



COUNTY OF KENOSHA

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Kreuser announces appointments to Kenosha County's new Racial and Ethnic Equity Commission

KENOSHA — Kenosha County Executive Jim Kreuser today announced the seven applicants he is recommending to serve on the county's new Racial and Ethnic Equity Commission.

Kreuser interviewed and selected these individuals from a field of 35 individuals who applied before the June 30 deadline.

Under the County Board resolution that established the committee earlier this year, members are to serve three-year terms, staggered so that the committee does not undergo complete turnover at any given time. As such, the initial appointees' terms are of varying lengths; commissioners may serve up to two consecutive terms.

The appointees and initial terms of service are:

- Brian Martinez, to serve through December 2022
- Tyler Arentz, to serve through December 2022
- Braden Backer, to serve through December 2023
- Justin Crosby, to serve through December 2023
- Elizabeth Garcia, to serve through December 2023
- Mimi Yang, to serve through December 2024
- Derrell Greene, to serve through December 2024

Additionally, under the resolution creating the committee, County Board Chairman John O'Day has the authority to appoint two members of the board to serve on the commission. His selections are Supervisors Daniel Gaschke and Sharon Pomaville.

The appointees' service on the commission will begin immediately, pending confirmation votes by the County Board on Aug. 17.

“These were difficult decisions to make because our pool of applicants was very strong,” Kreuser said. “I thank everyone who took the time to apply, and I wish the appointed commissioners well as they begin the vital work that this commission was created to do.”

The mission of the commission is to realize greater racial equity and dismantle racism in Kenosha County through research, education and ongoing review of current policies and procedures, as to implement transformative ideas born through research, collaboration, and community engagement.

As outlined in the resolution creating it, the commission is to reflect the diverse racial and ethnic makeup of Kenosha County as determined by the most recent Census data, with five of the seven county executive appointees representing racial and ethnic minorities in the county. Kreuser said he is pleased to bring forth a group of appointees that represent the rich racial and ethnic makeup of the community.

Kreuser said he hopes the other 28 applicants will be willing to serve in other capacities throughout the county.

As for the County Board appointees, O’Day said he is confident that Supervisors Gaschke and Pomaville will serve the commission as thoughtful representatives of the board and the community at large.

“This commission has a significant task ahead of it, and an important role to play in the community,” O’Day said. “I look forward to seeing this work get underway, and to hearing the reports the commission will bring back to the County Board in the coming months and years.”

About the county executive appointees:

Tyler Arentz, of Kenosha, is varsity cheerleading coach at Bradford High School with master’s degrees in education and psychology. A former behavioral treatment technician working with children with autism and a former activity aid at a skilled nursing facility, he has also been involved in numerous volunteer efforts in recent years.

Bradden Backer, of Somers, is an employment lawyer, providing employers and employees with advice and representation on a full range of employment matters and civil rights concerns. A graduate of the University of Wisconsin Law School, he has lived in the Kenosha area for more than 30 years.

Justin Crosby, of Wheatland, is a former communication tech with Comcast NBCUniversal. He studied business and computer information systems at Concordia University of Chicago.

Elizabeth Garcia, of Kenosha, is a legal secretary at a law office in Kenosha. A graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Parkside with a bachelor’s degree in communications, she has been active with Root-Pike WIN, the Girl Scouts of Wisconsin Southeast, the Boys & Girls Club of Kenosha and WIPZ Parkside Student Radio.

Derrell Greene, of Kenosha, is a 23-year U.S. Army veteran, having served tours of duty in Germany, Korea, and in Saudi Arabia during Operation Desert Storm. He retired in 2015 after seven years as director of the Kenosha County Division of Veterans Services and has been involved in numerous community organizations, including those that emphasize diversity and equity.

Brian Martinez, of Kenosha, is general manager of Martino's Master Dry Cleaners and a football coach at Bradford High School. He has also been involved with the Boys & Girls Club of Kenosha and the Kenosha Ramblers and Kenosha Cougars football clubs.

Mimi Yang, of Pleasant Prairie, is a professor emeritus of modern languages and Asian studies at Carthage College and recent recipient of a New England Regional Fellowship from the Massachusetts Historical Society, with her studies focused on race relations, multiracial democracy and multicultural patriotism. She is a fluent speaker of English, Spanish and Chinese.

About the County Board chairman appointees:

Daniel Gaschke has represented the central-city Kenosha 7th District on the County Board since 2018. He and his wife are adoptive and foster parents who operate Kindermusik with Emilie LLC, a music school offering private lessons and small-group music and movement classes for children. He has also worked in education and mental health care.

Sharon Pomaville was elected in April 2020 to represent the 20th District, which includes the Village of Paddock Lake and portions of the Village of Salem Lakes. She is the executive director of the Sharing Center in Trevor and serves on a variety of public interest boards and committees in Kenosha County.

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