

Please note that these minutes may not be complete. It's even harder to take notes and manage Zoom at the same time. So let me know if I need to add anything or anyone.

Criminal Justice Task Force Zoom Meeting Monday, June 8, 2020

Present: Shanique, Ellen, Mark, Jo, Roberta, Penny, Rachel, Kristi, Betty, Kathleen, James (briefly), Cheryl

1. Check in: How is everyone doing? We are all hanging in there, varying degrees of distress but hopeful that this could be the turning point, finally
2. GoFundMe for House of John in honor of Shawn Greenlea: please look it up and donate, if you can, and share widely
3. Juneteenth Fundraiser Project: This is a project of the Northeast group in Faith in Action: An Equity Agenda: A Faith Call to Liberation. The first step was a letter to the Governors of the eight states. The organizers have been meeting every morning since sometime in March to work on this. Outlining what we want to see as states open, COVID19 testing, food donations, etc. This next piece is Art for Liberation, asking artists to send in art to donate -- by Friday would be great. It is set to start on June 19. There will be an airing on a number of social media venues and then on two subsequent dates, June 24 and July 1. Proceeds to help bail fathers out of jail, immigration and rent. FIA will match all funds raised. Faith in Action is the national organization which RocACTS belongs to, and there are 17 federations around the country working toward social justice goals.
4. Shanique: Tocsin update: The magazine will be going out this week in print. Let her know if you want to follow up with any of the people receiving the magazine, about 100 will be going out. The inmates are responding to our letters, so keep writing. This is a social justice publication. Shanique is considering changing the name to something more memorable. There is a lot of work with incarcerated people as well as entertainment and other social subjects. There is a lot of concern about COVID19 in prison. Tocsinmag.com. Sent out a link about Kimberly and Beck -- they have been fired for their racist comments on the air. Need to follow up to see if they get rehired elsewhere, which often happens with shock jocks.
5. Roberta and Penny: Report from First Unitarian Criminal Justice Ministries priorities: Ideas for connecting with other groups as collaborators and allies. This needs to be formalized. We can invite others to our meetings and send liaisons to theirs, can ask for letters of support for RocACTS -- is this supported by the bylaws? Betty agrees, she's not sending a lot of emails, it's overwhelming. She wants to be strategic. For collaboration, there is a need for definition -- to sign on to letters is

one thing, but if you join, you need a MOU. RocACTS is a 501(c)3 and we need to watch out for crossovers. Penny and Roberta attended the first meeting of the Community Justice Initiative. Anthony Hall is the convener. About 50 people came, Penny, Ken and Roberta were the only white people there. They are ready to move and really want to take on the Locust Club (police union). It's a grassroots organization. There's a good opportunity to look at the police contract, which was negotiated in 2016 and still under negotiation, so there is a good opportunity for the community to get involved.

Dr. Gayle sent an attachment with the police contract, which I will attach to these notes. PABA is probably engaged in this in some way, and this will affect what the PAB can do. Betty notes that the PABA just met. The disciplinary power is still in court and this is a priority and still working on filling the PABA. The union does not operate as one union; all the unions around the country support each other. It's very wealthy and can drag out the litigation due to their deep pockets. We have to be informed and put together our plan. We need more information.

We must also commit to meeting more frequently than once a month, which has been brought up before. I suggest that we create some subcommittees that can meet outside this monthly meeting time. Please let us know if you would like to be point person for an area of work.

6. Activism in quarantine: Addressing employment: We have a draft letter but haven't decided how to use it. Shanique endorses the idea. How to do this? Speedway on Lake Ave. closed and is pulling out. Can we connect with a neighborhood organization? Betty reminds us that just as we organize, the other side is also organizing to derail any progress.

Know your history and be prepared for the strategy of the opposition. We discussed the "proud boy" and the "planted" people who caused the looting and disruption. Shanique also notes that because there is diversity, it can look like they are being labelled as white supremacists to discourage white people who come out to support, particularly in Rochester. Shanique will be following up with Chief Singletary. Betty points out that there are people on the police forces who operate with the "proud boy" mentality.

Collaboration with EiE; Collaboration with Center for Community Alternatives: RocACTS is collaborating widely, but we are not all aware of everything. Betty and Joanne will pull together a list of organizations to share with all of us.

7. Additions: Alchemical Dialogues podcast: tabled. I will send out an email on this topic separately.

Next meeting: July 13, most likely on Zoom again. Please contact me if you need more information about how to participate via Zoom.



Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen FitzPatrick, Shanique Byrd, Co-chairs
with Penny and Roberta, First Unitarian, Criminal Justice Ministry

Also I want to highlight something Betty said, which has been ringing in my ears: the opposition is also organizing. We must be prepared for the backlash. George Yancy wrote a whole book by that title after he published his "Dear White People" piece in the NYT The Stone.

Please update your file of minutes to this one.

Thanks and love,

Kathleen