

Champaign County Racial Justice Task Force (RJTF)
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, August 31, 2016
6:30 pm

I. Call to Order

Maryam Ar-Raheem called the meeting to order at 6:40pm. Eight members were present at this time.

II. Roll Call

Members Present: M. Ar-Raheem, L. Branham, E. Dee, (arrived 6:42pm) A. Felty, R. Hughes, A. James, E. Patt, H. Ross, G. Walter.

Members Absent: S. Balgoyen, S. Byndom, S. Lerner, C. Randolph, S. Silver, D. Turner,

III. Approval of Agenda

Gerry Walter moved to approve the agenda. Artice James seconded. The motion carried.

IV. Approval of Minutes

Esther Patt moved to approve the minutes. Gerry seconded the motion. The motion carried.

V. Public Participation

Albert Stabler

Bert was happy with how the last meeting went, including how decisive and focused the group was in light of the new discussion by the Sheriff to invest in a new jail. He has written pieces for Smile Politely and the Public I, and he encourages the momentum the task force has.

Sheri Williamson

Sheri is a social worker. She is starting a public affairs show on WEFT covering a variety of topics. On her first show, she will be discussing race so she wanted to be here to learn what the discussion is about.

VI. Presentations

No presentations.

VII. New Business

Vote on final report draft

The group addressed the various sections of the final report in order to approve them by vote.

Community Engagement

Gerry spoke about small changes made to this section. Some things were made more specific and inclusive.

Amy addressed the Police Training Institute and spoke about a citizen who has been through three PTI's and who said this one is the best he has seen. This PTI, according to him, focuses on the law and practices. He urged that we advocate that this one be retained.

Gerry moved that the Community Engagement section be adopted by the task force. Artice seconded the motion. The motion carried by vocal vote unanimously.

Police Practices

Ryan reviewed the Police Practices section again including a few small changes to grammar suggested by Lynn.

Ryan moved to approve the Police Practices section. Ellyn seconded the motion. Artice said that the County Board should begin looking at its policies. Maryam spoke about Durrell Cruz who studies Urbana's Police Practices. He called for the review of the IDOT study. He said that despite the IDOT study and the city's conclusion about the disparities, it has not resulted in any written change in policy. Maryam asked if we could add any language to emphasize the recommendations in the report. The group discussed how this could be added. Ellyn spoke briefly about her presentation to the County Board last week.

A friendly amendment was added: Recommendation 4. "*Local law enforcement agencies should investigate...*" Added at the end of Recommendation 4: "The County Board and municipalities should ensure that local law enforcement agencies meet this obligation." Ryan accepted the friendly amendment.

Henry came to the County Board and he said Ellyn and Ryan did a good job speaking about everything the task force has been doing. He also said that he really feels the spirit of the work in the drafts, and he thanked the task force for including his voice in the report. He is proud of the work.

The motion passed unanimously by vocal vote.

Juvenile Justice

Maryam spoke about the final draft of the Juvenile Justice section. One main focus was the effort to reduce the number of juveniles introduced into the criminal justice system.

Esther moved approval of the section. Artice seconded the motion.

Esther moved to suspend the rules for a member of the public to speak. Artice seconded. The motion carried. James Kilgore made a comment regarding the statistics presented in the Juvenile Justice section.

Maryam stated that the language needs to be more clear. Lynn introduced a friendly amendment to strike the sentence under "Local Detention of Youth and Racial Disparity in Detention": "Champaign locks up 23% of the youth population and contributes to 3.6% of statewide detention admissions." Esther and Artice accepted this friendly amendment. The motion passed by vocal vote.

Restorative Justices and Practices

Lynn spoke about the comments Ryan had regarding arrest vs. conviction data on page 3. The group discussed statistics for violent crimes. Lynn said they are trying to make the case that restorative justice and practices can help reduce racial disparities in the criminal justice system. Ryan introduced concerns about the first and third explanations on racial disparities.

Lynn moved to adopt the RJP section with the following changes: on page 3, delete #1 and #3 explanation on racial disparity, and the second section will read: “combating the effects of othering people of color.” Second sentence: “othering of people fosters...” 1st and 3rd footnotes to be deleted. Last sentence “other people of color.” Ryan seconded the motion.

The motion passed by vocal vote.

Fees and Costs for Criminal and Traffic Proceedings

Esther spoke briefly about minor changes made to this section. She moved to approve the section. Gerry seconded the motion.

Esther proposed an amendment to the motion to change the language of Recommendation 6. “The Champaign County Board should investigate with other local governments programs and policies to reduce the burden of cost of auto insurance.” Gerry agreed to the amendment. The motion was approved by vocal vote.

The group decided to postpone discussion and votes on the remaining sections until the next meeting. Amy noted that she was happy with Esther’s revisions to the Structural section.

VIII. Adjournment

Artice moved to adjourn.