

Minutes of Monday, October 21, 2019, 6:00 PM

Present:

Nicole DiCello – District 4

Patrick Hare – District 5

Savvas Kosmidis – District 1

Leigh Woodruff – District 5

AiVi Nguyen – District 1

Reese Bernard – District 2

Staff:

Suja Chacko, Chief Diversity Officer

1. The meeting was officially called to order at 6:03PM by Patrick Hare, Chair.
2. The chair called for a motion to approve minutes of 9/16/19. On a motion by AiVi Nguyen and seconded by Savvas Kosmidis, the minutes were approved.
3. No public comments were made.

4. Sub-Committee

Nicole DiCello proposed on following up with Savvas Kosmidis' suggestion of online surveys that follows applicants during the hiring process. For example, surveys can be distributed after the interview process has begun to gain feedback on the application process. In addition, surveys should be provided to current employees in efforts to understand what people find attractive about their jobs. Savvas Kosmidis mentioned he

would like to be involved in the creation of the survey questions. At this time, the board should focus on driving participation, aiming for a rate of 50-60% for the first survey.

In effort to gain clarity on the process, Leigh Woodruff asked what is expected of the board after recommendations are given. Suja Chacko explained the board should make a motion on what they would like to see in any of the items for hiring, retention, and recruitment. AiVi Nguyen agreed it was a good time to discuss the board process as Leigh Woodruff recently joined the board. Previously, the board was a working committee that drafted documents, but she believes it is an improper use of time. Instead, the board should be conducting oversight, reviewing and commenting on items. Suja Chacko explained members are welcomed to provide insight. AiVi Nguyen explained that aside from setting goals for the administration, the board should hold themselves accountable to the timeline.

AiVi Nguyen suggested the board lay eyes on surveys. Suja Chacko established a deadline for December, where four Affinity Groups have met until that date (new groups are also being made now). Nicole DiCello insisted on having a baseline, and that surveys should be distributed before individuals participate in Affinity Groups. In efforts to provide an example, Suja Chacko will share the format of the Volunteer Connections Surveys, where the City received approximately 100 responses to understand interests of volunteers. Reese Bernard asked if the Affinity Groups were implemented by the board or by City employees. Suja Chacko explained identity-based and social norm Affinity Groups were created as a result of feedback from employees. Savvas Kosmidis discussed that individuals will participate in surveys if it is anonymous and they know it will lead to action. He further explained that applicants in the pre and post process should be surveyed.

Suja Chacko reminds the board of the upcoming quarterly progress reports. On December 9th, the board will aim to discuss the feedback from the

Affinity Group surveys. On March 9th, the board should focus on the recruitment side of surveying and June 8th will be the last meeting before a report is given to the City Manager on the board's accomplishments during the fiscal year.

Nicole DiCello commented on a recent article published on the Telegram about the Polar Park project exceeding the diversity workforce goals. Nicole DiCello wishes the board received more publicity on their accomplishments. Suja Chacko explained that diversity goals are a directly result of the Affirmative Action Policy and Plan being established, which was great work of the board. Suja works closely with the departments that work on public constructions projects and supports them in meeting diversity goals. Reese Bernard reminded the board that diversity is an ideal that takes time but is a process that we need to continue to strive for.

In efforts to provide additional information to the board, Patrick Hare asked Suja Chacko if she could provide the board with an update on progress of Diversity and Inclusion as a standing agenda item.

Leigh Woodruff asked how the board can receive information about event opportunities. Suja Chacko explained that event information is sent electronically and advertised at board meetings. Board members would then confirm their attendance in response. Reese Bernard shared his experience at a recent event and the importance of being present. In addition, Suja Chacko informed the board that she will notify them of future events, including Opportunity Fairs and procurement workshops as they are announced.

5. Vision Plan of Board

Patrick Hare reminds the board the timeline map will be used to keep track of upcoming deadlines.

6. Announcements

Nicole DiCello mentioned the lack of City-wide statistics on hate crimes and sexual assault is a community safety issue. Suja Chacko informs Nicole DiCello that she can refer recommendations to the Human Rights Commission. Patrick Hare suggests inviting the Chair of the Human Rights Commission to attend a Board meeting and speak on progress. Suja Chacko agreed with this notion, and further informed the board of two department presentations, including the Innovation Office and Boards and Commissions Liaison, present for the next meeting. Their department presentation can assist the board with their charge and help new/current members understand their charge.

As a final note, Suja Chacko announced the upcoming Opportunity fairs for the Department of Public Works on November 13th and the 16th, where members of the board are invited to attend. In addition, the Human Rights Commission is expanding their Book Series into the Fall and, if interested, encourage participation from the board. Patrick Hare suggested the Worcester Public Library should have a section that showcases City of Worcester employees' book recommendations. As a reminder, Suja Chacko informed the board to continue sharing the City's employment page. In light of the pending Supreme Court decision on whether workplace discrimination protections extend to LGBTQ people, Patrick Hare suggested the City should assure the community of their protection.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:10.

C/o Suja Chacko, Chief Diversity Officer
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