

MINUTES
WORKFORCE DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE
JUNE 24, 2009 3:30 P.M.
BEVERLY LIVESAY CONFERENCE ROOM

Present: L. McBean-Clairborne; S. Martel Moore; L. Roberts; L. Holmes; M. DeSouza; C. DeMarco; K. Herrera, B. Doling

Excused: A. Fitzpatrick M. Lynch; P. Carey; K. Belanger; K. Kephart

Staff: K. Fuller, Deputy Clerk of the Legislature

Guests: Don Kelly, CSEA

Call to Order

The meeting opened at 3:35 p.m.

Introduction

Ms. DeMarco introduced Mr. Don Kelly, Director of Research for CSEA, with the primary responsibility of monitoring State municipal Civil Service and assisting with negotiations, preparation, etc. In addition he does workshops, provides testimony, has written various legislation as well. Ms. DeMarco noted Mr. Kelly had put together information packets for members. Members of the Committee introduced themselves to Mr. Kelly.

Announcements

- Mrs. McBean-Clairborne expressed her appreciation to the Mental Health Department for the use of the Diversity Logo on the awards presented to various individuals. Mr. DeLuca shared photographs of the award ceremony that showed recipients and the actual award.
- Mr. Roberts announced the Finger Lakes Independence Center annual picnic will be held July 15, noon to 3:00 p.m. in the small pavilion at Stewart Park.
- Ms. Herrera announced the Ithaca Car Share would be celebrating the one-year anniversary at Stewart Park June 25 in the afternoon.
- Mr. Roberts announced the marriage3 quality act is possibly being voted on tomorrow. Senator Winner is opposed and said he has had that opinion for all the time he has been in the Legislature.
- Ms. Herrera spoke of the Farm Worker legislation, noting it is on the schedule to be discussed on June 25th; this act provides for overtime and other benefits not presently available.
- Ms. Martel-Moore announced Ms. Belanger had attended the 25th annual NYSAA Meeting in Binghamton, which highlighted immigrant rights. Individuals from Cornell University were present to speak to the subject of reasonable accommodations, religious accommodations, etc. She has again been asked to serve as Vice President of the organization for 2010, with a strong desire to have her serve as President in the following year. Ms Belanger spoke of the County's diversity initiatives as well.
- Ms. Holmes noted the Bioterrorism Coordinator, Carol Hill, has resigned from the County and has taken a position at Unity House in Cortland, New York.
- Mrs. McBean-Clairborne spoke of the Greater Ithaca Activities Center (GIAC) Summer Baseball League having begun its season on Wood Street. She spoke of it being a wonderful place to contact with youth.

Civil Service Reform and CSEA Support

Mrs. McBean-Clairborne spoke of the Committee's work, noting the work for diversity and inclusion is not only internally, but with the community as well. She spoke of one barrier to hiring, promotions, and being able to interest individuals to become an employee is the civil service requirements. When reviewing how to look at this barrier and see if there is one aspect of civil service reform that would help, if only a pilot, to determine if it would assist in building a more inclusive organization. There have been meetings of individuals, with staff at Cornell University and with Cornell Institute for Public Affairs (CIPA) to discuss what would be a good approach. At a Committee meeting,

Minutes
Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Committee
June 24, 2009

it was suggested that a CSEA representative attend a meeting to provide their input and viewpoint regarding the topic of civil service reform, to enable a collaborative effort to move forward.

Mr. Kelly expressed his appreciation to speak to the Committee. He provided a review of his background. He indicated that the union would strongly oppose a pass/fail system based upon information and experience. Mr. Kelly reviewed the material provided that gave an historical accounting of the creation and modifications to the civil service laws and the purpose behind them. As part of the information, he noted that in 1986 Suffolk County attempted to create a civil service rule that would allow consideration of the top ten scores versus the top three for an eligible list. The attempt to expand failed but Suffolk County was allowed to use band scoring that would allow individual scores within a certain scoring group to be considered one range. Although Suffolk County wanted ten bands, the court determined following a lawsuit brought on by CSEA that it had to be reasonable parameters. Mr. Kelly reviewed what band scoring is, noting the State has determined five levels is the maximum.

Mr. Kelly said CSEA strongly endorses diversity and inclusion, however, with regard to the selection of competitive class positions he maintained the State Constitutional requirement must be supported by CSEA. He said a pass/fail system would be an extreme band that leaves the potential for abuse since it is too broad a choice and does not follow the object of merit and fitness.

Following the historical information that provided the CSEA viewpoint a brief discussion took place. It was noted that although an individual may be an excellent worker may not test well enough to maintain their position. Mr. Kelly maintained that the union takes the position that a wider band leaves it too open for political appointments rather than merit and fitness. Ms. Holmes asked if the union considered hands-on testing versus written exams. Mr. Kelly said well training and experience is acceptable but they create another standard. It was noted the County would have to work with Civil Service to develop criteria. It was further explained State employees develop the testing. If a municipality feels the test is too old a new one could be developed.

Next Meeting

The next meeting would be held on September 23, 2009. ***NO MEETING IN AUGUST.***

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 5:05 p.m.