

Spokane Regional Law and Justice Council

Committee Meeting Minutes

Chair-Elect: Angel Tomeo-Sam

Vice-Chair-Elect: Melissa Haney

Meeting Date: May 6, 2021

Meeting Location: virtual

Start Time: 11:35 AM

Adjourn Time: 12:40

Member Attendance x = present			
Name		Email (Optional)	Organization
Carmen Pacheco-Jones - Chair		Carmen.pachecojones@yahoo.com	SRLJC RE Community Rep.
Francis Adewale	x	FAdewale@Spokanecity.org	Muni Public Defender
Rick Matters		rickmatters@gmail.com	SCAR, Episcopal Church
Jazmyn Clark			City Public Defender
Melissa Haney - Vice Chair Elect	x	mhaney@spokanecounty.org	Public Defenders Office
Andrew Warlaumont			
Michiko Fjeld		mfjeld@spokanecity.org	
Em Daniels			
Curtis Hampton	x		
Kurtis Robinson			
Angel Tomeo-Sam Chair-Elect		angel.tomeosam@gmail.com	
Karen Boone	x		
Natasha Hill			
Rick Deekon Jones	x		
Other Attendees:		Email (Optional)	
Maggie Yates	x	MYates@spokanecounty.org	Law & Justice Administrator
Candace Aguirre	x	caguirre@spokanecounty.org	Office of Law & Justice
Annemarie Frohnhoefer		frogflipper@yahoo.com	Scribe
Melanie Perry	x		Human Rights Activist Coterie of Spokane
Alexis Tonasket-Galloway	x		Human Rights Activist Coterie of Spokane
Allia Borisov	x		Intern with Alex Gibilisco, Manager of Spokane City Council Equity Initiatives
David Carlson	x		Disability Rights Washington

All meetings and hearings held by the SRLJC and its subcommittees are held in facilities which are accessible to disabled individuals. For more information regarding the accessibility of the specific meeting room, or to request reasonable accommodations, please contact Law&Justice@Spokanecounty.org

1. Vice-Chair-Elect Melissa Haney called the **meeting to order** at 11:35 AM. Attendees introduced themselves.
2. **Minutes** from April's meeting were not been submitted. No action was taken on this agenda item.

3. **SRLJC Update**

Chair-elect Haney turned the floor over to Law and Justice Administrator Maggie Yates for the update.

Maggie Yates gave a summary of events to date:

In October of 2020 [The Blueprint for Reform Status Update](#) included a recommendation that the SRLJC consider adopting a Criminal Justice Coordinating Committee because "The SRLJC struggled to grow into an agile and effective working group necessary to catalyze change." (The Blueprint for Reform Status Update, 2020)

For the past three months the Board of County Commissioners and the SRLJC have been considering a proposal put forth by County Prosecutor Larry Haskell that would reconfigure the SRLJC as it currently stands. The proposed CJCC would not have direct community representation and would eliminate other representatives from various departments, among other changes.

The April SRLJC meeting resulted in a vote approving the Strategic Planning Committee's review and recommendations regarding the proposal and the status report's recommendations.

The May SRLJC meeting will include a presentation by the Strategic Planning Committee on their recommendations and review. The Strategic Planning Committee is currently considering a proposal that would create a separate body that will carry on the work of the existing SRLJC so as not to lose the momentum that the council has built and to continue to address issues and reform within the justice system. Yates noted that there will be public comment on the agenda, and Frontier Behavior Health Services will also make a presentation to discuss their crisis response efforts, progress and needs. Yates provided the time and the zoom link to the meeting in the chat.

Melissa Haney then opened the floor for discussion, comments and questions.

Committee member Karen Boone asked about the status of the letter that was discussed at the April meeting. Haney stated that the letter was distributed over a weekend by an organization other than the Racial Equity Committee and as far as she was aware there was only one response.

