

**MINUTES**  
**WORKFORCE DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE**  
**SEPTEMBER 22, 2010 3:30 P.M.**  
**BEVERLY LIVESAY CONFERENCE ROOM**

DRAFT

Present: L. McBean-Clairborne, S. Martel Moore; L. Roberts, A. Fitzpatrick, B. Doling; C. DeMarco, P. Pryor, L. Holmes, M. Lynch  
Excused: K. Luz Herrera; K. Belanger; M. DeSouza; P. Carey; R. DeLuca, K. Kephart, J. Breedlove,  
Staff: J. Mareane, County Administrator; K. Fuller, Deputy Clerk of the Legislature; S. Reistetter

**Call to Order**

Mrs. McBean-Clairborne called the meeting to order at 3:35 p.m.

**Announcement(s)**

- Mr. Roberts provided a flyer of numerous events that are being sponsored by Finger Lakes Independence Center. There are many programs focused on housing and home purchases. He called attention to the December 2<sup>nd</sup> Panel Discussion entitled Coming to Terms with Change. This panel discussion will feature two individuals speaking of their changes and challenges when they became disabled. The next Diversity Consortium Roundtable event is being planned for June 11, 2011.
- Ms. Reistetter said the Latino Civic Association and Ithaca Asian American Association are hosting a celebration of immigration on September 25<sup>th</sup> at 6 p.m. on the Commons. Followed by a celebration at the Women's Community Building.
- Ms. DeMarco said CSEA is sponsoring a National Coalition Building Institute training on November 9<sup>th</sup>. Any individual that is CSEA represented may attend the training and she asked that employees wishing to attend be allowed to attend without use of personal time.
- Ms. Reistetter said the global celebration building green communities through food systems will be breaking ground at Chestnut Hill for their community garden.
- Ms. Martel-Moore announced she had recently attended the International Human Rights Board conference in Mobile, Alabama. Tompkins County has been asked to host this conference in 2012. Members requested that the conference date be set at a time that would not conflict with the County Budget meetings.
- Mrs. McBean-Clairborne said next week there are two events, the Apple Harvest Festival and the First-People Festival. She also announced the Kitchen Theatre Ribbon-Cutting will take place at 10:30 a.m. on September 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Report on Bridge Barriers**

Mr. Roberts reported Cornell University and the City of Ithaca are working together to determine how to proceed regarding bridge barriers on City-owned and Cornell-owned bridges. A consultant has been hired to review design.

**Chair's Report**

Mrs. McBean-Clairborne said a goal of the Committee was to review Civil Service and how it operates within the County. Mr. Mareane, County Administrator, has been working with individuals and Cornell University students who provided their findings. She said work needs to continue and come to an understanding of the role of the Civil Service Commission, how local Civil Service laws are changed, and how the local municipalities can weigh in on those changes. More information is needed to determine how to meet the most diverse pool of people for jobs.

Mrs. McBean-Clairborne expressed her disappointment with the stalemate of the repeal of “Don’s Ask, Don’t tell” by the Federal government. She said it is troubling for the Federal government to participate and exercise discriminatory practices against people and expect the rest of the country to do different.

She then spoke of the statements that are being made during the election, including discriminatory, homophobic e-mails, and then claiming it is a joke. She is concerned about the direction the country is going.

**Resolution**

Mrs. McBean-Clairborne said the resolution for consideration was originally brought forward by Ms. Herrera. She said various actions are taking place across the nation to support the amendment.

**RESOLUTION NO. – IN SUPPORT OF FEDERAL BILLS S.2781/H.R. 4544, COMMONLY KNOWN AS “ROSA’S LAW”/ ELIZABETH A. CONNELLY ACT AND ASKING THAT ALL REFERENCES TO A MENTAL RETARDATION BE AMENDED TO INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES AND URGING ALL FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS TO AMEND REFERENCES TO “MENTALLY RETARDED” AND “MENTAL RETARDATION” TO “INTELLECTUALLY DISABLED” AND “INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY”**

It was MOVED by Mr. Roberts, seconded by Ms. Martel-Moore, and unanimously agreed, to recommend approval of the following resolution by consensus.

