Planning and Reports

Adelle put information about the Juneteenth event in the Lamoille Union school paper and sent it to the News & Citizen. Jeff will put it on Front Porch Forum. He said he has not heard back from LN. Adelle said LN asked her the other day about how long the story time at the Juneteenth event would be and whether the committee wants her to pick books or if there are specific ones the committee wants her to read. Jeff said she can have it be as short or as long as she wants, up to an hour, and she can read whatever books she wants. Our plan is to sign out some relevant books ahead of time. If there are specific ones she wants there, he is happy to get them. Offie asked if the piece he wrote about Juneteenth will be distributed. Jeff said yes; we are planning to have it there.

Jeff said he would like to offer LN a stipend. He does not know if she and Sophie had discussed that previously. He was thinking of \$100. We have money in our budget to be able to do that. Shayne asked for more information about who LN is. Jeff said she volunteers at the library and reads to kids regularly. She is a woman of color. Shayne said sometimes people's previous political statements or actions can be a distraction. Since he doesn't know anything about her he doesn't know if he can support using the town's money to pay her. He would like to be able to have a conversation with her. Offie said it would have been good for

the committee to have been able to meet her. Jeff said we have mentioned multiple times at multiple meetings that we wanted to have her at the event and we have previously talked about compensating people of color for helping with our educational process. Shayne said he is just concerned because he doesn't know this person and he does not want there to be any controversy about giving her money. Adelle said she feels like she is well known and respected in the community. She is well liked by people who come to the library and she is involved with things in Cambridge. Donna mentioned that LN was featured in a recent News & Citizen article. Adelle said she has been involved in demonstrations at the Jeffersonville roundabout on Sundays that started after George Floyd's death. Shayne said he will agree to paying her but in the future he will probably suggest meeting people that we are going to compensate. **Adelle moved to offer LN Bethea a \$100 stipend for her help at the Juneteenth event and the motion was passed.**

Jeff said he will pick up snacks and work with Kristen MacDowell to select and sign out a selection of books. Offie said he will not be able to be at the event because he has to go to a family reunion. Raven said she should have the banner done by Juneteenth. She has been working on it. She doesn't know how we will want to hang it. It has grommets on each corner. She believes she will still be able to be at the event but that could possibly change. It was agreed that Adelle will reach out to LN to let her know how we see her participating in the event and that we are offering her a stipend. Adelle said she can help set up. Jeff suggested that she get there about 4:30. He will plan to get there just after 4:00. (*Shayne left at 6:55.*)

6. Other Business

The next regularly scheduled meeting falls on July 7. Jeff asked if that day works for people. Adelle said there is a chance she will be traveling but she probably can come. Raven said she thinks it will work for her.

Adelle said in September she will be leaving for school so there will be a vacancy on the committee. She will be able to make it on the first Thursday in September. Jeff asked if she is planning to step down or stay connected remotely. Adelle said she would like to stay connected but she might not be able to be a very active member so she thinks it is best for her to step down. Jeff said he could ask the selectboard in July to post the vacancy, then the committee could meet with candidates in August and present a recommendation to the selectboard and the person appointed by the selectboard could start as a voting member at the October meeting.

Jeff said he recently overheard some discussion at a Healthy Lamoille Valley steering team meeting about ways substance-related companies target minority populations. He doesn't know if there is space for that in this committee's work, but there could be

7. Adjourn

Offie moved to adjourn at 7:02 and the motion was passed.