



# Town of Fairhaven

Town Hall - 40 Center Street - Fairhaven, MA 02719

## MEETING NOTES

### Date, Time, Location:

July 13, 2022 @ 6:30 P.M., Banquet Hall & Remote through ZOOM

### Meeting Overview:

1. Meeting called to order
2. Quorum/Attendance
3. New Member Introduction
4. FGP and July 4th Parade Recap
5. Disability Pride Month
6. Involvement suggestions
  - a. Social media presence
7. Items not previously anticipated
8. Next meeting August 10, 2022
9. Adjournment

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### -Key-

**BOLD** = Issue being discussed

● = Notes, indentation for more notes

○ = Questions and discussions below

\_\_ = Votes (Nom/Second)

! = Change in attendance

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### Member Attendance (8):

- Kylie Bateman, Jessica Fidalgo, Greg Weider, Laura Barillaro, Officer Jerome Penha, Leon Correy
- Absent; Jill Sullivan

### Town of Fairhaven & Guests:

- Pattie Pacella, Rachel Medeiros, Diane Hahn

Meeting called, PM

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### PAST MINUTES: May 2022

Motion to pass meeting minutes of May 2022 made by Kylie B., seconded by Jessica F.(?) \_\_ Passes unanimously

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### TONIGHT'S AGENDA

Chairperson Welcome & Media Notification

- Kylie Bateman calls the meeting to order, reads Media Notification & welcomes everyone to the Belonging Committee meeting.
- We have a quorum, Jill S. not present.

### **New Member Introduction**

- Rachel Medeiros is welcomed as a new member during attendance, not yet sworn in so nonvoting attendee tonight.

### **FGP and July 4th Parade Recap**

- Kylie B. begins recap of FGP, this is the second FGP event. Had tents and included scheduled and unscheduled speakers and a DJ. Excited to see so many kids having great experiences, including her oldest child. Event went really well and hopes for it to continue annually.
- Diane H. thanks Kylie and Jessica for carrying event forward
- Jessica F. begins recap of parade. Vicki Oliveira contacted and invited the committee to walk in the parade. Jessica F., Kylie B., and Laura B walked in the parade. Carried a banner reading "We Are All American" with Progress Pride colors and banner from FGP that attendees had been invited to write messages of love and encouragement on it. Also had an Encanto-themed float for kids and a float reminding people to register to vote.
- People joined the parade from the crowd in progress, and Jessica F. shares a story of a parent reaching out during the parade and the cheer group ahead asking for some of our small Pride flags to support one of their members who had recently come out as nonbinary
- Diane H. had walked with the parade also and points out the cheering and support from people who watched the parade.
- Jessica F. mentions that she and Kylie B. had also walked in New Bedford's Cape Verdean Recognition Parade and recognized that there is a lot more diversity in New Bedford and a lot of nonprofits doing good work. She would like to see the committee get more involved with those organizations and invite them to meetings.
- She mentions challenges finding ethnic diversity when looking for people to walk in the July 4th Parade. She remarks on the benefits of getting outside of town and meeting more people.
- Kylie B. agrees that building connections with others expands our understanding of others.

### **Disability Pride Month**

- Kylie introduces Pattie Pacella. She expresses positivity about the Belonging Committee's efforts and suggests that there are still a lot of closed doors. She shares a picture of her daughter Grace and says she has a disability, but she thinks of her as a girl with special abilities.
- Pattie shares how inclusion is a challenge for people with disabilities, that it is harder to find groups and activities for her daughter to feel like she belongs. Through Gnome Surf, she has been able to have great experiences.
- She shares further a story of frustration about trying to get Grace into a summer camp and an extensive ordeal about trying to get clarity on medical forms the camp was requiring for her attendance.
- After weeks of difficult communication, Pattie was informed that Grace could not attend because the camp's staff could not support Grace's needs, despite her having a full-time PCA.

