

Champaign County Racial Justice Task Force (RJTF)
Meeting Minutes
Thursday March 10, 2016
6:30 pm

I. Call to Order

Facilitator Samuel Byndom called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

II. Roll Call

Members Present:

S. Balgoyen, L. Branham, K. Bryan, P. Burnside, S. Byndom, A. Evans, A. Felty, R. Hughes, A. James, , E. Patt, K. Schneider, S. Silver, D. Turner, G. Walter, M. Ar-Raheem, E. Dee.

Members Absent:

B. Butts, D. Harber, F. Turner, R. Byrd, W. Feinberg, C. Randolph.

Members introduced themselves and their occupations to the group.

III. Approval of Agenda

Sarah Balgoyen moved to accept the agenda. Kevin Schneider seconded the motion. The motion carried.

IV. Approval of Minutes

Facilitator Byndom opened discussion of the meeting minutes from the February 25th meeting. Lynn Branham stated that she was not the member who “expressed concerns about other structural issues not being included in the mission statement such as education, housing, and policing” and that it was Pamela Burnside who made this comment. She asked that her name be changed to Pamela’s name.

Esther Pratt moved to approve the meeting minutes with the change that Lynn recommended. Kevin Schneider seconded the motion. The motion carried.

V. Public Participation

1. **Dottie Vera Weiss** thanked the members for their commitment of time to the task force. She encouraged the task force to do public participation like the City of Urbana’s city council meetings. She gave a summary of these rules: speakers may speak at the beginning of the meeting or during the discussion of the topic they are interested in; speakers can have their support for or against a topic recorded; and speakers can engage in dialogue with the councilmembers. She shared copies of a written summary of these rules with the task force.
2. **Christina Khan** is a 3 year resident of Champaign-Urbana who works with Build Programs Not Jails (BPNJ). She offered a personal thank you for the work the task force is doing. She spoke on behalf of BPNJ and said that the group is excited that the RJTF is happening. She explained that previous programs have had no success getting their

voices heard. She said that the trust of people impacted by the criminal justice system towards the system itself is very low. She suggested creating a framework to approach the community so it is clear what the task force is looking for when it reaches out to the community. BPNJ would like to give formal presentations on the work that has been done in the past. She also stated that Black Lives Matter is doing a survey that should be published at the end of March. The website for BPNJ is <http://www.programsnotjails.wordpress.com>.

VI. Task Force Member Updates

Artice James and Amy Felty presented updates from their meeting with state attorney David [REDACTED]. They asked a series of questions:

- 1) *How can members communicate outside of meetings? Can they share articles of interest with no discussion?* Yes, the RJTF can have a public Dropbox or other site for uploading articles/items of interest, but they cannot discuss what is posted; this includes text messages and emails related to the website. They can talk on the phone to discuss items, though. Artice clarified that one on one communication, even via email, is OK, but that members cannot “Reply All”.
- 2) *Can the County Board create a site for uploading items or place a link to a similar site on the County Board website?* Yes.
- 3) *Can the RJTF have a site for public input?* Yes, but no discussion would be allowed.
- 4) *Can we have Facebook or other social media sites?* Yes, but the group can’t discuss anything on the site.
- 5) *Is everything that is shared “FOIA-able”?* Yes. He recommended appointing 1 or 2 people to respond to any FOIA requests; this must be done within 5 days of the request. There was confusion in the group about whether the state’s attorney’s office would help with these requests.
- 6) *Would it be a violation of copyright laws if articles/other items were shared on a public site?* Unknown – the attorney will reply to this question later.

He stressed that if less than 6 members are discussing or communicating things of substance, then the lines of what is a meeting versus what is not a meeting blur quickly and he recommends not doing that.

- 7) *Can we attend other meetings?*

Yes, one member at the meeting may ask for clarification, and a second member could ask for more clarification, but this could become a comment.

- 8) *Relating to subcommittees*

Subcommittees will have their own majority quorum. The task force cannot ask for volunteers, but task force members can volunteer themselves.

