

MINUTES
WORKFORCE DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 27, 2008 3:30 P.M.
BEVERLY LIVESAY CONFERENCE ROOM

Approved 4/23/08

Present: Leslyn McBean-Clairborne, Chair; Dave Richardson; Larry Roberts; Lisa Holmes; Kathy Luz Herrera; Chantalise DeMarco; Robert DeLuca
Excused: Patricia Carey, Carol Griep, Kristina Belanger, Anita Fitzpatrick, Kit Kephart, Constance Thompson, Betsy Doling, Shawn Martel Moore, Marcia Lynch
Guests: Karen Fuller,

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 3:35 p.m. Mrs. McBean-Clairborne. Mrs. McBean-Clairborne noted that due to lack of quorum no action could be taken today.

Chair's Report

Mrs. McBean-Clairborne spoke of the need to have a Communication Plan in place and asked for a discussion regarding the steps to take.

Communication/Diversity Plan/Marketing Team/Training Discussion

Members present spoke of the need to have the Communication Plan action completed in order to progress with work. She would like the Communication Team to speak to Department Heads to determine the best way to approach departments to know how to best proceed.

Mrs. McBean-Clairborne spoke of the Recruitment/Resource Guide, noting it needs an update, during which process it would be useful to determine a plan that would present it as a working document, useful throughout the County.

Mr. Richardson inquired what training sessions occur within the County. Mrs. McBean-Clairborne said the County has training, but it is not clear to participants what the next steps are following training. This year the County will be providing a second session that would provide a follow-up plan. It will include a talking-circle and implementation plan that will provide benchmarks to indicate achievement. In addition, it was noted it is important to let departments/divisions know that the Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Committee is available to them and that an accountability piece be built into the plan.

During the discussion Mr. Richardson asked how the department head/managers look at the Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Committee. Mrs. McBean-Clairborne said it is as an advisory committee and seek advice, often through administration. She spoke of recently having been invited to participate in an interview process. It was noted that the group needs to be viewed not only as a group to help develop the concept of diversity and inclusion and how to bring this information into the organization, but as a resource for questions regarding the topic. Mrs. McBean-Clairborne spoke of the standard practice of having a separate office/position that deals with diversity and inclusion, however the County has the Human Resource Department. At the present time an effort is undertaken to hire an individual who will focus on diversity and inclusion, which would be report to the Personnel Commissioner. It was noted this is not standard practice, normally a diversity/inclusion employee reports to administration.

The Committee discussed the recent recognition of Mr. Richardson and others at Cornell University, noting that recognition of best practices provides incentive to bring about the change required. It was hoped that the Committee would be able to make it known that in order for diversity and inclusion to be successful the approach needs to be different than present practices.

Diversity Recognition Award

Members spoke of the possibility of an award to recognize diversity efforts. Following a brief conversation it was requested that the Marketing Team meet to brainstorm how to proceed in developing the award. Mrs. McBean-Clairborne suggested it be called the Tompkins County Strength in Diversity Award. It is hoped that the award could be brought before the Legislature in May.

Special Recognition

The Committee spoke of a Tompkins County Highway Department employee, Jerry Sterns, who has consistently gone above his required duties to assist others in receiving training that would improve their employability. It was decided to prepare a proclamation with a specific designation of this individual's work in the community for the April 1 Legislature meeting.

Recommendation of Working with Departments

The Committee discussed working with three departments knowledgeable with the efforts being done, noting it would show how to proceed with diversity and inclusion. It was determined that the Department of Social Services, Mental Health, and the Office for the Aging would be suitable to showcase how embracing inclusion and diversity assist in various areas, including interaction with the public. It was suggested that the information needed to be filtered to the front-line workers as well as the department heads and managers. Mrs. McBean-Clairborne will meet with the department heads of the pilot group and develop a model that could be followed by other departments.

Media Brochure Update

Ms. Holmes reported she has been working for the past five months with an individual to develop a brochure for her department that would include photographs of clients. She stressed to the individual that she would like a diverse group of individuals represented within the brochure. Ms. Holmes expressed dismay that continually the individual is producing proofs that do not meet the criteria requested. She noted that others asking for photographic media not sensitive to diversity and inclusion might accept what is being offered.

Diversity Resource

Ms. Holmes reported she has found a wonderful resource for the Office for the Aging, who is an M.S.W.-PhD who has done extensive work on older Asian-American caregivers. She has approached the office to discuss how this specific group is being approached. Ms. Holmes noted this group is underserved and she would like to do a project to do a broader outreach and marketing plan that studies this specific population, which could include translating brochures, finding common gatekeepers, etc. Ms. Holmes would like to hire this individual and has spoken to the Personnel Department regarding the project assistant positions; she would like to fund as much as possible from her departmental budget but inquired whether funding assistance is possible through the Committee. Mrs. McBean-Clairborne said following discussions with the Legislature Clerk she would have a better understanding, but believed some assistance might be possible.

Announcements

Mrs. McBean-Clairborne announced J.R. Clairborne is a diverse supplier who does diversity work on web pages and can assist in creating brochures, newsletters, etc. with a broad representation of citizens.

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Mr. Roberts announced there would be a World of Skills Annual Job Fair taking place on Thursday, April 10th from 9:00 a.m. to noon at the Holiday Inn.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:55 p.m.