

Sullivan County Human Rights Commission
Minutes of the Monthly Meeting, Thursday, June 5, 2024

Meeting called to order at 5:15 p.m. **Present:** Eric Monroe, Judy Balaban, Kathie Aberman, Gabriel Bertonazzi, Paul Austin, Catherine Iral

- I. Approval of last month's minutes: Gabriel made a motion to approve; Paul seconded; minutes approved
- II. Executive Director's Report: June 17, the Attorney General's Office is holding a Civil Rights Forum at Marist College. Eric will attend: a good opportunity to network with other commissions in the state.
- III. Executive Committee's Report – meeting will be later this month.
- IV. Issues Committee Report – two complaints being discussed
 - A. A woman whose son was enrolled in a local college. The son was arrested, and the school wouldn't let him withdraw, so he received F's. The mother retained an attorney on her son's behalf, and this attorney collected money from her but didn't file a complaint with the NYS Division of Human Rights. Eric has filed a complaint, and also explained to the woman that there is no fee for filing a complaint.
 - B. An individual who has volunteered at St. John's Food Pantry for the past 6-7 years says he was physically assaulted, humiliated (racially motivated). Eric contacted the church (the food pantry is federally funded) to try to resolve the dispute. The volunteer claims he tried to file a complaint with the police, but they told him he needed to take it up with the pastor. A State Trooper who was called said it was out of his jurisdiction.
- V. Outreach Committee Report
 - A. Judy, Kathie and Paul did a Human Rights Forum with 5th graders at Rutherford Elementary School. It went very well, and feedback from staff was very positive: the students were engaged and enthusiastic. Is it a possibility for the Outreach Committee to develop a group so these trainings can continue and expand in the next school year?
 - B. Tenants' Rights Forum is coming up, June 26, at the Baptist Church in South Fallsburg, from 6 – 7:30 p.m. We need to bring some refreshments, since that is what we advertised. [Kathie will bring something]

- C. Rights of the Accused Forum – not scheduled yet

- VII. Old Business – Roland will invite a philanthropist he knows to come to our meeting next month.

- VIII. New Business
 - A. Discussion of the “war on poor people in Sullivan County. Commissioner Parker is moving the welfare-to-work program from Monticello to Liberty. Workforce Development tried to fight this, since all other services are in Monticello. Lots of single mothers will be forced to travel, with kids, to make appointments. Laura Quigly will speak on June 10 to the Interfaith Council. Paul suggested the HRC draft a Resolution to the Legislature. This issue will be discussed at the Open Legislative Hearing in August. Paul asked, “Do we have any ability to go public with the HRC’s mission?” Judy suggested that we work with Laura Quigley, if feasible, on what we can do to support her. Judy will set up the conversation with Laura. Once we are really clear on all the facts, we can decide what action to take.

 - B. We all need to think about who we want to honor at next year’s Eileen Weil Scholarship Brunch.

- IX. Meeting was adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

My apologies for taking so long to type the minutes. If I have forgotten anything, or made any errors, please let me know.

Respectfully,

Kathie Aberman