

Kenosha



County

MEMORANDUM

Communication to Kenosha County Board of Supervisors
(For Informational Purposes Only)

COMMUNICATION TO APPEAR ON COUNTY BOARD MEETING AGENDA: 01/16/2024

SUBJECT: A Resolution Modifying the Racial and Ethnic Equity Commission of Kenosha County

COMMITTEE: Choose a Committee

SUBMITTED BY: Supervisor Gentz

RESOLUTION TO BE PRESENTED AT Choose a Committee **COMMITTEE ON** [Click here to enter a date.](#)

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION (optional):



KENOSHA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Resolution No. _____

Subject: A Resolution Modifying the Racial and Ethnic Equity Commission of Kenosha County		
Original ☒ Resubmitted ☐	Corrected ☐	2nd Correction ☐
Date Submitted:	Date Resubmitted:	
Submitted by: Supervisor Gentz		
Fiscal Note Attached ☐	Legal Note Attached ☐ Agreement	
Prepared by: Supervisor Jeffrey Gentz	Signature:	

WHEREAS, Kenosha County is committed to a shared vision of increased prosperity and improved wellbeing for all Kenosha County Residents; and

WHEREAS, racial inequity and injustice that impacts any resident of Kenosha County is a threat to the well-being of all Kenosha County residents; and

WHEREAS, trust between the residents of Kenosha County and all those elected, appointed and hired to serve in Kenosha County government is essential to our society; and

WHEREAS, citizens expect law enforcement officers to serve the public and conduct themselves with the highest standards of civility, fairness, and honor toward citizens, while maintaining respect for the rule of law; and

WHEREAS, citizens deserve equitable access to county services; and

WHEREAS, the Racial and Ethnic Equity Commission (the "REEC") was established by the Kenosha County Board of Supervisors to address issues of racial inequity and injustice in relation to access to county services; and

WHEREAS, the REEC as established was made up of nine (9) commissioners, seven (7) of which were to be appointed by the County Executive and two (2) of which were to be County Board Supervisors appointed by the Chair of the County Board; and

WHEREAS, the REEC should be under the direct authority of the County Board; and

WHEREAS, it is necessary and appropriate to modify the current structure and makeup of the REEC to better serve its intended purposes;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Kenosha County Board of Supervisors hereby modifies the Racial and Ethnic Equity Commission of Kenosha County ("REEC") by revising the original establishing resolution in the following ways:

The Racial Equity Commission's mission is to realize greater racial equity and work toward the dismantling of racism in Kenosha County through research, education, and on-going review of current Kenosha County policies and procedures so as to implement transformative ideas born of research, collaboration, and community engagement, focused on those areas over which the County has authority.

The Racial Equity Commission will be comprised of seven (7) commissioners.

Two (2) must be members of the County Board of Supervisors (County Board). These will be appointed by the County Board Chair with the approval of the County Board.

The other five (5) will be appointed by the County Board Chair, with the approval of the County Board. These appointments **must** be made from a pool of applicants/nominees.

Seventy-five (75) days before the end of a commissioner's term, the County shall publicize a notice of the upcoming appointment. This notice shall, at a minimum, be provided to those local media outlets routinely receiving communications from the County and shall be posted on the County's web site, with a link to the notice being placed on the homepage. A legal notice to the paper of record is neither required nor prohibited.

Individuals may apply themselves or may be nominated by individuals or organizations. As part of any application/nomination a statement indicating why the individual would be a valuable addition to the commission must be submitted. This statement should include a description of the individual's attributes as well as identifying what perspective their inclusion would bring to the commission as well as their commitment to solving issues of inequity. This may include, without limitation, history, experience, community participation and/or other aspects that would provide a different/unique/underrepresented perspective. In the event that a person is nominated rather than applying, a statement from the individual expressing willingness to serve must be included with the nomination.

The makeup of the commission should, at a minimum, reflect the diverse racial and ethnic makeup of Kenosha County as determined by the most recent census information, having a goal to at all times, have a majority of the five (5) non-County Board commissioners representing racial and ethnic minorities in Kenosha County. This should not be construed to in any way limit the ability of the County Board Chair in appointing, nor the County Board in approving appointments, but to encourage new ways to increase and maximize the participation of voices which have been traditionally and historically un- or under-represented. In making and approving appointments the goal of providing opportunities to such voices should be a prioritized consideration.

In the event that there are fewer applications/nominations than open positions, the County Board Chair shall find an individual willing to serve and nominate that person. Any such appointment should be guided by the same principles included as part of the nomination process.

The Commission shall report to, and be overseen by, the Kenosha County Board Executive Committee.

The Commissioners shall select, on a yearly basis, a chair and vice-chair, or co-chairs, from the Commission's Membership to serve a one-year term. The Commission may establish rules for the Commission's meetings and conduct of business. In the absence of rules to the contrary, the meetings of the Commission shall be governed by Chapter 2 of the Municipal Code of Kenosha County and by Robert's Rules of Order.

