



City of Worcester
Diversity & Inclusion Advisory Committee
Minutes of Virtual WebEx Meeting
Monday, April 12, 2021 5:30 PM

Present

District 1 Samuel Santiago

District 1 Savvas Kosmidis

District 2 Dr. Bernard Reese

District 3 Shakeerah Mcleod

District 5 Leigh Woodruff, Acting Chair

Staff Liaison: Stephanie Williams, EODI

Staff Liaison: Pam Callahan, Human Resources

Welcome, Call to Order & Roll Call

Call to order 5:30

Approval of Minutes of January 2021 Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve January 2021: first and second, roll call vote: Unanimous

Motion passed to approve meeting minutes.

Public Comment

None

Follow up and Discussion

Introduction of all Committee members

Introduction to new D&I Committee member, Shakeerah Mcleod. Shakeerah is a native of Newark, New Jersey, but has called the City of Worcester home for the past 16 years. She attended Anna Maria College where she received a Bachelor's Degree in Criminal Justices and a Master's Degree in Justice Administration. The Committee expressed their excitement to have her as a valued addition and contributor to the important work being done.

Update(s) from Staff Liaison

Stephanie explained that she was trying to get Committee Member's bios and headshot on the City's website, however, has been informed that it is not possible at this time due to the software platform currently being used. She is working with the CM on trying to get that changed. In the meantime she will request that the PowerPoint on the Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee be added to the Committee's webpage.

- Dr. Reese expressed his concern with lack of committee membership from the LGBTQ+ and disabled communities and suggested there be intentional outreach/recruitment for members who identify with these communities. Stephanie expressed her support, however wanted to mention that we have to be mindful that although current members may not outwardly appear to be and/or may not have self-identified as members of those communities we shouldn't assume that we don't already have committee members representing those communities- as members and/or allies. No motion was made to make this suggestion of intentional targeted recruitment actionable at this time.
- Question was raised as to how many Committee members the Committee is able to have. Stephanie informed that the Committee's membership is available for seven (7) seats. A Committee member explained that the Committee had nine (9) seats in the past, however over the last several years, available seats was changed due to the challenge this committee has had with getting a quorum at monthly meetings.
- There was mention of concern that there has been limited recruitment "slowed recruitment" since COVID and that publicity around membership should still be happening. Whether it's through the Citizen Advisory Council, media marketing through T&G, or other resources. Leigh suggested that an invitation letter be drafted and sent to community constituents and non-profits to encourage participation and membership within the Committee. Leigh expressed her willingness to share this invitation letter with community stakeholders that she works with daily. Pam expressed that this same effort was taken in the past and that it would be great if Leigh could share her list of constituents with the Committee so that it could be combined with the community group list that Jeannie Michaelson currently has and can be used with outreach efforts. No motion was made to make this suggestion actionable at this time.
- Dr. Reese mentioned that he read the recent T&G article that highlighted the lack of women and minority owned businesses (WMBEs) on the City's Polar Park contracts. He requested data be provided that shows WMBE hires on that particular project. No motion was made to request that information. **NOTE: Anyone can request public information, however, if it is not a request from the "body" of the Committee it would need to go through standard operational procedures and be requested through the legal department as a "Request for Public Records/Information". Requests may be submitted to the City's Records Access Officer (RAO) via the Public Records Portal:**
[https://worcesterma.govqa.us/WEBAPP/rs/\(S\(bwauoi2xaqrmxc4wv53nblg\)\)/supporthome.asp](https://worcesterma.govqa.us/WEBAPP/rs/(S(bwauoi2xaqrmxc4wv53nblg))/supporthome.asp)

Committee Overview (PowerPoint)

There was a (15 page) PowerPoint presented by Stephanie that highlighted the history and current strategic direction of the Committee. Leigh expressed her concern with the Duties and Responsibilities and mentioned that she was under the assumption that the Committee's duties and responsibilities was more varied. Pam stated that the duties and responsibilities has since been updated and she would send the updated information to Stephanie so the PowerPoint could be amended.

- There were suggested edits to the D&I Committee PowerPoint for slide #2-which suggests the Committee is currently a nine (9) member committee and slide #4-duties and responsibilities. Pam will provide Stephanie with the updated information and a motion for amended updates will be made at next meeting.