A brief discussion occurred, during which suggested amendments were accepted as friendly. Mr. Roberts asked if, when the resolution is adopted by the Legislature, the Mental Retardation/Development Disability Advisory Board could then amend their name accordingly, noting the subcommittee has expressed a desire to do so. He said previous discussions noted the current name of the advisory board is part of the County Charter. He was informed a resolution to amend the Charter would most likely need to happen; Ms. Doling will look into the matter to determine what would need to happen.

A voice vote taken of members present resulted in unanimously recommending the resolution as amended. RESOLUTION RECOMMENDED.

WHEREAS, individuals with disabilities work hard to live as independently as possible, and  
WHEREAS, the terms mental retardation and mentally retarded are insulting and hurtful to people with intellectual disabilities and their family members, and

WHEREAS, it is widely accepted that people-first language when referring to people with disabilities is the appropriate terminology that should be used, and

WHEREAS, the clinical language is changing and mental retardation/mentally retarded is outmoded, with those working in this field are aware of a shift in language, and that the present terminology is often used as a disrespectful epithet, and

WHEREAS, New York State has also recognized the shift in terminology and has adopted the use of Office for People with Developmental Disabilities, and

WHEREAS, on November 17, 2009, S. 2781, commonly known as “Rosa’s Law” was introduced at the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress, and

WHEREAS, on January 27, 2010, H.R. 4544, commonly known as the Elizabeth A. Connelly Act, a related bill, was introduced at the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress, and

WHEREAS, these bills amend the use of the terms “mentally retarded” and “mental retardation” to “intellectually disabled” and “intellectual disability” within Laws relating to education, employment, and other social services, and

WHEREAS, these amendments provide recognition of the need to amend how individuals with intellectual disabilities are perceived, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the Tompkins County Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Committee hereby supports Federal Bills S.2781 and H.R.4544,

RESOLVED, further, That the Tompkins County Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Committee hereby urges the Federal, State, and Local Governments, to amend the terms mental retardation and mentally retarded to “intellectually disabled” and “intellectual disability”, in all Federal, State, and Local Laws as well as in any titles and documents,

RESOLVED, further, That the Legislature Clerk is hereby directed to send certified copies of this resolution to President Obama, and the appropriate Federal representatives, Governor David Paterson, and the appropriate State representatives, New York State Association of Retarded Children, and New York State Association of Counties.

**SEQR ACTION:** TYPE II-20

### **Approval of Minutes**

By consensus, the Committee approved the minutes June 23, 2010, as amended.

### **Workplace Survey**

Ms. Reistetter said the last surveys were received at the end of July. The information has been input into a database and she will be preparing a report to be reviewed by the Committee at the October meeting. It was noted that approximately 370 employees responded and were equally distributed between electronic and paper submission. Any information that may provide identification of an individual or department would be redacted to maintain the confidentiality of information. In addition, an introductory statement will be provided to clarify the intent and use of the survey.

Mr. Mareane asked if it is possible to use any of the information specific to departments as a management tool. Members of the Committee indicated it could not be used. Mrs. McBean-Clairborne said it might be possible to do so in future surveys when employees and department heads feel more comfortable to be forthcoming. Ms. Martel-Moore said information obtained is to determine the need for an organizational change; if this happens it may not be necessary to work with any specific departments. Mrs. McBean-Clairborne said the survey is to assist how to utilize training that has already occurred and raise it to the next level.

Mr. Roberts agreed with Ms. Martel-Moore regarding organization change. He then asked what policy and procedure is currently in place for employee complaints and whether it is effective.

Mrs. McBean-Clairborne said she would like to present the survey results to the full Legislature in late December or early January. Ms. Martel-Moore said it would be good to simultaneously present the Diversity Plan as well.

### **Employee Recognition**

A brief discussion regarding employee recognition took place. Ms. Fitzpatrick will speak to Ms. Eckstrom who has worked with Ms. Valenti to determine how departments currently address the issue.

Minutes  
Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Committee  
September 22, 2010

**Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 4:45 p.m.