

SYSTEMIC RACISM REVIEW COMMITTEE WORKSESSION MINUTES - **DRAFT**



February 25, 2025 at 12:00 PM

Zoom Webinar

<https://juneau.zoom.us/j/92303909454> or: 1-253-215-8782 Webinar ID: 923 0390 9454

A. CALL TO ORDER - *Chair Froehlich called the Systemic Racism Review Committee Worksession to order via Zoom at 12:10 p.m.*

B. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT – *read by Chair Froehlich*

We would like to acknowledge that the City and Borough of Juneau is on Tlingit land and wish to honor the indigenous people of this land. For more than ten thousand years, Alaska Native people have been and continue to be integral to the well-being of our community. We are grateful to be in this place, a part of this community, and to honor the culture, traditions, and resilience of the Tlingit people. Gunalchéesh!

C. ROLL CALL

Present: Ephraim Froehlich, Ivan Nance, Jennifer Pemberton, AnaVera Morato, Lindsey Wold, and Kelli Patterson.

Absent: None

Staff/Others Present: Deputy City Clerk Di Cathcart, Assistant City Attorney Clinton Mitchell, SRRC Assembly Liaison Ella Adkison, Slate Communications Consultant Kim Newcomer, and Special Project Planning Manager Rob Dumouchel

D. APPROVAL OF AGENDA – *agenda approved as presented*

E. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – *Ms. Pemberton noted that Ms. Morato was listed as both absent and present, she was present – Minutes approved as amended*

1. January 28, 2025 SRRC Worksession Meeting Minutes - Draft

F. AGENDA TOPICS

2. CBJ Civic Engagement & Communications Strategy Project – Presentation by Rob Dumouchel & Slate Communications Consultant Kim Newcomer

Ms. Newcomer, with Slate Communications, introduced herself and the project work she is doing for CBJ on a communications and engagement strategy. A big goal of this effort is to look at not only how do we communicate more effectively, but how do we reach a more diverse audience and encourage engagement from the entire community.

Ms. Newcomer walked through her presentation highlighting the following pieces: how to improve communication and civic engagement efforts overall, create a sustainable and ongoing strategy and work to avoid creating all these great ideas at once and then they fade into the distance. We want this to be systemic, permanent and prioritize accessibility, inclusivity, heighten transparency and reach audiences that we haven't reached before. How do we make sure that people have access to information and understand the decision-making process of CBJ. Finally, it is looking at community engagement and outreach, and what does that look like. How do we recruit for boards and commissions, how do people get involved and make those permanent connections with CBJ and how do we make sure that we're providing that opportunity for the entire community, and not just maybe the segments that are easy to reach.

Ms. Newcomer outlined the project itself, which is set in 4 phases. Phase 1 is what we are currently doing, a discovery and communication audit. We've been talking to a lot of stakeholders, staff members and groups really trying to better understand the Juneau community. What works, what doesn't, who's the typical audience

member, who are we not reaching, where are we falling down and where are we doing well. From that we'll put together a framework, or the bones of the project (Phase 2), what are we trying to accomplish, what are some of the strategies we're looking at, and how much does that cost. What are the resources we need to get that done and from there we can build all of this out. What are the tools that we're using and what are some tools we can retire and what are some new programs we can put in place to really increase and improve our engagement and our communications. We have 2 big deliverable dates; one is coming up this weekend which covers Phases 1 & 2 and then the meat of the plan is due by June 30th. With that, Ms. Newcomer opened it up to input from the committee.

Mr. Froehlich opened up the discussion stating it was hard to gauge CBJ communication efforts vs. larger metropolitan area, 30,000 people vs. a million plus makes for a different communication network. Generally, we have the tools at our disposal with the local newspaper, radio stations and social media but not sure how much CBJ utilizes those tools.

Ms. Newcomer, for a town the size of Juneau you have those tools in place but maybe not the structure behind it to maximize them and do some of the outreach. What we've heard people repeatedly say that we've been talking to is relationships are important, and word of mouth is still the top tool for sharing information. CBJ's Facebook following and activity is high and there are some untapped opportunities with the CBJ website, so while you have these tools in place CBJ doesn't have a formalized department or program running all of these things.

