

We Are One Rutland

Chamber & Economic Development of the Rutland Region



Saying it was disturbed by national and local events related to racism, Rutland County's leading economic development organization on Tuesday took a stand on behalf of inclusion, diversity and community.

The Board of the Chamber and Economic Development of the Rutland Region approved a resolution denouncing bias and discrimination and creating a new committee to ensure the organization does its part going forward.

"We have a social and moral obligation to lead," CEDRR said in a statement. "We can no longer remain silent and must in fact speak out to condemn discrimination of all kinds and embrace diversity in our communities. It makes economic sense, but far more important, it's the right thing to do."

The board unanimously approved the resolution, and directed the Executive Director Lyle Jepson to establish a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee that will be charged with, but not limited to, the development of a DEI Strategic Plan. The resolution requires the plan to include education, projects and activities to address bias, racism and discrimination as well as increase diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout the CEDRR organization and the entire Rutland Region.

The resolution also directs the executive director to develop strategies that increase the understanding of systemic racism, equity, access to opportunity, diversity and inclusion among CEDRR staff, board members, committees, and members. It further encourages all members to support CEDRR and Jepson in this important and essential journey.

"We are alarmed, disturbed and concerned by national and local events and discourse relating to racism and intolerance of diversity," Jepson said.

"Remaining silent is no longer an option -- and we know words are not enough, so we are poised to examine our own implicit biases and root out barriers to opportunity for everyone within our membership and our community."

CEDRR Board Chair John Casella II said the resolution is critical for the community.

“This is a long overdue and needed period of transformation, and CEDRR believes that with a spirit of openness, humility, and respect, we can not only learn from one another, but we can create a diverse, equitable, and inclusive community where all can feel safe and where all can feel they belong and can thrive,” Casella said.

“We are one Rutland,” Jepson said. “We are actively listening with our minds, our hearts, and with open arms. We are prepared for the ‘essential journey’ to an inclusive community and country.”