Subcommittees must follow Open Meetings Act rules: must post the meeting time and agenda, the location must be ADA accessible, and minutes must be taken, approved, and posted.

9) *Any items may be brought up during a meeting, but only items on the agenda can be voted or acted on.*

10) *What kinds of subcommittee structures can be used?* Any, but they must follow Open Meetings Act.

11) *Be very mindful of the Open Meeting Act Rules.*

The RJTF can make its own rules on who can speak on behalf of the group. The chair is allowed to answer true questions on behalf of the task force. The RJTF can make its own rules for how to run meetings. It is helpful to have a parliamentarian. Rules must be adopted by a majority vote and can be changed. Having public participation rules is good, but it can prevent people from speaking. People who address the task force do not have to give their name or where they are from. The chair can make meeting agendas. Phone calls are not subject to FOIA. The attorney said that if the members have more questions, they may ask him.

Samuel Byndom spoke with Kay Rhodes (County Administration) about communications and is waiting on further guidance for methods of communication.

VII. Meeting Rules

Artice James suggested adopting the simplified Robert's Rules of Order. Kevin Schneider agreed. Demario Turner motioned to appoint a Parliamentarian. Gerald Walter seconded the motion. The motion carried. Kevin Schneider volunteered to be the Parliamentarian and was appointed by a vocal vote.

Artice moved to adopt the simplified Robert's Rules of Order as the meeting rules for the task force. Demario seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Ryan Hughes volunteered to be an alternate secretary. Kevin moved to appoint Ryan. Esther Patt seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Sara Balgoyen volunteered to serve as the alternate facilitator. Kevin moved to appoint Sara. Artice seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Gerald Walter introduced **Dottie Vera Weiss's** comment regarding public participation, stating that he liked the ideas presented. Kevin Schneider agreed and said the public participation should be back and forth because he wants to be able to address the speaker at the time they are speaking. He noted that the task force rules should allow for open discussion. Kim Bryan asked how the time limit for public participation would change. Esther suggested that the task force only be allowed to ask questions to the public to prevent debating; she does not want to take up

too much time for public comments. Gerry clarified that he doesn't want a back and forth between task force members and the public, but only wants the public to be allowed to speak at any time during the meeting. Kim asked for clarification. Maryam said that clarifying questions may be asked, with no discussion; if a clarification question from the task force is necessary later on, that would be allowed. Gerry stated that the task force would be out of order if it discussed something during public participation.

Kevin explained that he is concerned that the task force wouldn't be able to vote on the public's comments. Alex Evans suggested that Dottie be brought back up to clarify. Dottie explained that her idea of discussion would be a series of comments where the task force is trying to get a clear understanding of the person's comments. Amy commented that she wants members to be recognized before they talk and suggested that the facilitator do this. Artice suggested one minute be allowed for a task force member to respond to the public for a clarification question. Gerry suggested allowing 5 minutes for a response and then agreeing to cut people off at this time in order to keep it simple.

Kevin tried to summarize the discussion and introduce rules: rules would be 5 minutes of uninterrupted time for the public member to speak, possibly allowing 3 clarification questions, with a time limit for discussion/response, and the chair could elect to call a person back up to the microphone. He also stated that the task force could override the rules by a vote. Kevin suggested telling the public in advance of the rules, and Kim suggested placing the rules on the public participation sheets. Maryam suggested that members of the public should be allowed to share their remaining time with someone else. Kim suggested that if someone wants to give a presentation with a group of people, they should ask the task force in advance. Maryam noted that she was not referring to a group of people sabotaging the meeting process. Alex asked to be on record stating that policies and rules are the reasons that the task force is present, because the people struggling with the criminal justice system are tired of rules and policies; he felt that the conversation at the time was circular and doesn't want to inhibit the public. Sarah agreed, saying that the task force was spending too much time on rules without having decided on anything yet. She suggested a "quasi" form of the Urbana City Council rules to allow lots of public participation. Pam Burnside said that she was concerned with giving too much time to public participation and not doing the business of the task force. Kim agreed with Pam saying that she anticipates outside dialogues and meetings with the community and that the rules being discussed would only be applied to the formal task force meetings. Demario agreed saying that he sees both sides and that he thinks time limits are in line with the goals of using time efficiently and that the task force should have a forum for more dialogue outside of meetings. Sara stated that she thinks the task force is being formed in too structured of a way and that listening is the work of the task force. Kevin stated that he was swayed by Alex and Sara.

