



Select Board

Town of Hinesburg
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Meeting Minutes – June 10, 2020

- Draft -

Attending the Meeting: Phil Pouech, Mike Loner, Merrily Lovell, Jeff Tobrocke, Jeff French, Renae Marshall, Joy Dubin Grossman, Chief Anthony Cambridge, Elizabeth Deutsch, Christina Deeley.

Meeting called to order at 7:02 p.m. via Zoom meeting platform.

Additions/Deletions and Public Comment

There will be an executive session at the end of the public meeting for a personnel issue.

Town of Hinesburg Response to Racism and All Other Forms of Discrimination

Renae, Joy, Merrily and Jeff T worked on creating a three-step approach for the Board to consider to address this.

One is a Value Statement by the Town. The second step is a statement in response to current events in Hinesburg. The third step is to create a long-term action plan to facilitate change.

Mike thanked those who worked on this and noted it is incredibly important to do this work. He suggested the Value Statement be stronger and include black lives matter wording. Jeff T said the statement was intended to open discussion and allow for changes.

Renae addressed the third step and the need to make this a sustainable conversation and to work together to stop discrimination toward anyone.

Phil likes the idea of a statement front and center. He agrees the third step is the hard work and he likes that it expands and reaches out to the community for input on what in Hinesburg needs fixing and how people feel about what needs fixing.

Jeff F. is thankful for the work on putting this together and starting the conversation. He suggested adding accountability to the Value Statement, such as if you work for the Town you will not tolerate discrimination and would take whatever action necessary. Joy asked Jeff if he is also thinking of

Hinesburg residents in holding people accountable. Jeff said it would be nice to come up with some wording that could promote that.

Jeff T said awareness and training is important so it is not reactionary.

Jeff F said he feels the need to be specific in the Value Statement addressing the Black Live Matter movement and that we agree with it.

Chief Cambridge said certainly Black lives matter, his concern is what has shifted in the media where Black Lives Matter objectives are now becoming more anti police. He agrees Black lives matter but noted the actual movement is shifting. Agreeing with the organization Black Lives Matter could be problematic in the future.

Jeff T strongly disagrees with Anthony and feels we cannot disregard what is being done to Brown and Black people. Anthony said he is speaking specifically about the organization.

Merrily agrees with Anthony regarding the Value Statement. She would like the statement to be something that can be on the website for a long time and she likes that it is a general statement. She said for the second statement, the response to the stickers, we might want to say something about Black Lives Matter but she is very reluctant to tie Hinesburg to any specific organization. She feels we should state what our values are as the Town of Hinesburg.

Mike agrees with Merrily for the Value Statement which is a statement of who we as a community are. As far as a response to the stickers he feels we can state Black Lives Matter, if the Black Lives movement continues to go down the road toward de-funding police we can have a conversation about it. Anthony responded that as of right now the primary objective of Black Lives Matter is to de-fund the police.

Phil agrees with Merrily and is a bit reluctant to include Black Lives Matter in the Value Statement. He believes in that statement, but it is also a political movement and something we can't control. The Value Statement encompasses everyone. The second statement states we do not go along with the stickers and white supremacy and can include we believe in that movement.

Elizabeth, in response to the Value Statement, said as a non-Christian living in a town with white supremacists she has a different perspective. She is fully in support of Black Lives Matter and has thoughts on defunding the police but will not speak to that now. She wanted to comment on the fact that when Merrily says everyone is welcome to her it says white supremacists are welcome here with their anti-Semitism and racism and misogyny and all of that is just as welcome as any other group. That is what that statement says to her. While she can't speak as a person of color she can speak as someone who is not one of the predominant religious groups in Town. She can't imagine how much more hurtful this would be to someone who is a person of color. Jeff F pointed out the fact that the statement says "does not tolerate discrimination of any kind". Elizabeth replied all she hears is all lives matter.

Jeff F said he did not realize that Black Lives Matter was a political committee.

Anthony again said the Police Department is 100% behind Black lives matter but as a Town we should not be behind a political movement.

Jeff T suggested in include the work “social” before justice in the Value Statement.

Merrily moved to accept the Value Statement with the change to read social justice and omit for all. Mike second.

Phil likes the Value Statement and the intention to put it on the Town Website. The Board will likely put the statement on FPF. He wants to be sure there was ample opportunity for opinions on the statement. Merrily said she posted on FPF that the Board would be meeting to discuss this topic and it has been on the Town Website in the meeting packet which is the Board’s protocol and it is up to people to read it and show up if interested.

Jeff T added that as Phil said, if they decide it can be changed.

Motion voted and approved with 5 yes votes.

The Board then discussed the statement regarding the white supremacy stickers. Phil asked if this has continued and Anthony said they have not seen any since the 3rd.

Phil said this is where we can show our support for the Black Lives Matter movement.

Mike suggested a statement of Black lives matter without capitalizing to show we are not supporting a political movement or group, but are fully understanding and standing with them in what Black lives matters means. We could declare that we stand with the Black and Brown people of our country.

Merrily shared a statement a friend of hers wrote. Jeff F said he liked some of it but asked if it was a general statement and not focused on the white supremacy stickers.

Jeff T said the white supremacy group is in Hinesburg and we need to address that.

Joy asked if stating Black and Brown leaves out others that we should be including. Mike said it needs to be specific.

Merrily suggested to change to we, as the Select Board, the governing body of the Town of Hinesburg.....And later in the statement We stand with Black and Brown people in our community and those across our country fighting for racial justice.

Anthony asked about including specifically we do not welcome white supremacists.

Merrily moved to accept the response to white supremacy stickers with the changes suggested. Jeff T second.

Mike asked to include Black lives matter after we hear you, we see you. Merrily and Jeff T accepted the amendment to the motion.

Amended motion voted and approved with 5 yes votes.

The Long Term Action Plan was discussed. Phil suggested creating a Town committee such as a Social Justice Committee to work on this.

Merrily suggested those who have been working on these steps continue rather than a new committee at this point.

Mike said he would be willing to join the group and has experience as chair of the ethnic and racial disparities committee for the Children's Family Council.

Renae said the next step is to hear from those in our community who are most impacted. We need to see where we need to change to help make this better and what resources are available.

Executive Session

Jeff T moved that executive session is appropriate for personnel discussion under provisions of 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(3). This personnel matter may result in disciplinary action under the provisions of 1 V.S.A. §313(a)(4).

Second by Merrily and approved with 5 yes votes.

Jeff T moved to go into executive session including Renae. Second by Merrily and approved with 5 yes votes.

Mike moved to come out of executive session, second by Merrily and approved with 5 yes votes.

Merrily moved to adjourn at 8:40 p.m., second by Jeff T and approved with 5 yes votes.

Respectfully Submitted,
Valerie Spadaccini, Clerk of the Board