

MINUTES
WORKFORCE DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 25 3:30 P.M.
BEVERLY LIVESAY CONFERENCE ROOM

Draft 3/2/09

Present: L. McBean-Clairborne, Chair; K. Belanger; S. Martel Moore; L. Holmes; M. Lynch; M. DeSouza; B. Doling; C. Hill; K. Kephart arrived 4:02 p.m.); L. Roberts; P. Carey; K. Herrera
Not Present: C. DeMarco; R. DeLuca, A. Fitzpatrick
Staff: K. Fuller, Deputy Clerk of the Legislature

Call to Order

The meeting opened at 3:30 p.m.

Mrs. McBean-Clairborne spoke of the draft request to Civil Service for a pilot program presented by Mr. Mareane, County Administrator and how to increase communicating with individuals regarding diversity and inclusion. It was noted how many employees are utilizing the tagline and portions of the diversity statement in their e-mails.

Announcements

- Ms. Belanger reported the Diversity Consortium Community Roundtable would take place on May 7th.
- Mr. Roberts said the World of Skills Annual Job Fair would be held April 23rd from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon at the Holiday Inn. Mr. Estes has signed up on behalf of the County. Pre-fair workshops on the 20th with Ms. DeSouza; registration is through Workforce Development.
- Ms. Belanger reported The New York State Affirmative Action Officers Conference would be held in Binghamton June 18 – 19. There will be workshops on immigration in the workplace, religions accommodations, and how new ADA amendments affect employers.
- Mrs. McBean-Clairborne announced there would be a teen job fair from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at GIAC on April 4th, with area employers participating. Local employers are being encouraged to come, even if only to assist teens in skill-building such as interviews. She said GIAC does partner with Joblink through Workforce Development to assist teens in obtaining employment. Ms. Fuller shared information reported at the Planning, Development, and Environmental Quality Committee regarding Federal funding to Workforce Development for youth employment. Mrs. McBean-Clairborne spoke of her desire to allow youth to work more than the 120 or 150 hours presently allowed.

Chair's Report

Mrs. McBean-Clairborne, Chair, reported receiving an e-mail that disturbed her, and she shared it with the full Legislature. The e-mail, from an elected official in one of the six contiguous counties, stated: "Diversity is something that we [his county] have little opportunity to benefit from. We see it as counterproductive and will cause inordinate delays in the things we have to do while we re-plow ground." She indicated there was additional material that gave her concern contained within the e-mail.

She spoke of how the memo reaffirms the importance of the work being done by the Committee and the County to assist in bringing about awareness of the importance of diversity and inclusion. Ms. Hill spoke of her experience growing up in the particular county and has seen growth in diversity and inclusion; she believes the composer of the e-mail does not represent the sense of the rest of the county. Ms. Carey spoke of the different philosophy Tompkins County has to other counties and how it needs to be considered when new clients come into the office upon relocating.

Mrs. McBean-Clairborne reported the County Administrator, Mr. Mareane has put together a draft proposal to present to the State to request a pass/fail pilot program regarding civil service that would bring together Cornell University, City of Ithaca, and Tompkins County. She will be reviewing the

document and will share the information with members. Mrs. McBean-Clairborne spoke of the pro-active approach Mr. Mareane has to diversity and inclusion and how it is important to him.

Ms. Herrera indicated there is participation of union members regarding the pass/fail request to the State, which is a positive force for moving forward for everyone.

Diversity Consortium Support

Ms. Belanger provided information on the various workshops taking place at the Diversity Consortium Roundtable Discussion and their request to be sponsored from the Tompkins County Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Committee to assist in the expense of the event. It was noted that Fernan Ceperoo of the Rochester YMCA would be the keynote speaker. A brief discussion regarding the Diversity Consortium's 501c3 incorporation occurred. They are awaiting funding to provide for tax exempt status. A local diversified attorney has assisted in the incorporation process, which has taken almost two years. The Consortium is offering in-house training and now has approximately 40-50 affiliate members. It is hoped to have involvement in the Diversity Consortium and the Roundtable from all businesses within the County and the surrounding areas; the only true requirement is a commitment to diversity and inclusion. There is also a database maintained by the Consortium with resumes of almost 100 individuals; affiliate members may review the database for potential employees.

In response to Mr. Roberts question on participation, it was noted the majority of participants to the Roundtable are from Tompkins County, but other individuals are welcome.

Ms. Belanger said the 2009 Leadership Tompkins Class is also planning to attend the Roundtable event.

RESOLUTION NO. – SPONSORSHIP OF THE 2009 DIVERSITY CONSORTIUM COMMUNITY ROUNDTABLE EVENT

It was MOVED by Ms. Hill, seconded by Ms. Belanger, and unanimously adopted by voice vote by members. RESOLUTION ADOPTED.

