

Racial & Ethnic Equity Commission Minutes of Meeting  
August 17, 2023, 6:00 pm Kenosha County Board Chambers

**Committee Members Present:** Brian Thomas, Justin Crosby, Brian Gonzales, Xavier Solis, Duane O’Keefe, Andy Berg, Elizabeth Garcia

Excused: Cortney Marshall

Others Present: Kelsey Huebler, Joseph Cardamone

6:00 PM

**1. Call to Order/Roll Call** –Chair Solis called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm with roll call.

6:01 PM

**2. Approval of Minutes- July 20, 2023. Minutes Moved by Commissioner Gonzales, Seconded by Supervisor Brian Thomas. All Aye Motion Carried.**

6:01 PM

**3. Citizens Comments** – Comments limited to 3 minutes and up to 45 minutes. Comments made by:

Veronica King- Brings to the Commissioners attention regarding an incident at Country Thunder. Another incident at Applebee’s regarding City of Kenosha Police Brutality.

Heidi Helgeson- Speaks regarding applications for the Commission and requesting data that has already been provided. Urges the Commissioners to do the work it was designed to do or resign.

Angela Krutchmer- Feels the REEC is creating a divide within the community and will never accomplish what it was intended.

Monica Cumings- Concerned regarding another resignation of the Commission. How can this commission find common ground and work together to fulfil its mission? The reason the Commission exists is due to the Racism is a Public Health Crisis Resolution. Questions the Commission if they believe and support the resolution that created the Commission. She would like this item on the next Agenda.

Anthony Davis- President of NAACP in Kenosha. He has lived in this community for over 65 years and has experienced racism throughout his life. Speaks regarding an incident at Country Thunder. If incidents like these are not addressed, it affects the community.

6:17 PM

**4. Subcommittee Reports-**

**Law Enforcement Subcommittee-** Commissioner Gonzales states this Subcommittee is on the verge of submitting a full report on September 14<sup>th</sup> at 5:30pm. They have reached out to the Sheriff’s Department, data analyst for Sheriff’s Department, Jennifer Kopp from Corporation

Counsel, Clara Tappa from Human Resources. This subcommittee will address the Public School and Habitual Truancy relationship. Supervisor Thomas requests that the Commission create questions to ask the Presenters.

**Education Subcommittee-** Alayna Arrington has resigned, Chair Solis will find a replacement chair for this Subcommittee.

**Housing Subcommittee-** will meet next week and there will be a report for the September 14<sup>th</sup> meeting.

6:23 PM

**5. REEC Minority Teacher Loan Program:** Supervisor Thomas feels this resolution should go to the Subcommittee to review then bring back to the Commission to Review and vote. Supervisor Berg states this is relevant to Speaker Vos' task force. He feels they can use funds that have not been exhausted by the State to make Teaching more attractive in Kenosha County.

Supervisor Thomas feels the Commission needs more time to review the Resolution in order to vote. Supervisor Berg clarifies that the agenda was amended 48 hours ago and should have been reviewed prior to tonight's meeting.

Commissioner Garcia supports tabling the resolution and sending to the Subcommittee first and back to the Commission.

**Supervisor Berg makes a motion to approve, Seconded by Commissioner Crosby.**

Chair Solis inquires about the funds mentioned in the resolution. Supervisor Berg's intention is to market this in Kenosha County better by providing Community Outreach in the Job Center.

Commissioner Garcia clarifies that this loan program forgiveness is for teachers and feels KUSD could market this.

Supervisor Berg clarifies that it is a two-part process. The first is the loan program, the second is applying for forgiveness.

Commissioner Gonzales feels this is a State addressed issue and the State should promote it and would be voting no if there is a vote.

Supervisor Thomas asks if Carthage or Parkside promote this? Or if the scholarship through the Mahone fund if they are educated on this program. Supervisor Thomas feels this should be marketed through both Parkside and Carthage as well as the Mahone Fund. Supervisor Thomas is supportive of this resolution and recommends tabling until the September 21<sup>st</sup> meeting to vote on this resolution in order to investigate it further.

Supervisor Berg prefers to have a vote tonight and if it does not pass, it can still be brought forth to the Education subcommittee in the future.

Chair Solis would recommend postponing the Resolution until September 21<sup>st</sup>

Thomas-abstain

O'Keefe-nay

Gonzales-nay

Solis-nay

Garcia-aye

Berg-aye

Crosby-aye

**Motion fails.**

**6:42 PM**

**6. Discussion and Possible Action on Resolution Declaring Racism As a Health Crisis in Kenosha County:**

Supervisor Thomas states they passed a motion requesting information and have not yet received any information as of yet.

Commissioner Crosby asks if the information Supervisor Thomas is requesting is public record.

