

MUSKECON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
MUSKEGON COUNTY, MICHIGAN

AGENDA

**HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE**

Via Zoom

Charles Nash, Chair  
Marcia Hovey-Wright, Vice-Chair

July 7, 2020 – 3:30 PM

Join Zoom Meeting

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1. Call to Order
  2. Roll Call
  3. Approval of the Minutes of June 2, 2020
  4. Public Comment (on an agenda item)
  5. Old Business
  6. New Business

Muskegon County Resolution to Declare Racism as a Public Health Crisis

7. Public Comment
8. Final Board Comment
9. Adjournment

**Public Comment**

Persons may address the Commission during the time set aside for Public Comment or at any time by suspension of the rules. All persons must address the commission and state their name for the record. Comments shall be limited to **two (2) minutes** for each participant, unless time is extended prior to the public comment period by a vote of a majority of the commission.

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**Muskegon County  
Human Services Committee Meeting  
June 2, 2020  
3:30 p.m.  
Via Zoom**

**Charles Nash, Chair**

**Marcia Hovey-Wright, Vice-Chair**

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**MINUTES**

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**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Commissioner Hovey-Wright at 3:32 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

Present: Gary Foster, Marcia Hovey-Wright, Susie Hughes, Zach Lahring, Kenneth Mahoney, Bob Scolnik

Joined after roll call due to technical difficulties: Charles Nash

Absent due to technical difficulties: John Snider, Rillastine Wilkins

Also

Present: Mark Eisenbarth, County Administrator; Kathy Tharp, Administrative Coordinator

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

It was moved by Commissioner Foster, supported by Chairman Hughes, to approve the minutes of the May 5, 2020, meeting as written. Motion carried.

**PUBLIC COMMENT (On an agenda item)**

None.

**ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

HS20/06 – 14      It was moved by Commissioner Foster, supported by Chairman Hughes, to authorize Public Health to subcontract with GVSU Annis Water Resources Institute (AWRI) to conduct FY20 Great Lakes Beach Water Monitoring, using pass through funds received from the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE), with no effect on county general fund.

Roll Call:

Yes: Zach Lahring, Kenneth Mahoney, Charles Nash, Robert Scolnik, Gary Foster, Susie Hughes, Marcia Hovey-Wright      Motion carried.

**OLD BUSINESS**

None.

**NEW BUSINESS**

None.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

**FINAL BOARD COMMENT**

None.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Human Services Committee, the meeting adjourned at 3:36 p.m.

# MUSKEGON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

## **RESOLUTION TO DECLARE RACISM AS A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS IN THE COUNTY OF MUSKEGON**

WHEREAS, race is a social construction with no biologic basis; and

WHEREAS, racism is a social system with multiple dimensions, including individual racism, which is internalized or interpersonal; and

WHEREAS, systemic racism, which is institutional or structural, is a system of structuring opportunity and assigning value based on the social interpretation of how one looks; and

WHEREAS, systemic racism unfairly disadvantages some individuals and communities, unfairly advantages other individuals and communities, and depletes the strength of the whole society through the waste of human resources; and

WHEREAS, racism is rooted in the foundation of America. From the time chattel slavery began in the 1600s, to the Jim Crow era, declaration of the war on drugs that eventually led to the mass incarceration of Black people, racism has remained a presence in American society while subjecting Black people to hardships and disadvantages in every aspect of life; and

WHEREAS, racism, including unconscious and conscious bias, causes persistent racial discrimination in Criminal Justice, Social Capital, Voter Suppression, Education, Transportation, Employment, Food Access, Mental Health and Health Behaviors, Socioeconomic Status, Environmental Exposure, Access to Health Services, Housing, and Public Safety; and

WHEREAS, historical racism in Michigan has impacted Black Michiganders including Black Muskegon County residents. For example, Black citizens across the state of Michigan have been limited to areas with restricted access to healthy foods and other essential resources, leading to a variety of other health issues, including reduced life expectancy and higher rates of infant and maternal mortality; and