Committee member and out-going Vice-Chair Francis Adewale confirmed that the letter was sent out. Boone asked what happened beyond it being sent. Adewale continued that he believed the plan was for outgoing Chair Carmen Pacheco-Jones to bring up the letter at the May 12 meeting and that other council members will refer to it. He then encouraged community members to be part of that and to highlight their voice.

Haney asked for confirmation that the letter would be discussed on May 12. Adewale responded

that he was not aware of the exact process and asked for more information from Administrator Yates.

Yates was unsure of the letter that was being discussed but was aware that Community Representative Erin Hueter had read the letter at the April SRLJC meeting.

Meeting Scribe Annemarie Frohnhoefer stated that there may be other letters from other organizations but the letter from the Racial Equity Committee was the letter that was signed by the outgoing and incoming chairs. Francis Adewale confirmed that information was correct.

Boone thanked everyone for the information that was provided.

4. Equity Impact Assessment Update

Haney informed the committee that the Equity Impact Workgroup was currently reviewing impact tools from other counties and organizations in order to determine best processes going forward. She asked that anyone on the committee with thoughts or feedback on questions that would be appropriate for the assessment could email them to Candace Aguirre, Maggie Yates or herself, Melissa Haney.

Committee Member Curtis Hampton asked if what the expected outcome of the assessment might be.

Haney replied that she hopes the assessment is adopted by other departments so that disparities across the justice system can be mitigated but right now the assessment will most likely be adopted by District Court. Judge Maurer of District Court is a member of the workgroup and is interested in using the impact tool in response to the proposed changes in the PCS (possession of a controlled substance) law and equitable access to diversion and treatment programs to reduce disparities in who the law will benefit.

Maggie Yates added that the workgroup members have done an impressive job of addressing how system folks might use the tool.

Curtis Hampton asked how many system people have undergone racial equity training like “On Race Matters.”

Yates responded that nearly every department has undergone bias training with Just Lead and that the courts are looking at exploring even deeper trainings with the assistance of Just Lead Washington.

Hampton wondered if it were possible for the REC to request that racial equity training be part of all ongoing trainings and education.

Yates stated that a more concrete recommendation would be required if the request were to gain any traction.

Haney asked Hampton if he had a specific training in mind.

Hampton explained that the One Race Matters training that he attended recently was very impressive as it showed him how much there is to learn about racial equity in the justice system. He said he realized how much he does not know and how so many people can fall into that category of not knowing what they don't know. He continued that many leaders and departments

may check a box when it comes to equity training without ever going into such a deeper level of understanding.

Committee Member Kurtis Robinson offered his support of Curtis Hampton's thoughts. Robinson said he has worked with and sat on the board of many organizations that offer race and equity training including Just Lead and Better Health Together. He said that he has done the "lean into the systems thing" but now he is taking a step back and targeting what he knows has the greatest impact and that is the training that Hampton just mentioned. He believes the training was put on by Spokane Progress and that he, Robinson, has a lot of connectivity with these various organizations so he can see that there needs to be a common language developed so that all these partners can take advantage of what works and build a common knowledge and language as they go deeper and learn together "what they don't know that they don't know," as Hampton expressed. Robinson continued that he pushes to make these invites available to everyone in the community and he can affirm that On Race Matters affirms, engages, and pushes everyone across the board in ways that get across to all the people in the system what is happening historically and how it plays out today.

Haney asked what the training schedule was and if REC could participate in upcoming trainings.

Robinson explained that he has grant funds for the next two years to go toward impacted people first and combined with other training. That it is a full day of race and equity training in a historical context with the real story that plays out now in the criminal justice system and that's what's in motion and if anyone wants to participate the day training is in June and he wants to know who is going to take up the invitation to take the training.

Haney asked that Robinson share the invite with the committee and asked how long the training would take.

Robinson replied that the June training was one full day, but that Frontier Behavioral Health had participated in a virtual back-to-back training a few weeks ago. He said that other options were available.

