



Meeting Minutes | February 7, 2023

Present Members

- Alphonse Wright | Chair
- Shimon Avish | Treasurer
- Pamela Geiser | Clerk
- Veronica Faustino | Member
- Denise Regan | Member
- Katelyn Adams | Liason, Salem State University
- Lucy Corchado | Liason, Salem State University
- Julio Mota | Liason, City of Salem, Mayor's Office
- Kerry Neenan | Liaison, Commission on Disabilities
- Captain Burke | Liaison, Salem Police Department

Present Guests

Chris Fuccione, Salem Democratic Committee Coordinator
Alan Hanscom, SATV

Special Guest Speakers

Skyler Clark, Witch City Action
Jessica, Witch City Action

Meeting called to order, recording initiated.

Welcome and Introductions.

Opportunity for Public Comment.

- Fundraising Event: League of Women Voters at Flatbreads in Salem, MA until 9pm; a portion of purchase proceeds benefit the League.

Governor's Statement, read by Chair.

Officer Reports

A. Chairs

General Updates.

B. Clerk

Requested approval of Minutes from January 10, 2023 – unanimously approved. Julio will post to SHRC website. Latest published Minutes are from November 1, 2022 and are available online (website in Footer below).

C. Treasurer

Salem State University (SSU) MLK Writing Contest Prizes totaled \$192.50 (\$150 cash, \$50 to each of three winners; \$42.50 for five (5) books at \$8.50/book).



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Reimbursement to Shimon and Lucy, please. Julio to follow-up with Jen.

Liaison Reports

A. Julio Mota, Mayor's Office

A reminder about the Old Town Hall February 2023 Black Diaspora event that is open to the Public. https://www.salemma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlif7986/f/uploads/salem_united_-_black_diaspora_cultural_event_-_press_release_-_final_1-11-2023.pdf. Chris Fuccione is tabling on behalf of the Salem Democratic Committee over the weekend – stop and say hello!

Follow-up needed on a racial discrimination complaint received by the Mayor's Office regarding treatment on behalf of a police officer. The report was a phone call to Julio at the end of the workday. Julio is most familiar with the situation but has not reported to the Police yet. Chair and Officer Meeting to be held to discuss. Once complaint forwarded to Police, we will determine next steps. Once he knows more information, Captain Burke will advise us on Salem Police Department protocol when a complaint like this is received.

B. Kerry Neenan, Commission on Disabilities

Mass Families is hosting Embracing Intersectionality: A Conversation about Race and Disability on Zoom. Details <https://massfamilies.org/events/black-history-month-embracing-intersectionality-a-conversation-about-race-and-disability/>.

Mass Historical Society Zoom meetings on Disability of the American Past. February programs about the Disability Rights Movement. Details <https://www.masshist.org/events>.

C. Katelyn Adams & Lucy Corchado, SSU

SSU is celebrating Black History Month and encourage you to check their website - tonight showing of Woman King. More movies to come! Details <https://www.salemstate.edu/calendar>.

Some highlights include Justice Shannon Frison, the youngest black judge of the MA Supreme Court; Black and African American Disability Leaders; Black Queer MA History forum; February 25th Black Owned Business Popup event, and in support of Tyre Nichols, a March from Alumni Plaza to Downtown Salem. Upcoming Climate Expert events, too.

Having a mayoral forum to learn about the candidates on February 28th doors 6:30pm starts 7:00pm at the Sophia Gordon Center for Creative and Performing Arts.
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SalemMayor2023>



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Brief Discussions about supporting communities on South Campus. To support those families let Kate know directly how you would like to help and she can help coordinate donations and services.

C. Captain Burke, Salem Police Department

No bias related crimes since last meeting (except for Julio's resident complaint).

Salem Access Television was recording the Salem Police Department forum on Homelessness in our community. The video is being edited and will be aired on SATV, accessible online, and shared to the SHRC Facebook page.

Motion | Formation of Subcommittee to Update Salem Human Rights Coalition Bylaws

The Chair presented a Motion to form a Subcommittee to address the updating of our current SHRC Bylaws to be more representative of how we operate in current practice. They have not been reconsidered since 2014. The motion was seconded by Shimon, and Alphonse asked who would like to participate in the Subcommittee.

The new Bylaws Subcommittee consists of Alphonse, Pam, Veronica, Julio and Denise. Shimon and Lucy will advise as needed since they helped to adopt/shape the previous Bylaws.

Special Guest Presentation by Witch City Action

Skyler: Send emails to witchcityaction@gmail.com. This group was created in response to October's anti-homeless signage in Salem. This is an effort to bring unhoused people into these conversations – and act as a liaison between who has power and who needs power in our community.