Mr. Froehlich shared that CBJ shares important policies that are getting put into place or updating various plans but none of it is easy to understand or follow in layman's terms. If I'm having trouble navigating it as an attorney who's worked on Capitol Hill on national policy then I can't imagine how other people are navigating and digesting the information that the city puts out. While people don't want to necessarily see government grow but having a functioning communications team that can disseminate information in an approachable and digestible way is key.

Ms. Pemberton said she had lived in similar city-size communities and felt that Juneau does a really good job and felt more engaged and in touch with what's going on; which she said could also be because she's now a homeowner and parent with a child in the school system vs. when she was younger living in a similar size college town. However, there does seem to be lack of a real concerted targeted effort towards communication that is missing. She said she had put together a list of ideas for outreach opportunities related to the committee's boards and committees discussion and in reviewing the list of possible outreach such as engaging Facebook posts, flyers on community bulletin boards, or videos she realized, who's going to do that work. Staff are already maxed out in what they do for us, yet there does need to be a mechanism of city government to make dissemination of information accessible and engaging and less postings of almost verbatim language from the website and intimidating.

Mr. Froehlich noted there is a geographic aspect to engagement as well, as someone who grew up downtown, and going to Assembly meetings and currently lives downtown and can easily walk to City Hall to attend meetings, not everyone has that ease of ability. Our community is geographically spread out with not the best public transportation system so as you get further from downtown it can be harder to engage.

Ms. Newcomer thanked the committee for their time and great conversation and to reach out if members have other ideas that arise.

The committee thanked Ms. Newcomer for her time and presentation.

3. SRRC Discussion on CBJ Board Recruitment & Diversity - Narrowing Focus of SRRC's Scope of Work

Link to 2/3/2025 Assembly Human Resources Committee Packet w/ boards & committee information

[CBJ board directory](#)

[CBJ Boards/Committees Webpage](#)

Ms. Cathcart shared that CBJ does not have a standard policy for boards and committees outreach or recruitment however there are standard procedures the Clerk's Office and CBJ have historically done and continues to do

regarding all things boards and committees related. She said she was able to do some brief internet searches for any national best practices currently in place and found a couple potentially helpful websites; she will forward those links to the committee.

Ms. Pemberton said one way to start would be to develop a best practices list and then figure out if policies need to be changed or where to go from there. If we find strategies that we'd like to recommend as a committee and allow our liaison and city staff figure out how to make some of them happen or help direct us in where it needs to happen. She said she had created a list of ideas to beef up board recruitment and will forward that to the Clerk for inclusion in these minutes.

- Have a current list of affinity groups that are always contacted directly with vacancies: Fil-Comm, Black Awareness Association, Haa Toooh Licheesh, ANS & ANB, SHI, etc.
- Post flyers at churches, restaurants, stores, community spaces where a wide swath of Juneau visits or that are specific to under-represented people on our boards and committees
- Write "juicy" social media posts that really say why someone would want to join. Include testimonials from board members. Maybe videos.
- Run radio spots on KTOO and KINY -- they reach different and overlapping audiences in our community
- Once or twice a year, host "open house" meetings, where people are invited to see what we do — be more intentional during those meetings about explaining what we do, what impact we have on the community, how we conduct our meetings, etc.
- Post on job boards for nonprofits/volunteers like Craigslist, Indeed, Alaska Municipal League, Foraker Group, UAS
- Use part of an assembly meeting or a separate town hall to introduce boards and committees with vacancies
- Is there a list of contacts for people who testify at assembly meetings? Maybe reach out to people who are signed up to testify and see if they want to serve on a board. If they had enough engagement to testify, maybe they want to help work on solutions.

Ms. Wold shared that she thought testimonials or reviews by board or committee members of our experiences or the reasons why where're doing it was a great idea. Also liked the short video idea, not everyone is a reader, and a picture is worth a thousand words and how some people process information better or faster; but who's going to execute it.

Mr. Froehlich appreciated the ideas presented, noting that anything that expands outreach and touches new people falls within something that we should promote, suggest, or champion. As it relates to promoting diversity and combating systemic racism he would like to look at A. how CBJ interacts and notifies local tribal governments of various opportunities to promote tribal involvement, perhaps through written policy and B. the dissemination of information by CBJ to the public. Anybody can go online and check what committees are out there and have vacancies. The act of notification to tribal governments and the public could spur additional applications.