**6:49 PM**

**7. Discussion and Possible Action on the Report and Recommendation on the Report from the Thrive Program: Supervisor Thomas moves this rough draft for the REEC to consider to be submitted to the Executive Committee. Seconded by Commissioner Gonzales.**

Supervisor Thomas speaks regarding the Thrive Report and the Healthcare report to be submitted to the Executive Committee.

Supervisor Berg inquires if the Commission should make recommendation to remove health from responsibility from bylaws.

Attorney Cardamone states that if it is not keeping with the intent or appropriate of bylaws to submit to Executive Committee and let them advise next steps.

Commissioner Gonzales call to question.

OKeefe- Aye

Garcia- Abstain

Crosby-Nay

Super Thomas-Aye

Supervisor Berg-Nay

Gonz-aye

Solis- Aye

**Motion Carries.**

**6:59 PM**

**8. Resolution on Recognizing Hispanic Heritage Month and the Contributions of Hispanics and Latinos in Kenosha County:** Chair Solis speaks regarding the Resolution.

Supervisor Thomas makes a motion to discuss, Commissioner Gonzales seconded.

Commissioner Crosby questions why REEC is recognizing a resolution that is already recognized.

Chair Solis states that this is for the REEC to recognize.

Supervisor Berg states that he supports this Resolution, but the Commission and County is not addressing the terrible behavior of the Community and feels this is disingenuous to the Community.

Commissioner Garcia asks if any of the commissioners can draft a resolution.

Commissioner Gonzales speaks regarding his support of this resolution.

**Garcia-aye**  
**Crosby-aye**  
**Okeefe-aye**  
**Sup Thomas-aye**  
**Sup Berg-aye**  
**Gonzales-aye**  
**Solis-aye**

**All in favor. Motion Carries**

**7:15 PM**

**9. Discussion on the Nominations for Jennie Tunkieicz Award for Gender and Racial Equity and Possible Action and Recommendations in Regard to the Award-** Chair Solis states there have been zero nominations.

Kelsey states next year there should be no confusion on the name of the award and motivation and encouragement to apply.

Chair Solis refers this item back to the County Executive that there were zero nominations for this award.

Supervisor Thomas states one of the members that was part of the organizing group was Zach Rodriguez would be the recommendation for this award. He is very active on the County Board and represents an entirely new generation.

Commissioner Crosby asks why Supervisor Thomas did not nominate him in the first place. Commissioner Crosby states it should go back to the Executive Committee since there is zero nominations.

Chair Solis states the Commission can send the award back to the County Executive to rescind the award and give the REEC authority to create the award.

Commissioner Crosby states he did not request either of those suggestions.

Supervisor Berg states for the record that Commissioner Crosby did not request to rescind the award. Supervisor Berg requests to put on the next agenda to vote to rescind chair and vote on a new chair. Supervisor Berg feels that it should go back to the County to nominate again.

Supervisor Thomas withdraws his nomination.

Supervisor Berg asks Kelsey if a new email can go out to the County to explain the confusion and try again for nominations.

Kelsey states

Supervisor Berg would like to make a motion to keep the Jennie Tunkieicz award name as is and give County another 60 days to give nominations. Discussion ensues, motion withdrawn.

**Supervisor Berg makes a motion to have Kelsey to put the email together to squash the confusion on the award with County employees and give the County another 60 days for nominations. Seconded by Supervisor Thomas.**

Supervisor Thomas states that next year in January the nominations would come in and by March the Commission votes and is awarded in April. He suggests awarding it next year to get back to the cycle and skipping this year.

Supervisor Berg inquires if the 60 days should be 30 days. Supervisor Thomas states 30 days isn't in the timeline either.

Call to question

Garcia-Aye

Crosby-Aye

Okeefe-Aye

Thomas-Aye

Berg-Aye

Gonzales-Aye

Solis-Aye

Motion-

Garcia-Aye

Crosby-Aye

Okeefe-Nay

Thomas-Nay

Berg-Aye

Gonzales-Nay

Solis-Nay

Motion fails.

**7:27 PM**

**10. Law Enforcement Overview Report for County Board Executive Committee August 2023:**

Chair Solis speaks regarding the overview. Supervisor Thomas did research on the incident at Country Thunder and was informed that the Sheriff's Department did not receive a single report regarding harassment.

**7:28 PM**

**10. Adjourn- Supervisor Thomas makes a motion to adjourn, Commissioner Gonzales seconded.**

**Okeefe aye**

**Garcia nay**

**Crosby nay**

**Berg nay**

**Thomas aye**

**Gonzales aye**

**Solis aye**

**Motion Carries- meeting adjourned.**

**Respectfully Submitted,**

**Michelle Peralta (edited per REEC motion by Kelsey Hubeler)**