



**TEAM Westport Meeting Minutes**  
**June 6, 2017, 8:00 AM**  
**Room 201, Westport Town Hall, Westport, CT**

**Attendees:** Judy Hamer, Maggie Mudd, Harold Bailey (Presiding), Catherine Onyemelukwe, Susan Ellis, Karen Kleine, Dolores Paoli, Zoe Tarrant, Ramin Ganeshram, Bernicestine McLeod, Elaine Daignault, Althea Seaborn

**Guests:** Foti Koskinas (Chief of Police, Westport), Sam Arciola (Deputy Chief of Police), Brett Aronow, TJ Elgin, Denise Bahr, Rebecca Marsick, Candace Banks

The meeting was called to order at 8:07AM with introductions.

**Approval of Minutes:** Susan Ellis moved that we approve the minutes of our May 2, 2017 meeting as amended. Judy Hamer seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously and will be posted.

**Programming:**

**Flyer Response:** Harold, Maggie, and Bernicestine met on May 18<sup>th</sup> with a representative of the Saugatuck Congregational Church (Rev. Willie Salmond) and the current head of the Interfaith Clergy Association of Westport-Weston (Rabbi Jeremy Wiederhorn) at the request of Westport's First Selectman, Jim Marpe, to discuss programming responses to the flyer that was distributed in town in May re: white supremacy.

Several approaches were discussed:

- a. Host a panel discussion similar to the "Three-Amigo" sessions with representatives from Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. A group comprised of women already exists.
- b. Invite the former mayor of South Windsor (1<sup>st</sup> Muslim mayor in Connecticut) – Saud Anwar – to speak.
- c. Conduct additional programming (as we have in the past) around productions at the Westport Playhouse. The play, *Appropriate*, by a black playwright – Brandon Jacobs-Jenkins – will provide an opportunity in August.

Harold has spoken with Michael Barker, Managing Director at the Westport Playhouse, who has tentatively offered the Playhouse on Monday evenings for any of the programming. Schedules will be developed accordingly. Follow-up meetings re: programming will involve the Interfaith Clergy Association, the Westport Playhouse, and the Westport Library.

Chief Koskinas stated that the police have come together with TEAM Westport to proactively address next steps as a result of the distribution of the flyers. The police force is working with the ADL as well. He also observed that across the country gaps are growing between citizens due to the current political climate. So it is even more essential for everyone to work together and to share opinions although we may disagree.

The general discussion was in agreement with the Chief's comments about the growing gap: the backdrop of the current messaging from Washington presents a challenge and is creating a major divide and crisis. Westport's image of civilization and the community we want to be is going against that messaging.

Chief Koskinas also mentioned two proposed Connecticut House Bills (H.B. 6662 and H.B. 6663) that call for officers involved in use-of-excessive-force investigations to be suspended without pay and establish a 5-day deadline for prosecutors to finish their initial investigations. Some discussion ensued about these proposals.



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**Education:**

1. Redacted versions of all of the essays that were submitted during our most recent Essay Contest have been forwarded to the English Department at Staples and to the Superintendent.
2. Teacher education with regard to diversity and equity is key in getting the message across to students in class. For example, Harvard rescinded 10 kids' acceptances because of insensitive memes.
3. ADL works closely with the school system in training "Kool to be Kind" students (3 sessions a year for 2 hours each). Also "The Truth about Hate" program at Staples for juniors and sophomores this past year will be expanding so that all four grades will be trained. A program entitled "Names Can Really Hurt Us" is designed for the middle school and high school. There are sessions available for parents as well – programming such as "What We Wish Our Parents Knew: Bullying and/or Cyberbullying Programs for Parents and Guardians". ADL has worked with all of the police chiefs in Fairfield County. Next week ADL is going to honor a Muslim couple in New Haven for their community service.

**New Events:**

- To be rescheduled – June 8<sup>th</sup> at 7PM – Panel featuring Jeff Pegues (CBS) and Chief Foti Koskinas at the Westport Library. Mr. Pegues has authored the book Black and Blue: Inside the Divide between the Police and Black America.
- June 15<sup>th</sup> at 7:45PM – We are invited to a Ramadan Iftar at St. Luke's Church in Westport.
- July 1<sup>st</sup> at 11:30AM – Teen essay winners have been invited to read and discuss their essays at the Westport Senior Center.
- September 10<sup>th</sup> from 5:30-9:30PM – ADL Gala (concert and update for the community). More information will follow. Members of TEAM Westport are invited to a conference call with Marji Lipshez-Shapiro of the ADL immediately following this meeting to get more details.

**Marketing:**

1. We again discussed methods of outreach to advertise all of the events being conducted. Suggestions included: places of worship (congregations), parents, FaceBook groups, newspapers, blogs, Inklings, advertising during other related events, radio, friends and family.
2. Ramin reported on the progress of the TEAM Westport blog. Our blog is a great place to get content out to the community. However, we need to provide content to be able to keep the blog active and alive. For example, book reviews would be very helpful. Two paragraphs are sufficient about any topic we choose. Judy suggested that each of us write about something of interest and send that to Ramin for publishing.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:50 AM.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, July 11, 2017 at 8AM in Room 201, Westport Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Bernicestine McLeod  
Secretary