

## MINUTES

### WORKFORCE DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE

**MARCH 29, 2006 3:30 P.M. BEVERLY LIVESAY CONFERENCE ROOM**

Present: Kit Kephart, Dave Richardson, Anita Fitzpatrick, Chantalise DeMarco, Jim Dennis, Patricia Carey, Schelley Michell-Nunn, Larry Roberts, Kristina Belanger, Shawn Martel Moore, Steve Whicher, Tim Joseph, Satomi Hill, Betsy Doling, Bob DeLuca

#### **Called to Order**

Ms. Martel-Moore called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

#### **Announcements**

Mr. Roberts distributed a copy of the following announcements:

- April 27, 2006 – World of Skills XI Ithaca premier job fair, 9:00-12:00 at the Holiday Inn
- Pre-Fair Workshops: “Branding Your Brilliance: What It Takes For Success At Career Fairs”, March 20 and April 3 from 9:00-10:30 a.m. and will be held at the Tompkins County Public Library Borg Warner Rooms.

#### **Report from Diversity Policy Subcommittee**

Ms. Belanger distributed the most recent draft of the Diversity Policy as well as a timeline of the discussions and meetings that took place. She reported the subcommittee met and incorporated some but not all of the comments and recommendations suggested. Copies of the draft policy and memo outlining comments submitted by employees were sent to Departments Heads for feedback; however, since November 30, 2005, no further feedback was received. One recommendation made this morning at the special Department Head meeting was that having a working meeting on this item would have been appropriate.

The next steps for moving the Diversity Policy through the Legislative process is as follows:

- April 12 – Personnel Committee
- April 19 – Government Operations Committee
- April 26 – Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Committee (if needed)
- May 2 – County Legislature

At this time, Ms. Belanger reviewed the changes made by the subcommittee. Mr. Joseph reminded the Committee of the discussion held at the last meeting concerning format and consistency with other policies and asked if the subcommittee discussed this. Ms. Martel-Moore said the draft policy in the current format was presented to the appropriate standing committees of the Legislature and members of those committees felt the policy was acceptable and did not recommend changing the format at this time. It was understood that the “nuts and bolts” would follow in the overall Shell Plan on how this initiative would be carried out.

Following further review, discussion, and minor revisions, the following policy was unanimously adopted by the Committee:

#### **DIVERSITY POLICY**

Objective: **Tompkins County government is committed to creating a diverse and fully inclusive workplace that strengthens our organization and enhances our ability to adapt to change by developing**

**Policy No.**

**and maintaining: an organization-wide understanding and acceptance of the purpose and reasons for diversity; recruitment and retention policies that assure a diverse workforce; a workplace environment that is welcoming and supportive of all; awareness, understanding and education regarding diversity issues; zero tolerance for expressions of discrimination, bias, harassment, or negative stereotyping toward any person or group; and a workforce ethic that embraces diversity and makes it the norm for all interactions, including delivery of services to the public.**

**Effective Date:**

Reference: Board Resolution No. 52 and 126 of 2005; Administrative Policies 01-36, 02-13, 02-14; Tompkins County Law 6-1991, as amended in 2004

Policy: Recruitment, Retention, and Promotion of persons within Tompkins County government to promote diversity in the work force and ensure that all County departments will value diversity.

## **PURPOSE**

A. To foster an organizational culture of inclusion and full representation in every County department in which:

1. Groups, as well as individuals, are appreciated for their uniqueness and treat each other with respect;
2. Employees understand and appreciate the heritage and culture of many different groups and are responsive to the uniqueness of each individual as well as the community that the work force serves;
3. Individuals reach beyond their own experience to appreciate and work effectively with people who are not similar in values and backgrounds; and,
4. All employees reach their full potential in pursuit of organization objectives and goals.

B. Tompkins County work force strives to reflect the multi-cultural community that it serves. As an organization we must look beyond that which is promulgated in our local law, Tompkins County Law 6-1991, as amended in 2004, and recognize that valuing diversity requires both a change in the way we do business and how we interact with each other. Valuing diversity requires changes in policies and practices to the point of changing the culture of our county organizations.

C. We believe that a diverse work force provides advantages both internally, in terms of the human resources potential offered by a variety of perspectives, and externally, in increasing the County's ability to serve an equally diverse community. In order to treat people fairly and provide equal opportunity, County departments must seek out and learn from the different perspectives and values that characterize diverse employees and clients.

## **GOALS**

A. Build on the foundation of equality of opportunity and diversity, and embrace these concepts as necessary to ensure fair representation and treatment of diverse employees and the multi-cultural community we serve.

