



**TEAM Westport Meeting Minutes**  
**November 13, 2018, 8:00 AM**  
**Room 309, Westport Town Hall, Westport, CT**

**Attendees:** Harold Bailey, Jr. (Presiding), Bernicestine McLeod, Zoe Tarrant, Catherine Lewis, Susan Ellis, Alison Patton, Catherine Onyemelukwe, Dolores Paoli, Maggie Mudd, Ramin Ganeshram, Candace Banks, and Judy Hamer

**Guests:** Lauren Francese (Westport Public Schools), Lt. Eric Woods (Westport Police Department), Cody Daigle-Orians (Westport Library), Sandie Kinseley

The meeting was called to order at 8:09AM.

**Approval of Minutes:** Maggie moved that the minutes from our October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2018 meeting be approved with one amendment. Judy seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously and will be posted accordingly.

**What's Up.**

1. Susan circulated an article and picture from the New York Times showing "Black Girl Magic" – a picture of 17 black women judges who won office in Texas in November.
2. Whoopi Goldberg was in the area on Sunday at the ADL Voices event at the Klein Memorial Auditorium in Bridgeport. She recalled Jim Crow days and emphasized that we should all keep fighting. Trevor Noah had to cancel so Whoopi came instead.
3. The General's Cook by Ramin has been released!
4. There will be an Interfaith Thanksgiving service at 7:30 at the Unitarian Church this Thursday (the 15<sup>th</sup>).

**Programming:**

1. TW Book Club:  
The next book club session is on January 14<sup>th</sup>; however, no book has been selected yet. A really good discussion of Barracoon by Zora Neale Hurston was held at the last session.
2. Essay Contest: We discussed several possible topics for this year. The topic will be announced in January and will be distributed.
3. Westport Historical Society:
  - a. Dr. Stacey Close, from Eastern Connecticut State, is scheduled to speak on this Thursday, November 15<sup>th</sup> at 6PM. It is a free event and he will discuss African migration.
  - b. The WHS has received grants for the "Remembered" exhibit to be used in the community, one of which may apply to the MLK celebration to be held on January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2019.
  - c. The WHS and the "Remembered" exhibit have been nominated for awards from the NE Museum Association and other groups.
  - d. Jim Marpe and Ramin are in talks about the plaque outside of Town Hall. WHS created the plaque originally and now needs to raise money to change it to better reflect the history of the town of Westport with respect to people of color.
  - e. WHS is looking for additional board members.
4. Policing: Since Pittsburgh, the department has been doing a lot with the synagogues due to security concerns.
5. Playhouse: *The Pianist of Willesden Lane* will be presented at the Playhouse starting on December 5<sup>th</sup> – a return run. Is it possible to have student groups attend any of the performances?



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6. Library Partnership / Coming Events: Westport READS is coming in mid-January. Exit West, by Mohsin Hamid, is the selected book. The author is not touring now, but he may be available for an interview via Skype. Dolores will coordinate with Jennifer Keller at the Library in planning relevant programming during Westport READS.
7. MLK Planning Committee / Anti-Racism Training: We are looking at speakers still for the event, but we do have a strong candidate. Announcements will be made soon. The Martin Luther King, Jr. celebration will take place on January 20, 2019 at 3PM at the Westport Country Playhouse. Plans are also underway for our first anti-racism training class to take place here in December.

**Education:**

- Lauren attended a session on institutional racism in schools delivered by Professor Yohuru Williams (formerly of Fairfield University) at a fall teachers conference.
- Social studies teachers attended a Regional Conference and a Holocaust workshop put together in collaboration with ADL.
- Lauren explained how info comes back to Westport from these various sessions. There is an ongoing curriculum review process that incorporates the requirement to align with Connecticut's content standards. Teachers are now looking overall at the 8<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum and the Area Studies courses for 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders. They zoom in to see how to refocus and reframe these curricula – not just according to the state mandate, but also to incorporate human rights components because they are essential elements of the new state framework.
- Social Studies is working with Penguin Random House on diverse books in order to prepare materials and workshops for teachers.
- Julie is doing a lot with diverse books in other subject areas, e.g. English.
- Training on microaggressions is needed and a system for reporting them. It may be helpful for students who experience microaggressions to get together to share and/or to write about their experiences. The group *Sandy Hook Promise* has the "say something act" as a mechanism for anonymous reporting. We need teachers and administrators to be aware and informed about microaggressions, but they are not empowered currently to have such conversations or to recognize improper behavior with respect to microaggressions. However, the urgency is not there, yet. It may be helpful, as well, for the police department to hear more about the environment in the schools and what happens daily.

**Marketing:** Web – Catherine O. is working on our website and our FaceBook account. A student is working with Catherine as part of her student volunteer requirement. Please send your bio updates to Catherine.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 AM.

The next meeting will be held at 8AM on Tuesday, December 4, at 8AM in Room 201, Westport Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Bernicestine McLeod  
Secretary