Karen Boone stated that she preferred virtual training.

Robinson reiterated that the committee should think about attending or scheduling a training as it would benefit the committee and in addition to educational opportunities it is good to think about technical assistance toward application so that we [outside BIPOC orgs] can help change the application because it is difficult and well-intentioned white-dominant organizations have tried racial inclusion but have failed because they don't have cultural experience that ensures outcomes. BIPOC groups can help ensure outcomes.

David Carlson of Disability Rights Washington suggested that, like other organizations, caucusing can be considered. He explained that racial caucusing allows white people to work through racial issues without burdening BIPOC to explain or teach. This way white system people can learn on their own and build anti-racist community on their own and hold themselves accountable and not call on trainers constantly.

Annemarie Frohnhoefer, scribe, interjected that technical support from BIPOC is the best way to ensure accountability as white caucus groups typically partner with BIPOC organizations and trainers for accountability purposes.

Haney recommended that as a committee we should attend and work to get commitments from other criminal justice agencies to jump on and do it to. She asked if people were ready to commit to a one-day class or if a two-day class might be better. She wasn't sure if people could commit to a full day.

Committee Member Deekon Jones asked for clarification on who will commit to the training.

Haney clarified her thoughts that REC attends the training and keep pushing other departments to take the training by keeping up pressure on how important the training is.

Jones shared his thoughts that training would be great for the people who ask for it. He is concerned that resources are continually diverted from BIPOC communities to white people who are not invested in the training. He believes resources should go to BIPOC communities because current leadership isn't responsible for making the change and that leadership should find some other people who aren't engaged in system plays.

Haney stated that it is important to consider that point. She then pointed to the next item on the agenda. Frohnhoefer mentioned that some community members had wanted to share an experience they had at a recent protest in support of murdered and missing Indigenous women. Haney opened the floor to public comment.

5. Miscellaneous Items

Community member, activist and member of the Human Rights Activist Coterie of Spokane and the MAC Movement, Alexis Galloway-Tonasket shared her experiences with law enforcement at the rally on Wednesday evening, May 5.

Galloway-Tonasket explained that after the May 31, 2020 response to the Black Lives Matter Protest, the SPD has been much better at using de-escalation tactics and have reduced their presence at protests. However, on May 5, Galloway-Tonasket and other volunteers were asked numerous questions by SPD officers as they were setting up art installations that had been approved by the Parks Department. When told that the volunteers had been approved by the Parks Department, one of the officers said he might have received an email about that but he didn't read it. He then told the volunteers to let him know if they saw anyone suspicious.

Galloway-Tonasket said that the officers made the volunteers feel "trapped" and that they couldn't leave the area while the officers spoke with them. The feeling was uncomfortable and for many volunteers who had previous poor interactions with SPD the policing of the event was inappropriate.

Committee member Boone suggested that the leaders of the event speak with law enforcement about the encounter and she encouraged an open dialogue between both groups. Galloway-Tonasket responded positively to the suggestion.

Committee member Adewale offered the reminder that the SPD kept many people safe and disabled a bomb that had been placed by a white supremacist prior to an MLK Day march several years ago. Within this context, he supposed the SPD were following up on leads that participants in the May 5 event were unaware of.

Committee member Robinson brought up an incident that occurred after the Chauvin trial verdict was read, in which community member and Human Rights Commissioner Anwar Peace was arrested for jaywalking. A conversation about over-policing took place.

Committee member Deekon Jones bought up the tone that officers can contribute to an otherwise peaceful community event.

Committee member Robinson asked Galloway-Tonasket to send him an email in his position on the state's justice training commission.

Galloway-Tonasket thanked everyone for their support and guidance.

Chair Haney adjourned the meeting at 12:40.

Adjourned: 12:40 PM

SCRIBE: Annemarie Frohnhoefer

Next Meeting: 6/3/2021