

Racial Equity Advisory Panel (REAP)
Via Microsoft Teams
AMENDED Minutes
March 16, 2022

PRESENT: Panel members: Andrea Brett, Chair, Karen Richards (minutes), Clarence Davis. Guests: Catherine Russell, Panel Assistant, Xusana Davis, Executive Director of Racial Equity (EDRE), Shalini Suryanarayana, Racial Equity Education and Outreach Associate, Jay Greene, Racial Equity Data and Policy Analyst, Cary Brown, Executive Director of the Vermont Commission on Women.

BUSINESS MEETING:

The meeting was called to order by Chair Brett at 6:04 p.m.

- A. Panel Introductions: Jay Greene, who recently joined the Racial Equity staff as the Data and Policy Analyst introduced himself to the panel.
- B. Agenda approval: No changes or additions were suggested for the agenda.
- C. Approval of the Minutes: The minutes of the 2/16/22 Panel meeting were approved unanimously as written.
- D. Legislative Updates:
 - a. H. 546: House Appropriations included funding for the bill in their budget. The bill creates a Division of Racial Justice that would include current REO staff, and three data analysts, whose primary focus would be on criminal justice disparities.
 - b. IDEAL VT which would support equity projects at the municipal level has been given tentative funding by House Appropriations but they made it clear that funding may be sacrificed if necessary. The state would have a convening role and support participants with workshops and technical assistance. The bill has the support of the Vermont League of Cities and Towns and the Vermont Community Foundation, which will provide \$10,000 to support these efforts.
 - c. S.147: would require a unified language access plan (LAP) for all executive branch agencies. The bill did not make crossover and is likely dead.
 - d. S. 148: The Conservation Law Foundation and other advocates submitted a draft budget that included a request for AOA/ORE staff to manage the community participation grant funding. Since then, EDRE Xusana Davis and Jay Greene have encouraged the stakeholders who are consulting on the bill to look to organizations with existing grantmaking capacity like the Natural Resources Conservation Council and its funding entity Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets for assistance with managing the community participation grant instead of AOA/ORE. This is an ongoing conversation between advocates and the Office of Racial Equity.
 - e. H. 320 and H. 329 are employment discrimination bills which would prevent employers from forcing employees who have made complaints to agree never to work for the entity or its subsidiaries again. H. 329 would eliminate the severe and pervasive standard of proof. This has stalled due to educational entities who have concerns about its application to students and monitoring of out of school behavior.
 - f. H. 250 is a law enforcement bill that originally included use of force but that has become its own bill. The remaining provisions would update law enforcement requirements for data collection and add additional hours of equity and diversity training.

- g. S. 273 which would support homeownership ownership opportunities for BIPOC will not make it out of committee.
- h. Native-themed mascot legislation has passed the House and responsibility will be given to the State Board of Education to manage it. It is likely to pass the Senate as well.

E. New Business:

Panel Retreat: The ED spoke with the Chief Performance Officer about getting a Green Belt to facilitate a retreat by the Panel to discuss its role. The Panel is looking at an in-person retreat unless COVID takes another bad turn. Those present settled on early June. The Panel Assistant or the ED will send calendar dates. We will discuss the agenda at the next meeting which will be April 13 to accommodate school vacation schedules the week of our normal meeting.

- F. Public Comment: Cary Brown, introduced herself and indicated her interest in the Panel's work.

II. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:43.

Next Meetings: April 13, 2022.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen L. Richards

Karen L. Richards, Panel Member