Ms. Pemberton was cautious about changing the structure or putting more parameters around board membership because they don't want to create more barriers than we already have. However, when she served on the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) it has specific seats, and they added two tribal representative seats on that committee. It is a massive committee with 14 primary and 14 alternate member seats, and each pair of seats is specific to the media, healthcare, hospital, Red Cross, vulnerable population, HazMat, Firefighter/EMS, etc. While we don't want to create too many buckets for this committee or others, we could say one of the seats is reserved for a tribal member or something similar since there could be some kind of tribal government to local government relationship there. Would we also want to reserve a seat for other underrepresented community members but that may put us in a position of having quotas so we could figure out how to make sure that representation is somehow codified.

Mr. Mitchell advised the committee that as soon as CBJ starts having quotas on committees or boards that are based on race, national origin, alienage, things like that, then we're getting really close to 4th Amendment violations. He cautioned the SRRC on going down that path and that Law would need to take a close look at anything the committee is interested in doing along those lines.

Ms. Pemberton asked how that works with the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC), which has specific seats, is it because they are State or Federally mandated.

Ms. Cathcart responded that the LEPC follows the guidelines put forth by the State of Alaska Emergency Response Commission which calls for specific seats due to the charge of the committee. She noted there are some CBJ committees that do have specific seats due to the work the committee does such as the Utility Advisory Board, Personnel Board, Youth Activities Board and several of our quasi-judicial appeal boards. She noted that having a specific seat can be a pro and a con; it is great to have the expertise, however, it can be hard to fill that seat which then leads to a long-standing vacancy and affects quorum.

Mr. Froehlich, we are trying to promote rather than mandate representation; Mr. Mitchell highlighted the 4th Amendment issue well, however, there is precedence at most every level of government for carving out tribal seats on different boards and commissions, which is different than a race, gender creed carves out. We should think about how to promote all diversity, race, gender, financial status and in talking about communications more broadly it feels that promoting direct communication and relationships with our local tribal governments would be a really positive step.

Mr. Froehlich posed to the group that if there isn't currently a diversity policy in place, there probably should be, or something similar like a best practices document. It wouldn't have to be super prescriptive, perhaps a one-page list of some of the ideas Ms. Pemberton outlined as well as adding tribal outreach.

The committee discussed adding short summaries of what each board or commission does, the time commitment and what is expected of the board or commission to the website and places that are easily accessible to the community.

Mr. Froehlich asked Ms. Adkison and staff what the level of interest is in boards, if they've seen applications go up or down post-pandemic. Ms. Adkison responded that what she's seen post-pandemic, since she wasn't on the Assembly during the pandemic, is that typically it's been two open seats and two applicants. For Empowered Board appointments the Assembly tends to see more applicants, and the recruitment process is more involved. Yet, even with the nature of the work Empowered Boards do, overseeing that departments budget and director, there is still a struggle to get enough applicants to interview and appoint.

Ms. Adkison and Ms. Cathcart both shared that with Empowered Boards, also all volunteer with the exception of the Planning Commission and the Bartlett Regional Hospital Board which members receive a small stipend, the board members themselves are engaged in recruiting individuals that are users in that part of the community the board oversees, such as Docks & Harbors, or Eaglecrest. As with anything, if there is a hot topic or hot button issue affecting a particular area of the community and there is a CBJ board associated with it, more people will apply for that board.

Ms. Patterson commented that for her joining the SRRC was intimidating and after seeing the way a meeting is run she probably wouldn't have applied had she known the formality. She said that no other board, organization or staff meeting that she is a part of has the same level of formality or uses Robert's Rules of Order. It would be good to show that people who serve on committees are human and fumble through; and if committees could have the ability to be less formal while still completing the work the committee is charged with.

Ms. Wold agreed with Ms. Patterson and noted that a video might help highlight the human side of working together on a committee and remove the formality.

Mr. Nance recommended that when CBJ advertises for members to also send notices to various organizations rather than just a general announcement.

Mr. Froehlich commented that Roberts Rules itself is racist but that would be a conversation for another meeting to perhaps look at a suspension of Robert's Rules.

G. STAFF REPORTS - *None*

H. COMMITTEE MEMBER / LIAISON COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS - *None*

I. NEXT MEETING DATE – Tuesday, March

J. SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS - *None*

K. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the committee meeting adjourned at 1:03 p.m.