

**Town of Fairhaven**

Town Hall - 40 Center Street - Fairhaven, MA 02719

**Belonging Committee**



**Date, Time, and Location:**

January 10, 2024, 6:30 PM, Fairhaven Town Hall

Remote via ZOOM: 1-929-205-6099; Meeting ID: 892 1866 8394;

Passcode: 686316

Live recording available at:

<https://livestream.com/fairhavenlive/events/9874004/videos/238413501>

**Meeting Overview:**

1. **Call to order** and review of the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law
2. **Quorum/Attendance**

*In attendance:*

Members: Laura Barillaro; Jessica Fidalgo, Chair; Alliea E. Group, Clerk; Rachel Medeiros; Eryn Spencer Tomascik; Greg Weider.

Ex Officio: Leon E. Correy, III, Select Board Rep; Cameron Durant, Staff Liaison; Det. Jerome Penha, Jr., Police Department Rep.

*Absent:*

Members: Richard Cancio

Vacant Positions: Fire Department Representative; School Department Representative.

3. **Approve prior minutes:** A motion was made by Greg Weider and seconded by Rachel Medeiros to approve the minutes from August 2023. A roll call vote was held to approve as submitted; the motion passed unanimously. November 2023 minutes will be reviewed at our next meeting.

**New Business**

4. **Graffiti on the Rogers School Building**

In November, a report was made to the Fairhaven Police that the Rogers School building had been defaced with racially derogatory and sexually explicit graffiti. It was quickly removed and the town has made the following response:

- a. Select Board response. At the December 18, 2023 meeting of the Select Board a [proclamation](#) was made to indicate the town of Fairhaven's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. The resolution was read aloud. The responsibilities outlined in this proclamation of the Belonging Committee were reviewed.
- b. Police Reporting update: The police department is investigating this incident and encourages all residents to take a photo of any graffiti or other displays of racial, cultural or religious intolerance and to report it to the police. There is also an anonymous tip reporting form available on the [website](#).
- c. [Not In Our Town](#) – This has been delayed due to the medical leave of absence of Alliea Group, now that she has returned, she will revisit engaging people in this initiative.



- d. Promoting Anti-racism discussion, Wednesday, January 31<sup>st</sup> from 6-7 PM at the Millicent Library.
- e. The committee discussed potential opportunities to reach out to local employers to encourage DEI training in the workplace. The committee will review this further at our next meeting.

**5. Unsheltered Families Response**

Kelly Ochoa from the [South Coast Welcome Corps](#) joined the meeting to provide an update. The 30 families, at the discretion of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, will be moving out of Fairhaven tomorrow and will be relocated to other facilities within the state. Of these families over 50 of the people were children under the age of 5. The National Guard was there during the day to provide support and guidance. The town was able to provide many resources including infant supplies, clothes, food, and suit cases and backpacks to allow them to keep the supplies provided. The Family Resource Center, Select Board and other town officials and employees were able to host a Christmas gathering providing presents to all of the kids. Town officials, employees, and residents truly showed up to support these families and allowed us to truly welcome these families into our community. The Belonging Committee thanked the group for their leadership, coordination, and ability to truly provide a glorious welcome to these families.

- 6. Black History Month Planning:** Jessica is working with the Millicent Library to start planning a joint event. Alliea Group made a motion and Rachel Medeiros seconded to support the Belonging Committee to host an event in honor of Black History Month. A roll call vote was held; the motion passed unanimously.

The Millicent Library will be hosting an author talk on *Before Brooklyn: The Unsung Heroes Who Helped Break Baseball's Color Barrier* by Ted Reinstein uncovers the untold stories of those who fought against segregated baseball on Monday, February 5<sup>th</sup> from 6:30-7:30 PM.

- 7. Annual Report Review:** A motion was made by Alliea Group to approve the Annual Report as submitted and seconded by Greg Weider. A roll call vote was held; the motion passed unanimously.

**Old Business**

**8. Olde Holiday Fair Participation**

We hosted a presentation on winter cultural and religious holidays. We collected 53 cards and 37 ornaments which were distributed to the Council of Aging and Our Lady's Haven nursing facility.

**Items not Previously Anticipated/Board Member Comments**

[New Bedford MLK, Jr. Day](#) event will be held on Sunday, January 14<sup>th</sup> from 2-3:30 PM at the International Church of the Nazarene, 278 Pleasant St.

**Public Comments:** No public comments were received.

**Next meeting date:** The next meeting is currently scheduled for February 14, 2024. A motion was made by Greg Weider and seconded by Rachel Medeiros to change the date of our next meeting to February 7, 2024. A roll call vote was held; the motion passed unanimously.

**Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned by Jessica Fidalgo at 7:33 PM

Alliea E. Group

Signed by: