



# CITY OF PORTSMOUTH

## DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION WORKING GROUP

*Nancy Colbert Puff, Steve Butzel, Juliet Walker, Kelly Harper, Vincent Hayes, Tracy Gora, Jane Ferrini, Jessica Griffin, Nicole Cloutier, Eliza Gilmore, Cathryn Czajkowski, Laura Horwood-Benton...*

### Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, November 4, 2020

Zoom Meeting, 11 am

In attendance: Vincent Hayes, Kelly Harper, Jane Ferrini, Laura Horwood-Benton, Eliza Gilmore, Nancy Colbert Puff, Jessica Griffin, Juliet Walker, Peter Stith, Elise Annunziata

#### I. Introductions/Welcome to New Members

The group welcomed Elise Annunziata and Peter Stith to the meeting. Elise explained her interest in DEI issues coincides with her work with the Community Development Block (CDBG) grant program, as the population she most frequently works with tends to be more diverse.

#### II. Update on Data Gathering from Juliet Walker

Juliet presented some initial background data for consideration: using the 2018 American Community Survey (ACS), which is a projected update of 2010 Census data, the City is:

- 88% white
- 2.6% Black
- .1% American Indian/native Alaskan
- 5.2% Asian
- 3% 2 or more categories

She also reported that unemployment for Black people was 12%, and while 6% of White people were in poverty, 9% of Blacks were.

Nancy commented that HR is required to keep diversity statistics for federal reporting purposes, and would bring some data to the next meeting. She noted that since joining

CALEA, the Police Department was tracking diversity data as well. Elise questioned if there could be employee reporting produced on a department level; Nancy said she would explore, but it may result in some skewed figures for smaller departments vs. larger ones. Some discussion regarding gender options on employment forms came up – Kelly remarked that only 2 options were currently available to prospective employees. All thought we should think seriously about updating our gender options on our employment forms.

### **III. Discussion on Goals**

Although the City has various materials (Council Racial Justice Resolution, Master Plan, etc.) that incorporate some commitment to DEI, the group decided its goals should be distinct, treating “the City” similar to a corporate entity, where we could focus on things within our control/ability to make an impact, at least in this initial phase.

Building upon the HR discussion, the group considered an idea from the recent training and wondered if it were possible to develop a “values statement,” as an employer, that we could publicize to existing and potential employees to demonstrate our commitment to diversity. Such a statement would be most valuable if input from all employees were solicited. **Elise** offered to work with **Kelly and Laura** to develop a mechanism to gather this input. This became our first goal.

#### **1. Using broad employee input, develop a values statement for the organization to be used in recruitment and retention efforts.**

We then discussed an idea that was raised in a past meeting by Tracy Gora – which is to provide a way for current employees to celebrate our differences. A regular “brown bag” lunch series (via Zoom, during the COVID emergency) could be self-run. Nancy recalled a DEI presenter that said, “Sometimes it takes a story to start a conversation.” **Nancy** offered to work with **Tracy** to implement this, our second goal.

#### **2. Begin to offer monthly luncheon series “Sometimes It Takes a Story...” to all employees to promote discussions on DEI.**

Juliet then offered that we should decide whether the City should join the Government Alliance on Racial Equity (GARE), and identify resources to help us establish a framework for the group to use in its efforts. It was noted that not all departments in the organization

were aware/invited to participate in this effort yet. Nancy mentioned putting in a CIP request for funding to have consulting assistance in developing an organizational plan for the group's efforts. This developed into a third goal:

3. Identify/assemble resources to begin developing a **framework**. **Juliet** offered to assist with this task.

Discussion ensued about engaging/partnering with others, outside of the organization. Vince and Laura have been most involved in this, and the Library has held several public-facing events. The Library may also be able to use some of its program budget to support public events. This became our 4<sup>th</sup> goal:

4. **Engage with partners to develop resources and identify educational/outreach opportunities beyond the City's internal employee pool.** Vincent and Laura will work together on this.

#### IV. Update from Vincent Hayes on Outreach to Other Municipalities

Vincent shared his outreach efforts to Dover, NH, and noted we would be contacting Montpelier, VT next. All contacts so far have indicated interest in an on-going venue to share ideas.

#### V. Other?

Enclosure: Goals: Background/Examples; Executive Orders on Training