- As much progress as Fairhaven has made, Pattie says we can do more. She is a member of the Rotary club, and she mentions their theme this year is DEI. She suggests working together with the committee and offers help with parade floats for next year.
- She says kids are just curious about other kids, but it's adults who can close doors. She hopes sharing her story and that others know what she's gone through.
- While wrapping up she mentions the changes to Town Hall that came up in the recent Select Board meeting, that there was conversations about how people like to come to Town Hall to pay bills in person, see clerks they like, and experience camaraderie, but wheelchair users, elderly people and veterans are denied that experience because they can't use the stairs. She wants to see Town Hall become more accessible.
- Diane H. shares her experience with knowing Pattie for eight years and being Grace's PCA for three years, and also her own experience with a son with Autism and thanks her for her work.
- Jessica F. agrees with Pattie that kids are easily guided, and mentions her kids might take a sentence of explanation to understand. She mentions a line of childrens' books that are great for explaining different subjects with flexible thinking. She mentions Laura B. also has a child with autism, and recognizes the pushback about updating Town Hall. "If the Louvre can be updated, so can Town Hall."
- Pattie mentions her time on the Wellness Committee and that previously they had held a Wellness Fair. Suggest having something similar where people can learn about disabilities and the like.
- Jessica F. mentions Leon C.'s suggested plan that the Belonging Committee get involved in the recognition of various months like Hispanic Heritage, Disability Pride, etc.
- Rachel M. mentions her experience with running a camp in Dartmouth and that there might be town regulations that could be requiring the forms Pattie had mentioned in her story, and that more could possibly be done to support inclusion. She agrees Pattie did everything she needed to and that the Board of Health may be able to step in or be more involved.
- Jessica F. speaks to the challenges facing parents, and that she would have had no idea that the Board of Health had anything to do with camps.
- Kylie B. wraps up summarizing that this conversation is an inclusion conversation and that it's important to recognize who is being told they don't belong in any situation, and architecture can send that message. She asks for any other thoughts on Disability Pride Month
- Jessica F. shares that Disability Pride Month started when the ADA was signed in 1990 and that Boston was the first city to celebrate. She suggests an event down the line.

### **Involvement suggestions**

- Kylie B. asks the committee if there are suggestions for ways we can become more involved.
- Rachel M. asks if there are ways that we can engage the community and find out what needs we can help meet, maybe a survey at the library and town buildings or an email address published.
- Kylie B. agrees that engagement is a struggle and looking for points to act on is a challenge and we're working with our own experiences.
- Jessica F. says it's hard to get people to come to us, we've had more success when getting out into the community and trying to bring people to events. She shares that she talked with a friend from the Mashpee Wampanoag about inviting them to the July 4th parade and that apparently they had tried to join before and had been denied. She wanted to build a connection

in advance of Native American History Month, and through this conversation she learned more about how her friend felt growing up in Fairhaven. Using existing recognition “holidays” helps create conversations, surveys don’t seem to work well.

- She mentions that the Select Board asked the Belonging Committee to advise on the flag policy, and she would like to see our committee involved in the conversation about updating Town Hall.
- Kylie B. agrees that the most effective moments we’ve had with others was when we were out at events in the community. There probably isn’t a negative or anything wrong with having something in the Neighborhood News soliciting emails and that it creates a way to communicate. We get more out of being out at events with others, but we can absolutely do both.
- Diane H. mentions that schools have SEPACs, Special Education Parental Advisory Committees that serve as a means within the schools for parents to connect.
- Laura B. says she is the chair of the SEPAC committee and that it’s really hard to get attendance at their meetings, but that they do have speakers monthly and open meetings for parents and she encourages people to attend.
- Kylie B. suggests tabling the social media conversation with the realization that there are likely regulations and policies that would have to be considered first. Also that Rachel had mentioned about tabling at the Huttleston Marketplace.
- Jessica F. brings up October Kids’ Fest and that they are looking for vendors with low-cost or free activities for kids.
- Kylie B. recognizes that we would have to determine who can be present for these events as they approach.

#### **Any Other Business**

- Kylie B. agrees to do the minutes for this month’s meeting.
- Jessica F. brings up the Rotary Club and that they suggested that we have a meeting together and that they will be reaching out so we can possibly work together or so that the Belonging Committee can help advise on DEI.

**Next Meeting:** August 10th meeting at 6:30pm

- Motion to adjourn made by Jessica F., seconded by Laura B.
- Roll Call \_\_ vote passed unanimously to end meeting

**Meeting ended 7:36 PM**

Signed by: \_\_\_\_\_