B. Establish a strategic plan to promote an organizational culture that values diversity in every County department.

- C. Ensure equal employment and promotional opportunities for all members of our diverse work force.
- D. Create an organizational culture that fosters accountability for learning about, appreciating, and respecting employee differences.
- E. Make diversity a core organizational value, one which is practiced and communicated at all levels of county government and the workforce.
- F. Conduct employee education sessions regarding: respecting the individuality of others by creating an openness to the experience of others; generating awareness of personal perceptions; imparting knowledge of diversity attributes, and by teaching skills to apply cultural concepts in everyday working behaviors.
- G. Hold all managers accountable for demonstrating leadership in promoting an organizational culture that values diversity.

### **STRATEGY**

Workplace cultures usually require people to conform to the style historically dominant in the organization. In contrast, with an increasingly diverse work force and community, the County must assess its culture and identify policies and practices that both help and hinder the inclusion of a wide range of employees and the culturally sensitive provision of services to the community.

A. The County must move further toward a culture of inclusion, thereby increasing the consciousness and appreciation of differences associated with the heritage, characteristics and values of many different groups, as well as increasing the respect for the uniqueness of each individual.

1. Strive for a pluralistic work force in an effort to be more responsive to the service needs of the community.
2. For the County to continue to provide competent and quality services, we must acknowledge the changing demographics and recognize the impact on the way we do business. In order to be effective, we will identify the needs of the public and how they view the services we provide.
3. It is imperative that we recruit, hire and retain highly capable and productive employees into the County. To do this, we need to attract all qualified individuals, ensure that employees are acknowledged for their contributions, and encourage employees to achieve their full potential.
4. We must create programs that address diversity issues and include the full participation and involvement of managers, supervisors and employees representative of the many different groups that make up the County work force.

B. Valuing diversity can have a synergistic effect as the total work force of Tompkins County becomes greater than the sum of its parts. With this strategy guiding our actions, we will be ready to face the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

### **EXPECTATIONS**

The Tompkins County Legislature expects that departments will develop opportunities to draw on the diverse skills, energies, abilities, knowledge and perspectives of all employees in order to create a climate of a more open, flexible, responsive and responsible work environment – where people can achieve their full potential, thus becoming more efficient and productive.

For these expectations to occur, we will:

1. Assess organizational culture with respect to valuing diversity.
2. Involve managers, supervisors, union leaders, and employees in the development and implementation of the diversity program.
3. Implement new practices and policies for the workplace.
4. Provide annual diversity training to develop new skills for managers, supervisors, union leaders, and employees.
5. Appreciate and encourage non-traditional approaches to employment, i.e. flexible work schedules.
6. Achieve inclusion for all employees.
7. Minimize tensions and problems or culture clashes.
8. Provide a mentoring and formal development program for all employees.
9. Create a checks and balances system, wherein each level of recruiting, hiring, transfer and promotion is reviewed and improved upon when necessary.
10. Enforce existing recruitment, retention and promotion policies created to assure a diverse work force, including active participation by the entire work force.
11. The Commissioner of Personnel will continue to track the interviewing, hiring, transfer, promotion and discharge of all personnel in order to ensure that the Tompkins County work force represents the diversity of the Tompkins County community as a whole.
12. The Tompkins County Human Rights Commission and the Commissioner of Personnel will monitor complaints and ensure that there is zero tolerance for discrimination, bias, harassment, or negative stereotyping toward any person or group. After a thorough investigation, if discrimination is found, disciplinary action will be taken as outlined by Civil Service law or the appropriate collective bargaining agreement, or if any one act of discrimination or bias by any one individual is so egregious, there exists the potential for possible law enforcement action.
13. The County Administrator, as part of the Department Head's annual performance review, shall evaluate each Department's approach to incorporate the County's diversity and cultural goals and action plans. In addition, the County Administrator shall be responsible for evaluating each Department Head's ability to initiate, manage, and be accountable for cultural change and effectiveness in achieving those goals.
14. On an annual basis, the County Administrator shall recognize Departments who achieve their diversity goals. The County Administrator, or his/her designee, will work with Departments whose diversity goals were not met, to develop a corrective action plan that will be presented, discussed and acted upon with all employees within the department.

**Update on County's Candidate Demographic Questionnaire Form**

Mr. Roberts said the subgroup met and learned that the form is not necessary as it only tracks people who are coming into the workforce and does not provide information about the existing workforce. The subgroup is recommending that the County no longer use the form, but suggested discussions on other strategies or alternative methods be researched that would show the diversity of the workforce.

