

**Racial Equity Advisory Panel (REAP)
Steel Community Room
Waterbury Municipal Building
Minutes
October 24, 2019**

PRESENT: Panel members: Andrea Brett, Chair, Stephanie Seguino, Karen Richards (minutes); Nancy Waples and Clarence Davis, (on the phone), Guest: Xusana Davis, Executive Director of Racial Equity.

BUSINESS MEETING:

The meeting was called to order by Chair Brett at 5:06 p.m.

Agenda Amendments: The agenda was amended to add:

-Minutes of the September 25, 2019 meeting.

Minutes:

Motion: Waples made a motion to accept the minutes of the September 25, 2019 meeting. The motion was seconded by Richards. Vote: 4-0 (Seguino not yet present).

Cultural Commemoration proposal from Ms. Davis: Prior to the meeting, Ms. Davis had shared a proposed plan for the Administration to commemorate dates that are important to groups, whose holidays are traditionally under-represented, or are outside the awareness of the majority. The calendar is chronological and attempts categorize them for different levels of acknowledgement based on the numbers of people within the state to whom the holiday is important.

Members pointed out that for many families, who celebrate these holidays, it is necessary to take personal time off from work or miss the holiday because they are not ones traditionally supported by the state or private employers. It was suggested that the executive director (ED) approach the administration about creating a floating holiday that could be used by any employee for the religious or secular celebrations. The panel recognizes that this is a bargaining issue with VSEA but feels it is an important subject to raise.

Public Engagement Strategy: It was suggested to the Panel by a member of the public that the REAP meetings be moved around the state so that members of the public can better participate. The Panel and the ED feel that forums, around the state, where the ED can gather specific input from the public, helpful to her work, would be a better use of time than simply rotating meetings. It was decided that the REAP and the ED will sponsor two forums, one in late March/early April and the other in June, to coincide with Loving

Day and Juneteenth, to gather input from the public. The forums would likely be held in Bennington, Brattleboro and Rutland. More discussion regarding the format and partnerships with local groups will occur at the December REAP meeting.

New Business:

Reports to House and Senate Government Operations Committee: Per the authorizing legislation, both the Panel and the ED are to report to these committees, on or after January 15th each year. The legislation does not require a written report. The Panel and the ED will discuss this issue further at the December meeting.

Budget: The Panel's FY20 budget is \$243,000, which covers both the ED's salary and benefits as well as panel expenses. The legislation pays for the position through a surcharge on all state agencies. The Panel discussed ED expenditures and determined that a threshold should be set for the ED to seek panel approval beforehand.

Motion: Seguino made a motion to set an expenditure threshold for executive director approval at \$1000. The motion was seconded by C. Davis. Vote: 5-0.

Government Alliance on Racial Equity (GARE): GARE is a national network of local and state governments working to "achieve racial equity and advance opportunities for all." It is a joint project of the new Race Forward and the Haas Institute for a Fair & Inclusive Society, both organizations that are aimed at transforming society to create sustainability and inclusivity by engaging policymakers, academia, and other institutions. The GARE Membership Network is a professional peer-to-peer network of more than 145 members that enables government racial equity directors/leaders and subject matter experts to exchange information, collaborate in their practice, and develop solutions to racial equity challenges. The ED recommends that Vermont join as a core member at a cost of \$10,000 per year. Should we join, it is not clear whether the money would be paid out of the REAP budget or through some other source or sources.

Motion: Seguino made a motion that the Panel recommend joining GARE as a core member. The motion was seconded by Waples. Vote: 5-0.

2020 REAP Meeting Schedule: The Panel decided to change the meetings from the fourth Wednesday to the fourth Thursday to accommodate a member's work schedule. The meetings will continue from 5:00-7:00 p.m. at places to be determined, unless otherwise announced. The tentative schedule is:

January 23, 2020

March will be a forum (date, time and place to be determined)

May 28, 2020

June 19, 2020 will be a forum (time and place to be determined)
October 29, 2020
December 3, 2020

Next Meeting:

December 4, 2019- 5:00-7:00 p.m.- Room #12, City Hall, Burlington

Waples made a motion to adjourn which was seconded by Seguino. Vote 4-0.
(Davis left the meeting at 6:20).

Whereby the meeting adjourned at 6:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen L. Richards

Karen L. Richards, Panel Member