

COMMITTEE ON SOLIDARITY

PortlandCTSolidarity@gmail.com

Regular Meeting

Tuesday September 9, 2025

7:00 PM

Waverly Senior Center -7 Waverly Avenue, Portland Connecticut 06480
In-person and Zoom B -- ID: 352 700 8408 / Password 113ct

Members Present: Glenn "PJ" Eason, Hope Jones, Jacquilyn "Jackie" Davis, Liz Hibino, Emily "Em" Bickhardt, Nancy Goodwin, Drey Farmer (student rep).

Members of the Public Present: Janet Ellsworth.

Also Present: Jennifer Billingsly "JBill", Portland Library.

Members Absent: Cynthia Tyler (chair), Kristy Fuller (alternate), Shelly Nolan (alternate), Eunice Ngunjiri (student rep).

1. **Call Meeting to Order / Roll Call / Introductions.** Liz called the meeting to order at 7:07pm. Liz shared that Cindy is away on vacation and Eunice has a volleyball game. Members did introductions for those who haven't met yet. Em reported she completed ethics training and was sworn in as our newest member.
2. **Approve Agenda.** There was a motion by Nancy, seconded by Jackie to approve tonight's agenda. Vote unanimous, motion carried.
3. **Correspondence / Public Comment.** BOS meetings are moving back to the library and will continue to be accessible virtually: 1st meeting there is in October. Free Mental Health First Aid training by Gilead Community Services at Portland Library: The deadline to register is 9/12. MHFA training is a program that teaches people without a clinical background how to recognize, assess, and assist someone experiencing a mental health challenge. Like CPR training for non-medical professionals, MHFA prepares participants to engage with an individual experiencing a challenge and connect them with appropriate help.
4. **Approve Meeting Minutes: July 8, 2025.** There was a motion by Liz to approve the minutes, seconded by Jackie. Vote unanimous, motion carried.
5. **Donations and Budget:** There was a motion by Nancy, seconded by Jackie, to increase the budget for the Solidarity table runner from signs.com to \$125.00. Vote unanimous, motion carried. Hope will provide receipt to Michelle C and a copy to PJ.
6. **Solidarity in the Community**

- a. **Discuss publicity:** website, video. PJ shared a draft of a website. Liz shared that Parker from Focus Shift Media asked if there is still interest in a free promo video. Members are interested but are busy and need to set time to discuss plans for this. Jackie & PJ plan to create a workgroup, after October. Drey is a maybe depending on schedule. Discussion on including footage from past and upcoming events, and film next year. Liz will follow up with Parker.
- b. **Town events & meetings; Sign-ups for Board of Selectmen meetings & Rivereast Solidarity column**
 - i. Portland Fair: Committee is in agreement to leave information at a table at the Portland Fair, in the crafts and community tent, after an invitation by Melissa Kelley.
 - ii. BOS Meetings: 9/17, Hope (Drey has a conflict). 10/22, PJ. 11/19, Jackie. 12/17, Cindy (will confirm).
 - iii. Solidarity column for Rivereast: September — Jackie. October — Liz. November — Drey and Eunice.
- c. **Solidarity Calendar and flags**
 - i. Calendar: September is also Suicide Prevention Month. Sep 15-Oct 15 is Hispanic Heritage month. Liz will reach out to Julie, bilingual teacher to discuss possible collaboration for this year or the future. JBill is planning an Indigenous People's Heritage Month event at the library next November w/Wangunk elder Gary Red Oak O'Neil and invited help in planning. Hope, Jackie, Drey, Nancy, possibly others were interested.
 - ii. Solidarity flags for street posts are put up for June. Public works has a schedule they want to stick to, other months are not an option. PJ will remind them next year since they were not put up until the end of June. New Public Works director is Jason Morrocco.

7. DEIA efforts in Portland Schools and Town Departments

- a. **Social Service Collaboration** - no updates. Discussed support for Courtney Fitzkee, Youth Services Administrator recently diagnosed with cancer.
- b. **Social Work in Law Enforcement** - Liz mentioned there was interest from Mike Pelton in having an intern. One idea: a social worker who can be part time for

the police department and part time for the Senior Center. Nancy is part of this workgroup and Liz will connect her with Matt Solak who can provide support.

- c. **School updates:** Drey will look into Hispanic Heritage Month activities at the high school.
8. **Pride updates:** GSA in Middle School: Drey will find out which teacher is advising this group. Committee would like to order more Portland PRIDE stickers and “You Are Safe” pins. PJ will have a quote for stickers and Jackie will have a quote for 50 pins at next month's meeting. The community has loved these giveaways at events.
9. **Juneteenth updates:** Juneteenth 2025 review meeting: Next Monday.
10. **Voices of Portland updates:** The *Voices of Portland, Volume 1* book, funded by CT Humanities, was published and launched at Portland Library on 9/6. There was a great turnout. The book is now available to check out at the library, and archived at the Portland Historical Society, Middlesex Historical Society, and the CT State Library. More info on the project at: portlandlibraryct.org/voices-of-portland. Emily is interested in joining this workgroup.
11. **Open Discussion/Public Comment:** October is Spina Bifida month. Discussed ideas for a disability focused event for next year. Em and Janet are interested in helping with this. Janet will call Sarah Spear to discuss. Other helpers could be recruited via Rivereast probably next year. Next meeting October 14th, Cindy will be on vacation; Nancy will be running the meeting.
12. **Adjourn Meeting:** There was a motion by PJ seconded by Jackie to adjourn the meeting. Vote unanimous, motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:27.

Respectfully submitted,

Hope Jones

Liz Hibino