Members shall receive no compensation and shall serve voluntarily for a term of three (3) years. There will be no limit to the number of terms a member may serve. No more than two (2) terms may be served consecutively.

The County Board of Supervisors shall make reasonable efforts to seat the modified Racial Equity Commission in full within 90 days of the passage of this resolution.

Of the persons initially appointed, three shall hold office for one (1) year (including one County Supervisor), three for two (2) years, three for three (3) years (including one County Supervisor), from January 1 next following such appointment, and until their successor is appointed and qualifies. By December immediately preceding the expiration of the term of office of any such Commissioner, the County Board Chair shall appoint, subject to confirmation by the County Board, one (1) member of such Commission to hold office for three (3) years from January 1 next succeeding the appointment and until a successor is appointed and qualifies. The exception to this paragraph involves the two (2) County Board Supervisors whose terms shall be from June 1. The Office of the Commissioner shall become vacant upon the happening of any of the following:

1. The death of the incumbent.
2. The person's resignation, whether oral or written.
3. The person's removal by the County Board Chair.
4. The person's ceasing to be a resident of Kenosha County.
5. In the case of the two (2) Commissioners who are members of the County Board, upon their ceasing to be members of that body.

The County Board Chair will make every effort to provide an appointment to such vacancy to the County Board at its first meeting thirty (30) days after the vacancy occurs, subject to subsequent committee review and confirmation by a majority of the County Board. Any such appointment shall be for the unfinished portion of the term being filled.

The REEC shall be tasked with adopting a set of bylaws for itself which shall generally reflect the provisions contained within this resolution. This does not, however, prevent the REEC from making recommendations as part of the bylaw adoption process for changes in the procedure and timing for making appointments. After such adoption, the bylaws will be presented to the County Board for its approval.

The REEC shall be staffed by Kenosha County staff with assistance from other experts or organizations as appropriate.

The REEC shall be subject to the Wisconsin Public Records Law and the Wisconsin Open Meetings Law.

Plans, reports, or recommendations of any nature adopted by the REEC shall be considered advice to the Kenosha County Board of Supervisors, and shall not be construed as official policies, positions, or interpretations of laws, rules, or regulations by any department or agency of County government, nor shall any such department or agency be bound in any manner to consider such advice when conducting their advisory and regulatory affairs.

The REEC may also, at any time, choose to submit a recommendation to the County Board or the County Executive with any information or recommendation that the commission believes requires immediate action or attention.

The goals of the Racial Equity Commission shall be to:

- a. Study issues of racial equity in Kenosha County, focusing on ordinances, policies and procedures that perpetuate systemic racism, result in disparate impact on underrepresented populations and contribute to racial inequity in Kenosha County, first focusing on policing and law enforcement then expanding the work to other systemic problems determined by members of the Racial Equity Commission;
- b. Perform outreach and hold at minimum, one annual listening session with Kenosha County residents, including community members, local elected officials, law enforcement, state legislators, educators, mental health professionals, social workers, people impacted by systemic racism, and other Kenosha County residents with experience and expertise in various aspects of racial equity;
- c. Research and analyze County ordinances, policies and procedures as they relate to racial equity, including the availability of adequate data on the topic;
- d. Review research on actions that have been proven effective in increasing racial equity in similar counties;
- e. Analyze racial equity in the context of various systems in Kenosha County, including law enforcement, justice, physical and mental health, education, housing and economic opportunity;
- f. Make recommendations to the County Board on concrete and immediate steps that can be taken to increase racial equity.
- g. Before one year from the date the reformed REEC holds its first meeting, the REEC shall submit to the Kenosha County Board an initial report detailing assessments, recommendations, and any proposals for the REEC's further work; and present this report and any subsequent report on a page dedicated to racial equity on the County website. A presentation of this report shall be given to the public in an open forum that would allow for discussion and questions.
- h. Before six months from the date of the presentation of the initial report, the REEC shall submit to the County Board a second report detailing assessments, recommendations, and any proposals for the REEC's further work. A presentation of this report shall be given to the public in an open forum that would allow for discussion and questions.

i. Before one year from the date of the presentation of the second report, the REEC shall submit a final comprehensive report to the County Board detailing assessments, recommendations and relevant findings of the REEC. A presentation of this report shall be given to the public in an open forum that would allow for discussion and questions.

Supervisor Jeffrey Gentz

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:AyeNayAbstainExcused

Gabe Nudo, Chair☐☐☐☐

Erin Decker, Vice Chair☐☐☐☐

Zach Stock☐☐☐☐

Brian Thomas☐☐☐☐

Brian Bashaw☐☐☐☐

Aaron Karow☐☐☐☐

Mark Nordigian☐☐☐☐

Terry Rose☐☐☐☐