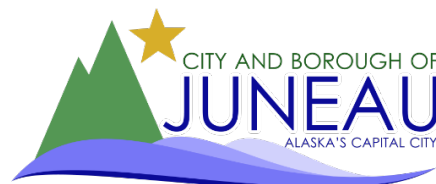


SYSTEMIC RACISM REVIEW COMMITTEE WORKSESSION MINUTES

January 28, 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 12:01 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, Jennifer Pemberton, Ivan Nance, AnaVera Morato, and Lindsey Wold

Absent: Kelli Patterson, and John Drips

Staff/Others: Deputy City Clerk Di Cathcart, and Assembly Liaison Ella Adkison

D. APPROVAL OF AGENDA – Agenda approved as presented

E. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Minutes approved as presented

1. November 5, 2024 SRRC Worksession Minutes - Draft

F. AGENDA TOPICS

2. SRRC Discussion on CBJ Board Recruitment & Diversity

Link to [1/6/2025 Assembly Human Resources Committee Packet](#) w/ boards & committee information

[CBJ board directory](#)

[CBJ board application](#)

[CBJ Boards/Committees Webpage](#)

[CBJ advisory board pamphlet](#)

Assemblymember Adkison gave an update on which CBJ boards the Assembly Human Resources Committee (HRC) are looking at dissolving due to those boards duties now completed or merged into standard staff duties within CBJ departments. The HRC is also reviewing dissolving most of the appeal boards with the exception of the Board of Equalization. Appeals that previously would have gone to the Sales Tax Board of Appeals, Bidding Review Board or Building Code Board of Appeals would instead go before a Hearing Officer.

Mr. Froehlich gave an overview of how the SRRC came to pick the boards and committees topic for a deeper discussion; and reviewing - does consolidation of boards actually promote diversity.

Mr. Nance asked how many boards CBJ currently has. Ms. Cathcart said over 30 various boards and committees.

Ms. Pemberton watched the January 6 Assembly HRC recording and appreciated the discussion that was had. She posed the question, now that we will have a more streamlined roster of committees how we get people interested in filling those seats, and how can we continue to reach a broader swath of the community will be key.

Assemblymember Adkison clarified that the boards and committees discussion at the Assembly Human Resources Committee is just part of the conversation. It falls within the purview of HRC's duties to review boards and committees. However, this conversation, and any recommendations, will move forward to a future Assembly Committee of the Whole meeting where the full Assembly can discuss. Ms. Adkison noted that people who sit on these various boards and committees care about the work they are doing, and we want to make sure they have a full and diverse board to do the work they volunteered to do. She said she was interested in hearing what good next steps are for the recruitment and outreach part of this conversation as well as any thoughts SRRC has on the consolidation and dissolving dissolutions the HRC is looking at.

Ms. Pemberton asked if it would be helpful if SRRC gave recommendations regarding boards/committees.

Ms. Adkison, yes, if that is something the SRRC is comfortable doing. There are certain boards and commissions that people are very passionate about; such as the Historic Resources Advisory Committee (HRAC). And so, as with anything, big changes create hesitancy from people. If this is something that the SRRC is comfortable reviewing the Assembly would appreciate the SRRC's thoughts and suggestions.

Ms. Pemberton stated that during the January 6 HRC meeting discussion regarding HRAC the City Attorney brought up that there had been some systemic racism in the definition of what is considered historic by CBJ or HRAC standards and thought that seemed like an easy one for the SRRC to review. The SRRC could look at other potential discriminatory policies related to a boards charge.

Ms. Cathcart noted that some of these boards, as they move through the review process, are created by resolution and some by ordinance. Since the SRRC typically only reviews ordinances, they wouldn't see any boards created by resolution, such as the ADA Committee and Sister Cities Committee which are on the February 3 Assembly agenda for dissolution. The SRRC has a couple options, you could choose to write a formal memo outlining the committees thoughts or utilize the ability of having Ms. Adkison as both your Assembly Liaison and the Assembly HRC Chair to share your comments, concerns and recommendations with and she can report those back to the HRC and the full Assembly.

Mr. Froehlich, tagging off of Ms. Pemberton's statement of potential systemic racism, noted that the board matrix outlined HRAC to have a board membership made up of archaeologists, historians, architects, owners of recognized historic property and people knowledgeable in the customs and language of the Tlingit and Haida people. So is the Assembly following that guideline for the board make up and is it the committee being systemically racist or is it committee members.

