

Minutes of Monday, February 10, 2020, 6:00 PM

Present:

Nicole DiCello – District 4

Patrick Hare – District 5

Savvas Kosmidis – District 1

Reese Bernard – District 2

Absent:

Leigh Woodruff – District 5

Staff:

Suja Chacko, Chief Diversity Officer

Candela Montenegro, Diversity & Inclusion Intern

1. The meeting was officially called to order at 6:04PM by Patrick Hare, Chair.
2. The chair called for a motion to approve minutes of 1/13/2020. On a motion by Nicole DiCello and seconded by Savvas Kosmidis, the minutes were approved.
3. No public comments were made.

4. Vision Plan of the Board

a. Recruitment & Outreach Recommendations

Following the Board's charge to provide recruitment and outreach recommendations, Patrick Hare suggested the City work with local colleges and universities to establish an internship pipeline. Committing themselves to enrolling a few students, the program would allow individuals to gain experience working and exploring different areas of government. In addition, Patrick Hare suggested implementing a shadowing program for students interested in government. Reese Bernard noted the importance of civic education and suggested the City work alongside local middle and high schools to provide opportunities for students to learn about the functions of government. Nicole DiCello believes it is vital to explain to students the importance of local government. Further along, Savvas Kosmidis recommends the City implement a short video series of current employees sharing their experiences in the City and how diversity & inclusion has played a role in their career.

b. Retention Recommendations

Patrick Hare recommended the City provide safe space trainings. As an example, Patrick Hare explained Worcester State University's safe space trainings focuses on the LGBTQ+

community. WSU training provides a historical background of the LGBTQ+ community, a discussion of current events surrounding LGBTQ+, a guide for campus resources, and learning what it means to be an active listener. Furthering the Board's recommendations on retention, Nicole DiCello emphasized the importance of providing employees with opportunities to continue education. In effort to provide an example, Nicole DiCello explained her experience attending a latinx cultural workshop & anti-racist training. The presentation included an overview of latinx history, people and culture. In discussing retention efforts, Patrick Hare recommended surveying employees to understand the workforce climate. Furthermore, it is important folks understand their responses are anonymous. Suja Chacko agreed and believes a holistic, equity assessment is important.

Patrick Hare requested the Chief Diversity Officer provide the Board with the mission statement for affinity groups. The mission statement reads as follows: "Affinity Groups create important community and foster inclusivity. They provide a way for individuals to convene together around a shared social principle, social norm, interests, hobbies and/or identity." Suja Chacko explained there is five affinity groups established. Furthermore, the City would like to launch another kick-off event for affinity groups, with the hopes of providing employees with another opportunity to join. Suja Chacko highlighted the importance of creating a sustainable approach to affinity groups. This entails having a strategic plan for each group which may include panel discussions, educational, social and/or mentorship opportunities.

Patrick Hare reminded the Board target areas for this year are recruitment, outreach and retention recommendations. For the next meeting, the Board should focus on expanding the vision plan to meet their goals. In discussions surrounding retention efforts, and to provide new members with an opportunity to learn about various departments, members of the Board are encouraged to recommend departmental presentations. Suja Chacko recommended diversity officers for the Worcester Police Department and Worcester Fire Department present at a Board meeting. Patrick Hare recommended the Economic Development office present to discuss the process of soliciting a business into the City.

c. *Updates from the Diversity and Inclusion Office*

Candela Montenegro provided demographics for the Fire Department's opportunity fairs. The fairs took place on Wednesday, January 22nd and Saturday, January 25th. With a total of 77 people in attendance, the fairs had 30% minority-representation and 9% female-representation.

5. Announcements

a. *Upcoming Recruitment & Community Engagement Opportunities*

Suja Chacko announced this year's Black History Month event, *Cultural Hour: A Celebration of Worcester's Black History*. In partnership with the Worcester Police Department and the Worcester Historical Museum, the City of Worcester will honor the first people of color to enter the Worcester Police workforce. The event will host relatives and colleagues who will provide oral histories and a photo presentation of the lives of each officer. The event is scheduled to take place on Thursday, February 20, 2020 from 3:00pm-5:00pm in Levi Lincoln, City Hall.

6. The meeting was adjourned at 7:22pm.

C/o Suja Chacko, Chief Diversity Officer
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