

JOHNSON RACIAL JUSTICE AND SOCIAL EQUITY COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES  
JOHNSON MUNICIPAL BUILDING  
THURSDAY, MAY 4, 2023

**Present:**

Committee Members: Sophia Berard, Offie Wortham, Jeff Bickford, Jackie Stanton

Others: Shayne Spence,

**Absent:** Johna Keefe

**Note: All votes taken are unanimous unless otherwise noted.**

**1. Call to Order**

Sophia called the meeting to order at 6:37.

**2. Review Agenda and Any Adjustments, Changes, Additions**

No changes to the agenda were needed.

**3. Approve Meeting Minutes from 3/2/23**

Jackie asked if the three new people who came to the March 2 meeting were NVU students.

Shayne said two of the three were. Jackie asked if the committee got their contact information.

Sophia said no. Jackie said we should do that when people come to meetings. She may be able to get information on the NVU students.

**Sophia moved to approve the minutes of March 2, 2023, Offie seconded and the motion was passed.**

**4. IDEAL Proposal**

Sophia said the committee was waiting until the April meeting to give the IDEAL proposal to the selectboard but the committee did not end up meeting in April. The proposal could go to the selectboard if someone wants to go to their next meeting. Jeff said he can't go to the next meeting but he could go to the second one in May.

Jackie said she thinks it is worth following up to see whether towns can join IDEAL at any time. She doesn't even know if it is possible to join at this point. She could find out.

Jeff said he will send information on the IDEAL proposal to the selectboard and ask to be on the agenda for the second meeting in May. Jackie said she can go too. Sophia said she thinks she can also.

**5. Creative Discourse Group / United Way – Regional Equity Audit**

Jackie said Creative Discourse is an organization United Way hired with a grant they got to help do a regional equity audit. A committee of 10 people called the Lamoille Equity Team has been working with them. Jackie is one of them. There were 9 members and then she asked Kyle Nuse to join. The work will continue until September. So far they have mapped out existing equity organizations and activities. They are now developing the equity assessment, which will be a survey that will go out to citizens of the towns in the Lamoille Valley. There will be community listening sessions and people will be offered stipends to tell their stories.

Offie asked who created the Creative Discourse group. Jackie said two women created it as their business.

Jackie said after the listening sessions and the results of the equity assessment there will be something that they are calling a summit right now. They may come up with a better word. The goals are to connect people and organizations doing equity work, raise awareness, build capacity, create shared vision, etc.

Shayne said he imagines information will come out of this that selectboards can use.

Jackie said she is serving on the Lamoille Equity Team as an employee of the Lamoille Family Center. She also represents this group.

#### **6. Juneteenth**

Offie said he ordered a Juneteenth flag but he thinks it is too small. He showed it to the group. He will order a larger one. He suggested flying it on the village green for Juneteenth. Shayne said that will need to go through the village trustees. It was agreed to try to put the Juneteenth flag proposal on the agenda for the June 12 trustee board meeting.

Shayne said he sent the invoice to Rosemary for the deposit for the food. He hasn't confirmed that it was paid.

Jackie said the dancers are scheduled to perform from 5:20 to 5:40.

Jackie said she is not feeling confident in this event. People on this committee have not been following through on things. People have not been showing up to meetings or answering emails.. There are a lot of details still to be worked out. We need to keep the food warm We need a table, cutlery, and drinks. We need to take care of trash. We need a rain site.

Jackie asked Jeff what his capacity is. He said he could take on an aspect of the event like food, arranging for a rain site, or marketing.

Sophia agreed that it is difficult and frustrating that not everyone responds to emails or shows up to meetings.

Jackie asked if Offie and Johna have been communicating about grant writing. Offie said no, he hasn't heard from her and hasn't reached out to her. Sophia said when she last ran into Johna she said her health was not good. Jeff applied for the Rapid Response Grant, so that is done. He asked for \$1,000.

It was discussed that the committee will need facilities use permits for the village green and Legion Field. Committee members are not sure whether the portable toilet is still on Legion Field. Sophia said she and Jasmine Yuris have talked about using the bread oven to make cornbread.

The committee discussed whether members have the capacity to pull off the Juneteenth event. Sophia said she wonders if we need to pare it down to something more attainable. Jeff said he thinks it would be a good idea to pare it back. He suggested that if the deposit for the food has not been paid that would be the easiest thing to let go of. If the deposit has been paid, it may be possible to simplify the menu. We could cancel the performance. Or we could use just one location instead of trying to move locations, which adds complications. Sophia asked if the performance

could be on the village green. How big is the group? Jackie said she doesn't know. Jackie said she thinks we need a rain location.

Sophia said if we cut out the food and the bread oven, she could take on logistics and planning engaging things for children. Shayne said Jae Basiliere is interested in going. Sophia said she thinks we could pull off the event if we have it in one location with no food. Jeff said if the deposit is already paid then he suggests simplifying the menu. Jackie asked if food trucks will be on the village green again this year. Committee members were not sure. Jeff said he thinks he and Shayne can handle the food. Jackie suggested the demonstration could begin at 4:30 and then the performance would be from 5:20 to 5:40. She suggested the Lowe Lecture Hall as a possible rain site. Sophia will do marketing and publicity. Jackie will help. Jeff and Shayne will handle the food if there is food. Offie will print out educational materials to bring to the event as well as getting the flag. Jackie said she has some materials too. She can reach out to the Vermont Studio Center about using the Lowe Lecture Hall. Jeff said he will submit the facilities use application for the village green. Sophia will submit the request for the Juneteenth flag on the village green flagpole.

It was agreed to schedule a special meeting for May 9 at 6:30. Jeff said he will check tomorrow to see if the meeting room in the municipal building is available.

Shayne said he is willing to serve as unofficial selectboard liaison. If the committee wants an official selectboard liaison they should make a request to the selectboard and he will probably volunteer. Shayne left at 8:07.

Jeff said he will take care of warning the special meeting. Sophia said she will ask to be on the June 12 village trustee board agenda for the flag request.

**7. *Rotation of Co-Chair Positions***

Jeff said he feels committees he has been on have been more productive when they do not have the same people always chairing them. He is interested in rotating out of the co-chair position. But he wants to remain active on the committee. Sophia said she likes the idea of healthy rotation. But she feels we need a full committee to be able to rotate co-chairs. She said Jeff can step down now if he wants to or wait a meeting or two to see if we get someone else on the committee. Jeff said he thinks he will step out of the co-chair role at the July meeting. Maybe by then we will have been able to gain another member. Sophia said she would also be open to rotating out of the co-chair position to spread the work around but she will remain co-chair until the time is right.

**8. *Committee Concerns***

The committee agreed that the concerns about how the committee is functioning had already been sufficiently discussed. It was agreed to try to contact Johna and find out if she still has interest and ability to serve on the committee.

**9. *Public Comment***

No members of the public were present

**10. *Adjourn***

Sophia moved to adjourn, the motion was passed and the meeting was adjourned at 8:24.