Ms. Adkison responded that Attorney Wright during her discussion at the meeting stated that staff who work with HRAC had concerns about members being systemically racist vs. the board as a whole. If it is a concern with members that's not a reason to dissolve a board, but rather to remove problematic members. One issue that came up was regarding the downtown historic district design standards, they are all based on Victorian or turn of the century history standards but do not include any native design or architecture. When the Sealaska Plaza and complex were built it had to be removed from the downtown historic district in order to be approved. So, rather than dissolve HRAC, would it be better suited to have them come together on a case-by-case basis like when a project like Sealaska is up for review. They could also look at including native design into design requirements.

Mr. Froehlich asked for clarification on whether HRAC is being looked at possibly being dissolved for a functional reason for the city or for a personality issue. Disagreements among board members or boards and the Assembly can add to healthy discussions.

Ms. Adkison agreed that to a certain point adversarial relationships with the Assembly are not necessarily a bad thing. It is absolutely within a board or commissions purview to say they don't agree with a decision; that is part of the advisory committees role and not a reason to dissolve a committee. A lot of these decisions and discussions revolve around staff time and staff capacity. It is a heavy lift on our Clerks and other department staff, having as

many boards and commissions as we do. There are certain boards and commissions that are a little directionless; part of that is because there are so many boards and commissions the Assembly can't pay attention to and direct all of them. So that leads to a bunch of boards that don't fully know what their purpose is, and that can result in taking up more staff time while they try to determine what they can and can't do. In terms of a broader goal, reducing boards and commissions is good for Assembly relationships and also for staff time and staff capacity, and if staff have more capacity, they're also able to help the boards and commissions accomplish their stated goals.

Mr. Froehlich agreed that on the broad level if the functionality of a board or commission can be accomplished elsewhere, effectively and with public participation then there is an opportunity to call it redundant, thereby freeing up valuable staff time and potentially the Assembly's time.

Ms. Pemberton shared that she wondered if it was worth exploring Chairs receiving stipends to help incentivize a little more structure and to make sure people are committed. When you have a good Chair or staff person it helps create a better functioning board. A lot of staff time is dedicated to helping boards and committees, our committee alone has support from upwards of 4 staff members at times.

Mr. Nance commented that staff were always well prepared and responded to committee member questions quickly.

Mr. Froehlich noted the one of the aspects of diversity that's not recorded in our gender and ethnic demographic charts is age. He requested the committee flag for a future discussion on how to get young people involved in government. The other topic for future review is the overall broader discussion of best practices for recruitment from these underrepresented groups in the demographics chart.

Ms. Pemberton recommended the SRRC figure out a strategy to make time for the meatier discussion around recruitment. How can strategize to get people engaged when they have limited personal time.

Mr. Froehlich requested the SRRC look at having a standing worksession meeting in addition to the standard SRRC legislative review meetings. Does CBJ have a recruitment policy and if not, what is the de facto policy; if staff could speak to that at our next worksession. What are the nationally recognized best practices for diversity and recruitment and is CBJ following any of those.

Ms. Cathcart stated that what would be helpful from a staff perspective would be if SRRC could dig into the engagement and recruitment piece related to boards and committees; how do we get citizens interested in joining a board or committee. This would help the HRC as they work on what boards to potentially dissolve or lower membership on through vacancies. SRRC is CBJ's youngest committee and has had almost complete membership turnover in its 4 years as a committee and struggles with filling vacancies just as every other CBJ board does.

Ms. Adkison welcomed SRRC members to reach out to her with any questions or if they wished to talk one on one on this topic or any other topics.

Ms. Wold appreciated the great conversation and everything that was said.

Committee members closed out the meeting with a discussion around the possibility of meeting in person or meeting one on one to get to know each other better vs. just via Zoom for an hour during SRRC meetings.

G. COMMITTEE MEMBER / LIAISON COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS - None

H. NEXT MEETING DATE - at Noon via Zoom

Tuesday, February 4, 2025 - Regular SRRC Meeting for legislation review

I. SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS - None

J. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee meeting adjourned at 12:59 p.m.