WHEREAS, the members of the Tompkins County Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Committee understand the importance of, and are committed to providing education and promoting best practices in the field of diversity and inclusion throughout the County, and

WHEREAS, the members of the Tompkins County Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Committee have an interest in maintaining and expanding efforts that advance equal opportunities for all community members in both securing employment and in promotion opportunities at all levels and in all occupational categories, and

WHEREAS, the Diversity Consortium of Tompkins County, Inc., exists to promote the benefits of diversity and inclusion through education, enhancing awareness of, providing a supportive network for, and sharing best practices in the field of diversity and inclusion throughout the Tompkins County community, and

WHEREAS, the Diversity Consortium's bi-annual Community Roundtable Event plays a significant role in forwarding the vision of the Tompkins County Legislature and the Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Committee, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Workforce Diversity and Inclusion and Government Performance and Workforce Relations Committees, that the Director of Finance is authorized to disburse \$2,800 from Account No. 1010.54486 to the Diversity Consortium of Tompkins County in support of the Diversity Consortium's 2009 Community Roundtable Event.

SEQR ACTION: TYPE II-20

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Minutes of December 17, 2008

It was MOVED by Ms. Balenger, seconded by Ms. Martel-Moore, and unanimously adopted by voice vote by members present, to approve the minutes of December 17, 2008, as submitted. MINUTES ADOPTED.

Strength in Diversity Award

The Committee was informed of discussions with Mr. Mareane regarding the Strength in Diversity Award. Ms. Carey, Mr. DeLuca, and County Clerk, Ms. Valente, will take the matter to Department Heads and have a break-out to come up with ten things that could be done for employee recognition. It is hoped to have input from employees to avoid a sense of inequity in determining recognition. Ms. Carey spoke of having discussions with the head of the union to determine the best way to have employee input. Ms. Martel-Moore also spoke of departments not having funding to cover employee recognition awards. Ms. Carey spoke of how they are looking into low/no cost recognition methods. Mr. Roberts was pleased and noted the marketing committee had spoken of the need to have employee recognition awards.

A brief discussion of various methods of employee recognition occurred including birthdays, special events, longevity within the department, etc. Mrs. McBean-Clairborne spoke of how the City closes for business one day a year and provides a picnic that brings employees together. Ms. Martel-Moore spoke of Finance indicating there could not be fund expended by departments for awards. It was noted that at this time Human Resources does not have funding in place for awards but if the funds were put in place specifically for employee recognition it would be acceptable.

Ms. Herrera said there are a lot of models that could be used for this community-building effort. Mrs. McBean-Clairborne suggested a resolution be drafted in support and encouragement of employee recognition on all levels.

Meeting Schedule

It was noted the meetings for 2009 would be the fourth Wednesday of the month from 3:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Disability Accommodation Disclaimer

A discussion regarding the County's inclusion of a disability accommodation disclaimer on all meeting agendas occurred. During the discussion it was noted there are many variables that could occur depending on what the disability is. Ms. Martel-Moore would bring the matter to the attention of the Administrative Cabinet and Ms. Carey will have her staff develop a list of the cost of services. She would also review the possibility of inclusion of the part-time employment of individuals who assist the disabled under existing contracts. Mr. Roberts suggested speaking to the firm that is utilized for the service to speak of the various methods that could be used at a public meeting. The item would also be discussed at the Department Head meeting for input. Mrs. McBean-Clairborne suggested a resolution could be developed to request inclusion of the disclaimer on all agendas. She would also like to determine how the Legislature meetings could accommodate hearing-impaired individuals, perhaps by closed caption.

Transportation Plan Amendments

Minutes
Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Committee
February 25, 2009

Mr. Roberts expressed concern regarding the proposed amendments to bus and paratransit services by Tompkins Consolidated Area Transit (TCAT). He spoke of the elimination of some routes and reduction of stops on routes. It would have profound implications for agencies that serve this segment of the population as well as those who are low-income, the paratransit footprint, etc. Although TCAT has been very open about having public input he suggested contacting them to provide input prior to the final decisions.

Ms. Holmes spoke of the concerns expressed by the Office for the Aging Advisory Board regarding the proposed amendments of bus routes by Tompkins Consolidated Area Services. Also of concern was how the proposed route amendments would affect those requiring paratransit services.

Mr. Roberts acknowledged that TCAT is trying to make changes that would make sense for all involved.

Ms. Herrera spoke of her position on the TCAT Board and attendance at the transit services meeting. She said what TCAT has been trying to do for several years is to deal with increased fiscal pressure combined with reduced funding from the partners. What is being done is to compile data regarding ridership, combined with public input. The goal is to respond in a manner that is equitable and meets the need. She stressed the lines of communication would be kept open during the process and it is not expected the changes would be finalized until late spring or early summer.

The next meeting would be held on March 25, 2009.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:55 p.m.