

General Committee Meeting

Date: Thursday, May 25, 2023

Topics: Juneteenth and Creation of a Proclamation in support of May as Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month

Committee Members present: Alderwoman Hooker, Alderman Barbagallo, Alderman Cupoli, Alderwoman Savage, Alderwoman Tadio

Others Present: Alderman Talbott, Alderwoman Davis, Treasurer Markowski, Russel Flannery

Meeting was called to order at: 5:30pm.

Community member Russel Flannery stated he would like Rutland City to officially designate May as Asian American and Pacific Islander month. His intention is to call attention to the contributions of the Asian American and Pacific Islander community in Rutland. He would like the Board of Aldermen to pass a declaration to support the month in line with the Vermont State declaration.

The Aldermen discussed the many ways our community benefits from various cultures in our city and the benefits Rutland students receive from participation in the RISE program. The RISE program is the Rutland City and Hanamaki, Japan student exchange program for 8th and 9th grade students in Rutland City. Alderman Michael Talbott recommended passing a version of the Governor's resolution with an additional portion highlighting RISE and drawing attention to racism here in our community.

It was agreed upon to place a copy of the resolution on the Rutland City website and read it, or an updated version every year at the beginning of May.

A motion was made to write a proclamation in support of Asian American and Pacific Islander Month and to read it annually at the first Board of Aldermen meeting in May.

Motion passed 5-0.

Alderwoman Tadio then spoke about designating Juneteenth as a citywide holiday and offering the holiday as a paid day off for city workers. Her intention is to show people our city is committed to efforts to support Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and to attract more BIPOC people to Rutland city. She explained this change would involve negotiations with four separate unions including the Police Department, the Fire Department, the Department of Public Works, and the Recreation Department. Each union has different time periods to negotiate their contracts, but according to Attorney Bloomer the city could offer each union a Memorandum of Understanding that updates the contract until it is officially renegotiated. Alderwoman Tadio explained that she had spoken with the Rutland Area NAACP and has their support for this change.

To be cost neutral to the city of Rutland, Treasurer Markowski stated that substituting a floater holiday such as an employee's birthday or Washington's birthday for Juneteenth would be an easy option.

Alderman Barbagallo suggested combining Washington and Lincoln's birthdays into one holiday to add Juneteenth. Ultimately the unions will decide which option works best for them.

A motion was made to direct the city administration to propose to the city unions that Juneteenth would be a replacement floating holiday, and to have the City Attorney draw up the Memorandum of Understanding for the unions.

Motion passed 5-0.

Meeting adjourned at 6:14pm.