Ms. Belanger said the issue is recruitment and the existing form does not accomplish that. She said that postcards could be used asking people how they heard about County employment or add a section to the employment application form. She also reminded the Committee that the data currently being tracked is for EEOC purposes. Mr. Roberts noted that the EEOC data is already being collected as required.

Mr. DeLuca arrived at this time.

Mr. Richardson said in order to begin tracking diversity, there needs to be a baseline of existing employees. Ms. Fitzpatrick reported that current demographic information is being collected and provided to the appropriate standing committee of the Legislature. Ms. Martel-Moore clarified that the information being collected is by department and based on gender, disability and minority (both of those are in cases of individuals who have identified themselves). With regard to the recruitment process, Ms. Martel-Moore spoke as the Human Rights Director and stated that many people do not appreciate having to give that data. She stated that collection of this information needs to be done on a very voluntary basis. Mr. Roberts said that issue was discussed and feels that further discussion should follow regarding the tracking recruitment process and develop a way for gathering information the County is seeking.

Following further discussion, and the Committee agreed that the subgroup will continue to meet. Mr. Roberts feels Constance Thompson would be a helpful resource and will ask her if she would be willing to join and assist the subgroup. Schelley Michell-Nunn and Steve Whicher agreed to serve on it as well.

### **Report from the Marketing Subcommittee**

Ms. Kephart said the subcommittee has been meeting for approximately two months and the members consist of Constance Thompson, Larry Roberts, Schelley Michell-Nunn, Betsy Doling, and herself. The subcommittee was charged with:

- Developing plans to ensure that the Diversity Statement becomes part of the fabric of Tompkins County
- To that end – developing a Marketing Strategy

The subcommittee began with a review of six images/logos and reviewed them for message of clarity, easy recognition, adaptability (color vs. grayscale), portability (logo, banner, etc.) and theme. Following that review process, the subcommittee arrived at the use of one design. At this time, copies of the proposed logo were distributed to the Committee for review and discussion.

Ms. Kephart provided the following overview of the subcommittees feelings of the logo:

- Symbolically speaking...
- Stylistic elements of water = waterfalls
- County logo – diamond shape = N, S, E, W
- Attractive, eye-catching design without saying too much
- Very adaptable: business logo, letterhead
  - watermark/presentation of diversity statement

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- use by Chamber of Commerce for travel/tourism
- T-shirts at Ithaca Festival

Some other uses of the image:

- Logo use: letterhead – at top, middle of bottom
- Watermark for documents/posters
- Postcards for distribution to employees
- Banner – 3x10ft. Over Green Street @ \$210 or \$360 depending on vector
- Promotional items: image can be transferred to cups, pens, pins, etc.

At this time, Mr. Roberts provided an overview of the marketing strategy proposed for the Diversity Statement. There are three phases:

Phase I – March 2006

Logo Presentation

March 2006

- WDIC Logo Presentation
- Amendments to logo made

Phase II – April-May 2006

Invitation to employees and community

Event Planning

April 2006

- Budget request made
- Leadership Invite Draft
- Location and launch details secured
- Translation of statement

May 2006

- Press Release Launch
- Invitation to current employees and community
- Framed copies in major county offices given

Phase III – June-July 2006

Community Event

Statement Integration

June 2006

- Community Launch event
- Placards given for offices

July 2006

- Position descriptions
- Website, Chamber, Recruitment Resource Guide location integration
- Hand-off to County for sustainability

Further discussion followed concerning the logo design and possible uses. In rolling this out, Ms. Carey suggested that booths be set up at other fairs and events as well. Ms. Kephart agreed to take the comments made by Committee members and reconvene the subcommittee to explore ideas of color and moving the words “Strength in Diversity” to the top of the logo.

**Update on Shell Plan**

Ms. Martel-Moore said the subcommittee consisting of herself, Patricia Carey, Steve Whicher, Lynette Chappell Williams, and an intern from County Administration have several meetings scheduled between April and June. She commented the intern is doing an excellent job and has been working with the Government Accountability office on their diversity initiative specifically in the financial arena. The intern has jumped right in and has begun gathering information for the subcommittee. Ms. Martel-Moore said the plan will be given to the Committee in piecemeal for review and approval. She hopes the following information will be presented first:

- Executive summary
- Vision
- History
- Resolutions and applicable laws (including a brief synopsis)

In addition, Ms. Martel-Moore outlined what the Shell Plan will encompass with a goal of having a complete draft done by mid summer.

**Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 4:52 p.m.