Discussion of current committee initiatives

There were questions around strategic priorities (slide # 13) in which Leigh expressed concern with straying from current initiatives to focus on items that may not be “high priority” for the Committee. There is concern that the Committee may get too distracted with trying to juggle too many tasks at one time. A motion was taken and passed that the Committee focus on the current priority of municipal civil service for the next several months. A request was made that if other items need to be focused on (e.g., application process, job postings, VSID, recruitment marketing/sourcing, review and revision of the AAP, EEOP and Anti-Discrimination Statement, etc.) that the Chief Diversity Officer submit a bullet point outline of what needs to be worked on in order of priority and make recommendations to the Committee.

- There was a recommendation that the City’s website should clarify the age for the Civil Service exam. No motion was made to make a request to the City’s IT/Cable Services that the website should be amended.
- There was mention that no confirmation email is received once an applicant applies for a City job. Pam informed the committee that this is a known problem that the Human Resources Department is working on to correct.
- Dr. Reese mentioned that he shared an email with Stephanie that highlighted his interview with Chief Lester Baker of the Framingham Police Department regarding Pros & Cons of Civil Service Exam. He asked Stephanie to share that email with all committee members. Stephanie confirmed that she would get the email out to all members.

Memo summarizing status of civil service review

Leigh led the discussion on the memorandum regarding Civil Service Review. This memorandum is something that she drafted on behalf of the committee and the work that has been done thus far.

- There are permanent full time, non-public safety, employees that are not protected by civil service. Worcester should remove non-public safety civil service (see page 5).
- There is information that is needed from the City to complete the report to make a full review and informed recommendation, the D&I Committee needs additional information from the City of Worcester. We recognize that the City may not have compiled all data requested below. But to the extent such data and information is accessible, the Committee requests the following:
 - 1) Data about relationship between exam score and position on Worcester lists.
 - 2) Data about relationship between exam score and job performance.
 - 3) Data about relationship between Worcester list rank and job performance.
 - 4) Data about linguistic diversity in Worcester police and fire departments.
 - 5) Data about national origin diversity (e.g., how many Worcester officers are immigrants or children of immigrants from Vietnam, Ghana, and Puerto Rico?)
 - 6) Data about the relationship between educational attainment (beyond high school) and: exam performance; eligible list rank; and job performance.
 - 7) More detailed information about how Worcester hires and promotes public safety employees.
 - 8) 2020 Census data about Worcester demographics (when available).
 - 9) Collective bargaining agreements related to police and fire department employees.
 - 10) A list of all lawsuits (party names and docket numbers) alleging discrimination in employment against the Worcester police or fire departments.

- There was mention that HR reported that a consent decree requires Worcester to hire one minority (meaning Black or Latino person under the decree) for every three non-minority persons hired in the police and fire departments. Where is that? The Committee would like to see that consent decree as well as information on lawsuits against the City regarding civil service. No motion was made to request this information at this time.
- It was mentioned that at the Board of Health meeting the Chief of Police stated that he relies on the civil service exam to hire people. There is a good thing and bad things about it. The financial costs are significant barriers.
- If the City eliminates civil service they would be responsible to pay exams fees.

Closing Round and Next action Steps

- Suggestion to have a conduct a survey during this summer's Civil Service exam.
- Saavas has been working on an employee survey on behalf of the Committee. He states that he is still gathering survey questions and putting the survey together. It will be 12-20 questions for city employees and will be distributed twice per year.
- Next meeting the committee should focus on the process for doing a full analysis on Civil Service. Leigh will reach out to towns and cities that left civil service and have someone come to a meeting to speak about their experience.
- There was a proposal made that after everyone has had a chance to fully review the memorandum, the committee should plan to come up with a series of sub topics for the next few meetings. Those sub topics would be broken down to work on and examine piece by piece.
- In the meantime committee members are asked to individually brainstorm on what those sub topics should be and discuss at next meeting.
- A motion was taken and passed for the committee to proceed in this direction for full review of the report and then move forward with the recommended proposal.

Motion to adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 7:12 P.M.

Meeting minutes drafted and submitted by Stephanie Williams.