Operating a warming shelter out of St. James Church, collecting donations, and distributing directly to unhoused in our community at this time.

Jessica: In response to it being brought up, the Salem Homeless meeting was *about* the homeless, not *for the homeless*, and served to separate the house-havers from the house-not-having.

Jess is unhoused in a car around Salem since last April. She is a graduate of SSU, a licensed social worker, but is on disability with PTSD. There is a wide range of reasons why you might be homeless or less a home. It's not because of drugs or lack of trying to keep employment. LEARN why they are on the street and understand – what are your fears in relation to the homeless?



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Jess is frustrated. She used a brown cardboard sign to get money for a car, and it helped her, and the gas money and earnings she made all goes back into the city. People think the unhoused are not responsible re: money, but they have the least amount of means – it is an archaic view to think that's all they spend it on instead of basic human needs like food, supplies, and shelter.

Skyler: The City of Salem was founded on witch trials, and a majority of income comes from witches, who were in reality humans murdered – and we're founded and based on that. I challenge anyone to explore your inner feelings, the angry, scared judgements. Why do you have those feelings – we have every right to be here with you!

Kerry: new in position as a community resource specialist, has a list of resources for people with disabilities to get housing and assistance and will pass along to WCA.

Christy: volunteers for a warming station with medical reserve corp, which operates a Danvers warming station but not here in Salem. She will message all volunteers along the North Shore and we can man your station here in Salem. WCA in talks with Danvers about a more permanent warming solution. First Church Essex Street put gloves and hats out on fence.

Elise: not long ago at Nagly kids initiated a backpack program and are handing them out to the unhoused, do you think they could help with certain things? Already donated Blankets, Hats, Mittens, Snacks, Handwarmers, and Gift Cards by shopping cart.

Jess & Skyler: Some other current needs are baby wipes, dry shampoo, white socks, female products, hotel rooms, underwear, phone chargers and batteries, cards with words of encouragement because you feel so dehumanized by being unhoused, it's a lonely sad place to be.

Never been offered laundry service - it's enormous wearing the same thing over and over, struggle to find transportation with all your laundry; nothing like a hot shower and clean clothes!

Solidarity NS has a storage unit where they put all donations, and stuff they can't use gives money to Lifebridge through sales at their Thrift Shop.

Jessica: it's a different experience being in a car than on the street; she barely knows anyone else car-ing it, so now she's trying to reach out and build bridges.



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Biggest misconception about being homeless in Salem? That Jess graduated from SSU in 2013, and thought the community being progressive and proud to be from here were her supports. Instead, there's a huge disparity, and how small the perception is – always asking "Why don't you have a job?" or saying, "You're not trying."

Getting to Pharmacy to get meds, usually people have a social worker or care coordinator, but it would be more helpful if we had outreach from behavioral therapists and workers, disabilities too – we want help. I know someone who had surgery, went back on the street in recovery...not sure how that worked out...people need to think about the unhoused elderly, disabled, and the daily struggles to survive.

Julio: for transportation, has Skipper been helpful? Seth Moulton got a grant for Skipper, may make some improvements?

Jess: No once you're out of town, why do you need a car if you're in town, you need to get to and from your hotel so no one uses it.

Kerry: community behavioral health centers (Elliott & Lynn) more money into those centers and ramping up services, 24-hour clinical hotline for issues with substance/mental health "warm handmuff" and hand you off to an actual person. Maybe not in-patient available, there should be an in-between facility. MassHelpline.com

Elise: can we do an action, get to know people, etc. sign making together if anyone wants to organize an event? Positive responses.

Julio: Lifebridge Curfew Policy was an issue for attendance by the unhoused. One attendee, Lori Stewart, is a Neighborhood Stability Coordinator, she was previously homeless, and shares an office 93 Washington Street, if you want to know your civil/human rights go visit Julio and Lori Room #2.

Alphonse to Denise: Many hands make light work let's see if we can establish an in-community legal clinic?

Upcoming Events

Salem's So Sweet ice sculptures, \$40 wine tasting and chocolate bag, party Friday ticketed fundraiser for downtown events, roaming musicians downtown for free. 2/10 first day. Ice Sculpture illumination at 5PM half on Friday other half Saturday. Lightbrite installation by Salem PEM, live mural painting, seeking volunteers for these events.



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2/24 Friday 5pm Lafayette Park raising the Dominican flag, singing anthem, and celebration of Dominican Independence.

A grocery store opening in Apt Bldg on Lafayette called the Daily Table which pays a livable wage, well priced food, one in Roxbury and it's now coming soon!

2/24 Julio, Alphonse, and Regina tabling at Black Diaspora Expo and will send times once known.

Next Scheduled Meeting

March 7, 2023

Adjournment