WHEREAS, for more than 400 years, racism has existed in America. However, in the 21st century, we are now seeing an increased incidence of police brutality, the result of racism and the disproportionate impact on Black people during the COVID-19 pandemic. Black people are dying in larger-than-expected, record numbers from both; and

WHEREAS, older adults and people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions are at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19, Black people have higher incidence of chronic illnesses than other races causing them to die from COVID-19 at 3.8 times the rate of white people. In Muskegon County, Black people make up 14 percent of the population, yet they account for 41 percent of confirmed COVID-19 cases; and

WHEREAS, Black people are disproportionately suffering in-part due to long standing, unaddressed health disparities as well as systemic racism and other socioeconomic inequities. Indicators of health disparities shown in the latest numbers from the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services report that the Black infant mortality was 15.1% compared to White infant mortality at 4.5%; prevalence of diabetes in Michigan which is 12.6% for Blacks compared to 8.7% for Whites; and 17.2% of Black residents are unable to access health care due to cost compared to 10.5% for White residents; and

WHEREAS, there is clear data to illustrate that racism negatively impacts the lives of Black people in Muskegon County. The current COVID-19 crisis and ongoing protests against police brutality have helped to highlight now, more than ever, that racism, not race, causes disparities for Black Americans; and

WHEREAS, the privileges that other Americans experience inhibit them from fully understanding how racism impacts Black people in America - for example the performance of simple tasks like driving while Black, walking/running in neighborhoods, wearing a hoodie, going to the store, eating ice cream in your own home, or just going to a park all come with certain risk not experienced by others. Concerned parents prepare their Black youth at an early age by having "The Talk" with their children in order to attempt to protect them; and

WHEREAS, prior to the recent police brutality incidents and COVID-19 pandemic, Muskegon County was already taking steps to promote health equity through its Social Justice Commission; and

WHEREAS, the American Public Health Association, National Association of County and City Health Officials, and the American Academy of Pediatrics have declared racism as a public health crisis, this Board believes that now is the time to do the same. The disparities caused by racism that we have outlined in this resolution represent a public health crisis which affects us all; and

WHEREAS, we as a governmental body have a responsibility to ensure an optimal quality of life for all of our Black Muskegon County residents.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Muskegon County Board of Commissioners hereby declares racism as a public health crisis in the County of Muskegon that affects all members of our society on a local (urban and rural), state, and national level and demands action from all levels of government and society.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Muskegon County is recommitting its full attention to improving the quality of life and health of our Black Muskegon County residents.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Muskegon County Board of Commissioners advocates for relevant policies that improve health in the Black community, and support local, state, and federal initiatives that advance social justice.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Muskegon County will assess our current and proposed laws (ordinances and health regulations) and our policies, as well as their implementation, to promote health for Blacks within Muskegon County.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Muskegon County will assess internal policies and procedures to ensure racial equity is a core element in all organizational practices.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Social Justice Commission is comprised of Muskegon County leaders, employees, and the community to broadly represent and achieve community-centered solutions to address the legacy of racial injustices faced by Black communities.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this Board of Commissioners urges other governmental bodies to declare racism as a public health crisis and to immediately take steps to intentionally address and support methods that will strategically reduce the long-term impact of systemic racism.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Commissioners requests that the County Clerk forward copies of this resolution to the Governor of the State of Michigan, Muskegon County's State Legislative delegation, the Michigan Association of Counties and local units of government within Muskegon County.

Motion by Commissioner \_\_\_\_\_, supported by Commissioner \_\_\_\_\_, to adopt above resolution at a regular meeting of the Muskegon County Board of Commissioners, \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2020.

I, Nancy A. Waters, Clerk of the Muskegon County Board of Commissioners and Clerk of the County of Muskegon, do hereby certify that the above Resolution was duly adopted by said Board on \_\_\_\_\_, 2020.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Nancy A. Waters, Clerk  
County of Muskegon

