

ANTI-RACISM TASK FORCE
MEETING MINUTES
MIDDLETOWN, CONNECTICUT

REGULAR MEETING
MARCH 14, 2022

Present: Darnell Ford, Sacha Armstrong-Crockett, Jeanette Blackwell, Stacey Barka, Valerie Light, Kayon Morgan, Kirk Hart, Patricia Alston, Sam Rival, Ed Ford, Brian Gartner, Staff: Human Resource Specialist Cayla Jones

1. **Call to Order.** Chairperson Ford called the meeting to order with Chairperson Crockett at 6:10 p.m.
2. **Public Comment on Agenda Items.** None
3. **New Business.**
4. **Approval of Minutes for the December 13, 2021 Regular Meeting of the Anti-Racism Task Force.**

MOTION: Task Force Member Barka made a motion to approve the minutes for the December 13, 2021 meeting. Task Force Member Morgan seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously at 6:13 p.m.

5. **New Business**

A. Announcement to Acknowledge Women’s Month.

Chairperson Ford took the moment to acknowledge Woman’s Month by saying, “Happy Women’s Month to all powerful woman out there”. He then passed it over to Chairperson Crockett, while she honored Councilwoman Jeanette White-Blackwell by reading a biography of Councilwoman Blackwell; highlighting her accomplishments of making history, by becoming the first black woman ever elected to the City of Middletown Common Council. Councilwoman Blackwell expressed her gratitude and thanked both Chairperson Ford and Chairperson Crockett for carving time out for her on the agenda.

Councilwoman White-Blackwell gave thanks to the entire Task Force for recognizing her. She went on to expressing how much of an honor it has been to serve and how she felt the Anti-Racism Task Force was uniquely positioned to get a lot of work done. Other Task Force Members spoke and honored Councilwoman Jeanette Blackwell.

B. Discussion of forums and invite speakers to the meeting.

Chairperson Ford opened up the conversation to discuss future forums and speakers based on individual Work Groups. Task Member Stacey Barka informed the Task Force of her responsibility as the leader of the Criminal Justice Work Group. She also informed the Task Force of an upcoming Working Group meeting. Further discussion ensued regarding ideas of speakers and forums.

C. Task Force Communication.

1. Introduction and discussion of Box Drive – Chairperson Ford moved the conversation forward with a discuss of Box Drive. He mentioned the feedback received from Task Force Members regarding the need to communicate effectively. As a response to the feedback the implementation of Box Drive will help support effective communication. Staff: Cayla Jones introduced Box Drive to the group and shared details of how the program will be useful for the Task Force.

2. Cayla Jones' Role as tasked to the Anti-Racism Task Force – Chairperson Ford introduced Cayla Jones and explained her role and responsibility to the Anti-Racism Task Force. Chairperson Ford indicated that there were discussions with Mayor Florsheim and Director of Human Resources Justin Richards regarding the Cayla Jones' continued role and as of now, there are no limitations and constraints. Ford explained that Ms. Jones is available to all Task Force members and could be reach by email. All communication regarding recommendations, research, etc. should go through Ms. Jones and or the Box Drive program.

3. Deadlines for submission of Agenda Items – It was established that all Agenda Items should be submitted to Cayla Jones by no later than the Wednesday before the next scheduled meeting.

D. Upcoming Events Chairperson Ford asked the Taskforce if they'd like to have some involvement in the LGBTQIA and JUNETEENTH event, as there had been an invitation extended. Also, requested feedback from Task Force Members on how they'd wish to participate in both events.

MOTION: Councilwoman Blackwell made a motion to invite Erica Hunter the organizer of the Middletown Juneteenth Event, to discuss the Anti-Racism Task Force's involvement in the event. The motion was seconded by Task Member Valerie Light. The motion passed unanimously at 7:08 p.m.

MOTION: Councilwoman Blackwell made a motion to invite someone from the LGBTQIA Commission to discuss the Anti-Racism Task Force's involvement in the upcoming June 2022 event. The motion was seconded by Task Member Sam Rival. The motion passed unanimously at 7:13 p.m.

E. Discussions of CRB recommendations

Chairperson explained that Director Camacho of The Justice Collaboratory at Yale Law School is excited to support the Task Force with the language in a CRB recommendation. Chairperson Crocket asked for feedback on moving forward with the Director Camacho and the Yale Law School, The Justice Collaboratory.

MOTION: Task Force Member, and Leader of the Criminal Justice Work Group, Stacey Barka made a motion to the collaboration of Anti-Racism Task Force and The Yale Law School, Justice Collaboratory. Councilwoman Blackwell second the motion and then

asked for the motion to be tabled for further discussion. Councilwoman Blackwell mentioned that she was excited about working with the Jorge Camacho and Justice Collaboratory. She also stated that although the proposed collaboration with the Yale students would be free, there is an allocated \$200,000.00 Anti-Racism Task Force budget, which has been approved by the Common Council. Further discussion ensued regarding the motion. Chairperson Ford made an effort to explain that the Justice Collaboratory will be a consultant for the Task Force, and will not be used for legal advice or as legal counsel. The motion passed unanimously.

MOTION: Councilman Ed Ford made a motion to extend an invite to Chairperson Ava Hart of the Human Relations Commission, to collaborate with the Anti-Racism Task Force's Criminal Justice Themed Work Group, with a focus on the Community Review Board topic. Council Woman Blackwell second the motion. The motion was tabled by Chairperson Ford for discussion. After further discussion the motion did not move forward. 5-3

Yes

1. Ed Ford
2. Jeanette Blackwell,
3. Valerie Light –

Abstain

1. Kayon Morgan
2. Sam Rival
3. Brian Gartner

NO

1. Sacha Crockett
2. Stacey Barka
3. Kirk Hart
4. Pat Alston
5. Darnell Ford

A. NCCJ Report (standing item);

Chairperson Ford highlighted the importance of the themed assigned work groups. Chairperson Crockett took over by reviewing and clarifying assigned work groups by organized by theme. In addition to clarifying assignments Chairperson reminded the Task Force that they could change their theme focus and participate in any work group.

6. Adjournment: Chairperson Ford asked for a motion to adjourn. Task Member Valerie Light gave a motion adjourn the meeting. Councilwoman Blackwell seconded. The meeting ended at 8:06 p.m.