

Cultural Connections Committee Minutes

Location: City Hall Auditorium

Date/ Time: 5/27/2026 12:00-1:00PM

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 12:00PM by Chair Iraida Muñoz.

2. Roll Call and Introductions

Iraida facilitated introductions and posed an ice-breaker question: “If you could control the weather, would you prefer always summer or four distinct seasons?”

3. Attendance- 17 people

- Members in Attendance (In-Person): 9

Bernadette Melton-Plante, Marina Vaz, Iraida Muñoz, Xiannglan Zhu, Meta Vornehm, Julia Stryzhenko, Elizabeth Berry, Jenn Hosking, Joslyn Kuchinski

- Non-Members in Attendance (In-Person): 5

Jordan Barnett, Angela Mercado, Emily Mercado, Stephanie Burke, Alejandro Urrutia

- Non-Members Attending via Zoom: 3

David Holt, Nonny Egbonu, Loick Muyuka

4. Approval of April 2026 Meeting Minutes

Approval of the April meeting minutes was postponed due to several members being absent. It will be reviewed and approved at the next meeting.

5. Multicultural Festival Update

- September 26 at Renaissance Park, Nashua;
- Most departmental approvals received; fire and risk-management approvals need to be done closer to the event;
- Recommend 10 tents on the grass;
- Food truck area can accommodate 5–6 trucks comfortably;
- Planning Committee Meetings: Every other Friday at 3 PM via Zoom. Next meeting is this Friday.

- Sponsorship and donation forms are open, e.g., Girl Scouts have already applied.
- Facebook event is live and ready to share.
- Eventbrite page is active for community visibility.
- Question about whether the tents will also be used for community tables: they will be prioritized for artisans and sponsors first.

6. Guest Presentation

Speaker: Angela and Emily Mercado (Community Engagement Training Center, Pine St. Ext Unit 3L, 603-577-6358)

The Community Engagement Center offers many resources including:

- English classes: Monday 5-6PM, Wednesdays & Thursdays 10–11 AM, anyone can drop-in and even stay for a part of the class;
- Citizenship classes: Ongoing, tailored to individuals preparing for interviews;
- Computer access and technology assistance
- Driving test prep
- Food, diapers, wipes, and essential supplies available onsite;
- The Center also provides assistance with health & dental insurance enrollment, childcare scholarship applications, immigration support (including asylum paperwork), employment connections (especially home-care roles) and notary services;
- Center hours: M-F 9 AM–2 PM, with flexible appointments evenings/weekends as needed.
- The Center partners with other organizations like the United Way and Gloria Timmons Community Center

Discussion: Challenges facing clients of the center and others in the general community

- Transportation insecurity
- Technology access
- Language barriers
- Poor customer service experiences at some agencies/feeling unwelcome or disrespected
- Strict DHHS income limits that do not reflect real living costs
- Mental health support gaps
- Challenges with vehicle towing, fines, and license suspensions disproportionately affecting low-income residents

7. Guest Presentation

Speaker: Stephanie Burke (Nashua Public Library)

Topic: Adult Summer Reading Program

- Runs June 12 – August 8
- Uses the Beanstack app for tracking minutes read
- Reading includes: books, audiobooks, e-books, reading to children, and even reading subtitles
- New this year: rotating activities (book recommendations, scavenger hunts, etc.) to encourage library visits
- Kickoff event: Friday, June 12, 6–8 PM on the Library Plaza
 - Nitrogen ice cream samples
 - Bounce houses
 - Activities for all ages
- Library cards are available to Nashua residents or workers; free of charge.

8. Community Announcements

- Window Dressers program for insulating window inserts – program information previously emailed;
- Religious Freedom Seminar hosted by local interfaith partners, June 14, 7pm at Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
- ESL Saturday classes by Nashua Community College (held at United Way).
- Environmental Justice Survey available in multiple languages (English, Spanish, Portuguese, French, Arabic, Swahili, Chinese)
- Juneteenth Celebration on June 19, 2-6pm at Nashua Riverwalk Renaissance Park
- Ukrainian Cultural Fair May 31, 11am-4pm Londonderry Commons
- Speaking Our Minds Podcast continues producing multilingual mental-health and community-health episodes.

9. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 1:00PM.

Next meeting will be on Wednesday, Jun 24th, 2026 at noon- Nashua City Hall Auditorium with a virtual option for nonmembers as needed.