

Champaign County Racial Justice Task Force (RJTF)
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, July 13, 2017
6:30 pm

I. Call to Order

Sam Byndom called the meeting to order at 6:35 pm.

II. Roll Call

Members Present: M. Ar-Raheem, S. Balgoyen, L. Branham, S. Byndom, E. Dee, A. Felty, D. Harber, R. Hughes, A. James, E. Patt, S. Silver, D. Turner, G. Walter.

Members Absent: A. Evans, S. Lerner, C. Randolph, H. Ross, A. Shelton.

III. Approval of Agenda

Esther Patt moved to approve the agenda for the meeting. Sara Balgoyen seconded the motion. The motion carried.

IV. Approval of Minutes

Esther Patt moved to approve the agenda. Artice James seconded the motion. Maryam Ar-Raheem made a friendly amendment to add the names of the 16 individuals who were extended for the task force to the minutes. Esther and Artice seconded the motion. The motion carried with the amendment to add in the 16 names.

V. Public Participation

James Kilgore

James noted how happy he was to be here at this point in the Racial Justice Task Force. He wanted to make general comments about some of the drafts he has looked through. He believes the task force should state clearly how important the work of the RJTF has been and how difficult it has been because of limited resources. In particular, he thinks the task force should trumpet the collaboration with Dr. Bev Wilson's class. He also thinks it important to put forward measures to make the County Board accountable to the recommendations the task force has put forward. He also thinks the County Board should consider the composition of the groups who are under the County Board who work with the criminal justice system. Third, he thinks the County Board should pass a resolution acknowledging the disparities, racial bias, and structural racism in the criminal justice system. Fourth, he wants the RJTF to find more uniformity in style, including accessibility for the general public (easier to navigate). Lastly, he thinks it is important that the task force talk about group/racial dynamics of the body. He recommended shifting a lot of references and text to appendices.

VI. Presentations: Report Sections

Juvenile Justice

Sara spoke about the structure of the Juvenile Justice Report. She is looking for help on how to recommend ways to lower the number of kids going to the detention center. She spoke about eliminating school resource officers. She wants feedback on how to strengthen recommendation 4 about training. The group gave feedback for Sara's report.

Restorative Justice and Practices

Lynn introduced this draft which includes examples of restorative practices in criminal justice systems. She discussed those practices, the connection between restorative justice and reducing racial disparities, and the recommendations of the subcommittee. The group discussed how best to organize the recommendation of a planning committee for restorative justice and practices. The idea of recommending a coordinating council as an overall recommendation by the task force was proposed.

Police Practices

Ryan outlined the structure and listed the recommendations. Artice noted more ideas for the community involvement piece. Amy asked specifically why the subcommittee wanted to recommend the continuation of the police training institute. The group discussed the PTI's value to the community, positive or negative, and how to properly include it in the report. Ryan will add more language clarifying the position of the group.

Community Engagement

David highlighted the text and a few updates that have been made to the Community Engagement section. The section is related to how the community engages with the issue of racial disparities in Champaign County, and the County Board's role in that.

VII. Task Force Member Comments/Updates

Esther moved to suspend the rules to allow an audience member to speak. Maryam seconded the motion. The motion carried.

David Sutton

David suggested coupling the community engagement with the police training by having the police engage in workshops in equal numbers with community members who are beginning reentry.

Plan for final report draft and final July meeting.

Sara urged that each subcommittee come up with specifics on how much money they are asking for specific recommendations to share with the County Board.

Sam suggested that we continue to look at revisions in two weeks and then the report will be continually worked on after that. Gerry suggested a conference committee. Esther suggested a specific budget recommendations agenda item for next week's meeting.

VIII. New Business

There was no new business.

IX. Adjournment

Artice moved to adjourn.