Gerry moved to adopt rules to have the public identify at what point in the meeting they would like to speak. Pam seconded this motion. The motion carried.

Public participation: **Dolores Henry** addressed the task force and asked who they should talk to about Open Meetings Training. She also asked the task force if they were made aware of the training. The task force responded that all members are required to take the training. She asked if the meeting dates of the task force will be published. Demario responded that the meeting dates are posted on the county's website.

VIII. Community Meetings

Lynn Branham stated that the task force has lots of questions about community meetings and suggested smaller groups to discuss how to facilitate the meetings and get input from the community. Kevin asked whether a group of volunteers could do this. Esther stated that she was concerned that the task force doesn't yet know what it wants people to talk about yet. Ryan Hughes agreed with Esther and with Lynn and suggested that the task force could decide on how to facilitate the meetings based on the input of the volunteer group that Lynn suggested. Sara volunteered to help with the planning of community meetings. She stated that she could work with a few other people to begin planning community events, what they would look like, and what the volunteers' thoughts on those would be. Artice, Maryam, and Pam volunteered to help. Sara asked the task force to send inquiries and ideas about the community meetings to her and volunteered to accept individual emails from the task force and from the community. She volunteered to work on locations, focus areas, questions for the community, facilitation of the meetings, and the logistics of the meetings with Artice, Maryam, and Pam. Kevin suggested starting with the North End Breakfast Club. Ryan suggested creating a list of organizations that would be useful for collaboration. Sara said the volunteers will take more ideas and share them with the group.

IX. Special Guest and Recommended Readings

Lynn said that she and another member of the Community Justice Task Force could present on the work on the task force. Kevin asked how it related to the Build Programs Not Jails presentation suggested earlier, and Lynn explained that it would be a different topic and presentation. Kevin asked Build Programs Not Jails how much they would need to prepare and then to present at a meeting. **Christina** (BPNJ) said that 5 to 10 minutes is possible. Lynn explained that she would present the results and recommendations of the Community Justice Task Force. Kevin suggested that BPNJ contact Samuel Byndom to set up a meeting. Gerry suggested that we have lots of time devoted to presentations. Maryam stated that she would not want three presentations on one agenda because it would be too much information to absorb without any discussion or questions. Pam asked if the Community Justice Task Force created a report. Lynn responded yes. Lynn did not want to present on March 24th when a lot of members would be absent. Esther asked for a show of hands for who would be absent, and three members raised their hands. Kevin said that the task force does not need a presentation at the next meeting.

Public Participation: **Mark Enslin** mentioned the ILPP assessment which is different from the Community Justice Task Force report and stated that it is available online.

Sara asked for an email version of the hard copy of links that were distributed to the task force at its first meeting. She suggested using info from the presentations to introduce the community meetings. She shared that the Seattle Police Department has a great tool about social justice.

Alex suggested reading Chapter 1 of *Beneath the Surface of White Supremacy – Denaturalizing U.S. Racisms Past and Present* by Moon-Kie Jung.

Susan Silver suggested reading *The New Jim Crow* by Michelle Alexander and *America's Original Sin* by Jim Wallace.

Demario stated that he has the study guide and call to action supplement for *The New Jim Crow*.

Esther shared that the City of Urbana has a report on traffic stops that was done in conjunction with the Illinois Department of Transportation. She also shared that Community Elements is sponsoring a re-entry resume fair at the Illinois Terminal Building.

Kevin moved to adjourn the meeting. Maryam seconded the motion. The chair adjourned the meeting.