



Stratford C.A.R.E Committee

Minutes April 6, 2016

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“The mission of Stratford C.A.R.E. is to make the Stratford, CT community strong, united, and vibrant by ensuring racial equity and promoting cultural competence.”

In attendance: Yan Searcy, Donald Goodson, Olga Pena, John Fahan, Sybil Friedman, Ann Stockman, William M. Boyd, Tania Livingston, Karen Edwards, Tammy Langston, Sylvia Martin,, Patrick Ridenhour, Ed Rauls, Elene Crosby, Vera Maxiwin, Wali Kadeem, and Harold Greist of the Stratford Public Schools.

Meeting called to order at 7:16 PM

Welcome and Introductions: Each member in attendance introduced themselves and stated their type of employment and whether or not they like to go fishing.

Approval of Minutes: Motion by Patrick Ridenhour. Second by Sylvia Martin. All in favor, motion passes.

Treasurer’s Report: Olga Pena stated the balance is \$3,142.32. Yan Searcy stated the authorized signers on the account will be updated soon as he is the new chairman and the names ought to be changed.

-Chief Ridenhour presented two draft amendment choices to our by-laws to allow for spending \$250 on time sensitive matters that cannot wait for next meeting with the Chairman ensuring that the membership is notified by telephone or electronic media. At least 10 members must vote with a decision by simple majority. If that does not occur, the Chairperson may unilaterally make the decision. John Fahan questioned the legality of such votes especially email votes as it pertains to FOI laws. A few members stated there should be no cause for concern on such votes. After discussion Sylvia Martin made a motion to accept the longer version to be added to the by-laws. It was seconded by Donald Goodson. **Those in favor** were: Sylvia Martin, Lucretia Duwel, Olga

Pena, Patrick Ridenhour, Donald Goodson, Yan Searcy, William Boyd, Ed Rawls, Elene Crosby, Ann Stockman, Vera Maxiwin, Tania Livingston, and John Fahan. **Voting No** was Karen Edwards. **Abstaining** was Sybil Friedman. The motion carried.

Old Business – Committee Reports:

- **Police/Community Relations** – Chief Ridenhour stated he attended the community forum with state representatives concerning opiate use and addiction. The discussion in part was about parents of addicted children concerned about the lack of resources to help those in need of help.
 - Next month he will have a meeting with the Institute for Municipal and Regional Policy. Chief Ridenhour does not know the content of the updated report but does not anticipate any problems.
 - PAL Boxing and Jr. Rife Team and other programs are doing well.
 - Staffing levels have dropped. Interviews are being conducted for new hires.
 - The Lieutenant exams were given. A total of 6 candidates are eligible for promotion. Most if not all of the candidates will be promoted.
 - Chief Ridenhour will be an African American Award Recipient at the 8th Annual Carter G. Woodson Awards Ceremony on April 30, 2016 5-8pm at the Bridgeport Public Library.
- **Education Committee:** Yan Searcy read aloud a letter to the committee addressed by Superintendent of Schools Janet Robinson. In the letter the Superintendent states that the School District is in compliance with State of CT mandates for racial balancing for the schools. A school is considered imbalanced if its minority enrollment is more than 25 percentage points above or below that of the district as a whole. Many of CARE feel that standard sets a low bar. Chairman Searcy stated that CARE needs to present specific metrics it would like the BOE to meet above and beyond what is permitted by state mandate. Olga Pena and Tania Livingston stated that it is imperative that classrooms in addition to schools be racially balanced.
 - Harold Greist of the Stratford Public Schools gave a presentation on racial balancing in the school system. He said part of the challenge to have diversity our schools is the fact that we built our schools in the wrong place. Some schools are smaller than others and far apart from each other which makes it difficult to achieve balance without having to bus children across town.

Community Recognition Dinner: Yan Searcy and Karen Edwards presented a report for the community recognition dinner to be held either September 16th or September 23rd. Price for admission, possible venues, and choice for MC for the event were discussed. The Chairman entertained suggestions on whom to honor from among 10 categories: Police, Fire, EMS, Youth, CARE Community Advocate, Senior Lifetime Commitment, public school teacher, elected official, business, non-profit. In general, the committee decided to honor about 5 individuals from among these categories who exemplify the mission of CARE.

Public Relations/Communications: John Fahan had no report except to say it may be a good idea to get the attention of NPR for some of our discussions. Yan Searcy reported that Ken Simon has been working on our Facebook page and he was able to get several more views and likes to the page.

Adjournment: 9:05pm

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Fahan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "J" and "F".

John Fahan