

General Body Meeting May 20, 2021

Meeting began at 7:00pm

- Jarrod Lussier spoke about the process of becoming a vocational-technical teacher. Anyone who would like more information is welcome to contact him at jrlussier82@gmail.com.
- Gretchen Baker-Smith spoke about yesterday's marathon hearings at the State House by the Education Committee, a portion of which considered the refiling of legislation that would ban Native American mascots. Both Gretchen (as a Dartmouth resident and alumna) and the NAACP Branch itself prepared testimony for the legislature.
- Elizabeth Murphy, a member of Dartmouth's Diversity Committee, mentioned that the committee has made consideration of the mascot its first order of business.
- Following the Department of Homeland Security's decision to terminate Bristol County's ICE agreements, David Ehrens provided a summary of the decision and how it will impact ICE detention in Massachusetts. Betty Ussach and Linda Haskins, also of BCCJ, joined the meeting and expressed satisfaction at the decision and with the years-long efforts of so many citizen groups that were necessary to stop Hodgson's ICE abuses.
- Sidney Murray II, a volunteer with the American Red Cross, spoke about the great need for blood donors to support those with Sickle Cell Disease, an inherited blood disorder that affects one out of 365 African-Americans and is known for the flattened sickle-shaped red blood cells that block blood flow and consequently delivery of oxygen to the body. Transfusions are an important form of treatment for SCD. For more information donors should go to <https://www.redcross.org/give-blood.html>.
- VP Ledbetter spoke about Juneteenth, a celebration by former slaves in Texas who were denied their rights for two and a half years, even after the Emancipation Proclamation. Juneteenth is a bittersweet day, a reminder of America's unpaid promises to Black Americans – but also one of hope for positive change. Juneteenth is celebrated on June 19th. In 2007 former governor Deval Patrick recognized Juneteenth, and last year governor Charlie Baker signed into law Juneteenth as an official state holiday. You can count on our celebrating it!
- Accordingly, Dr. Hall invited everyone to a Branch Juneteenth celebration that will be held LIVE at the NAACP New Bedford offices at 95 Cedar Street on Juneteenth (again, June 19) from 12-5 PM. Save the date.

Meeting ended at 8:00pm