

MINUTES
WORKFORCE DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE
JULY 23, 2008 3:30 P.M.
BEVERLY LIVESAY CONFERENCE ROOM

Approved 12/17/08

Present: L. McBean-Clairborne, Chair; C. Griep; C. DeMarco; D. Richardson; S. Martel Moore; K. Herrera; R. DeLuca; L. Holmes

Not Present: K. Belanger; K. Kephart; A. Fitzpatrick; M. Lynch; L. Roberts; P. Carey; B. Doling

Staff: C. Covert, Clerk of the Legislature; S. Moody, Personnel Department

Guests: Mary De Souza

Call to Order

The meeting opened at 3:30 p.m.

Welcome and Introductions

Mrs. McBean-Clairborne reported that Constance Thompson has resigned as a member of this Committee. She will be greatly missed and members thanked her for her insight, drive, knowledge, talent, and presence on the Committee. The presentation she gave at the last meeting was amazing and Mrs. McBean-Clairborne said she hopes to bring the same presentation to the Legislature. Ms. Thompson has recommended Mary De Souza to replace her. Mrs. McBean-Clairborne welcomed Ms. De Souza who introduced herself and expressed interest in serving on the Committee and has submitted an application for consideration.

Mrs. McBean-Clairborne explained briefly the structure of the Committee and funds available for diversity initiatives. One of the areas currently underway is the cultural competency training for all County employees. This effort began last year with the Department Heads and is moving to division managers and line staff.

Announcements

Mr. Richardson said their video is now finished and have presented it to FMCS (Federal Mediation and Conciliatory Services). Last month (June 8-12) the presentation of the video was shown that shared diversity efforts in the skilled trades, pre-construction program, and career day. The video will also be introduced to IBEW (International Brotherhood Electrical Workers). He also spoke of other opportunities for the video to be shown. In addition he reported that the golf tournament which consisted of 55 teams raised between \$72,000-\$75,000.

Mrs. McBean-Clairborne requested and Mr. Richardson agreed to show the video he referenced above at the next Committee meeting.

Ms. Griep reported on her progress with working with the State to get the preparedness materials (emergency plans for families) for her Bio-terrorism program more diverse. She just ordered interactive DVDs for families which were done with sign language. Many of the program brochures are being done in Braille and are also available in different languages. She asked Committee members that if there are specific community groups that need this information to let her know.

Ms. Herrera announced the County participated in the Dragonboat Festival. It was a lot of fun and many of the Committee members participated. She spoke of the difficulty with finding enough people to paddle the boat, but by the final heat, team members were able to recruit others at the event. She said she was proud of the group and believes it was an accomplishment and only improves as it goes forward. The total cost for this event is \$500. Ms. Martel Moore spoke about the cost of the event and spreading the joy around. She suggested maybe other departments could rotate or sponsor the Dragonboat event which could also encourage more participation from County employees.

Appointment

It was the consensus of the Committee to submit the appointment of Mary De Souza to the Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Committee to the Human Resources Committee for consideration.

Approval of Minutes

Approval of minutes was deferred to the next meeting.

Resolution – Award of Grant – The Grandmothers Project

Ms. Griep explained The Grandmothers Project and said it continues to move forward. There are several partners and sponsorships that have occurred; however, the need to raise money continues. The word is getting out as far away as Sterling, Auburn, and Norwich. To date, between \$60,000-\$70,000 has been raised. The goal is \$160,000. Ms. DeMarco said she would forward information to Ms. Fuller of the Legislature's office to distribute as requested. The event will be held the first week in October.

Following further discussion, it was the consensus of the Committee to submit the following resolution to the Human Resources Committee for consideration:

RESOLUTION NO. – AWARD OF GRANT – THE GRANDMOTHERS PROJECT

WHEREAS, Women's Gathering of Groton is hosting a week-long event in October 2008, to bring The Council of Thirteen Indigenous Grandmothers, women who come together from the Artic Circle, North, South, and Central America, Africa, and Asia, and

WHEREAS, The Council of Thirteen Indigenous Grandmothers are women of prayer and action with a solidarity creating a network to rebalance and educate the world concerning the fundamental laws of nature and original teachings based on respect for all life, and

WHEREAS, as part of their stay in Tompkins County they will be meeting with men, women, and children from throughout Tompkins County and surrounding areas to assist in healing differences and educate those attending their events on the importance of diversity, and

WHEREAS, as part of the Tompkins County Diversity Statement, Tompkins County acknowledges the importance of:

- awareness, understanding, and education regarding diversity issues;
- zero tolerance for expressions of discrimination, bias, harassment, or negative stereotyping toward any person or group

, and

WHEREAS, the Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Committee embraces this opportunity/event as one that supports the purpose, policy and function of this committee in furthering the diversity and inclusion initiatives in Tompkins County, and

WHEREAS, funds are available in the Workforce Diversity and Inclusion budget to further this work, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Workforce Diversity and Inclusion and the Human Resources Committees, That the following grant is hereby approved:

Women's Gathering of Groton The Grandmothers Project \$1,000

RESOLVED, further, That the County Administrator or designee shall be authorized to sign any documents related to the aforementioned projects.

SEQR ACTION: TYPE II-20

Strength in Diversity Award

The Committee reviewed the draft proposal for a Strength in Diversity Award and discussed it at length. Included in the discussion were ideas about what the award(s) could be and if other community agencies should be contacted to sponsor an award. The selection process was discussed briefly and Mrs. McBean-Clairborne said there will likely be a subcommittee of this committee. A discussion followed concerning the award criteria and how many of them need to be met. Suggestions included one or more or two or more criteria must be met.

Mrs. McBean-Clairborne explained her thinking that she would like to see something different for County employees and departments through the Personnel Department separate from this award.

Under guidelines, the Committee agreed to change the definition paragraph to read as follows:

For purposes of the award selection process, diversity and inclusion initiatives are defined as organizational programs, activities and as well as individual efforts designed to promote and embrace the many differences and unique qualities in people and society, which include but not limited to race, and ethnic origin, gender identity or expression, physical and/or mental abilities, religious beliefs, age, education, sexual orientation and/or other perceived differences.

Ms. Herrera recommended in the Purpose/goal paragraph to change the word “and” in the second line to “a”.

Some of the areas that need to be addressed include selection process, what the award will be, and sponsorship.

Discussion followed and several suggestions were made as to what the award could entail:

- Plaque
- Gift certificates
- Living item (i.e., a plant)
- Diversity garden
- A book on a relevant topic (one for the recipient and one for public use at the library with a description on the inside for the person)

Another suggestion made is a running list of who’s received the award could be maintained.

Mrs. McBean-Clairborne said she will revise the proposal and circulate it Department Heads and others for input. She hopes this will be adopted by the Legislature before the end of the year to begin this in 2009.

Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Brochure

A draft copy of the brochure was distributed for review and comment. Ms. Lynch is looking for feedback and if anyone is interested in working with her on the style design to let her know.

Committee Goals

Mrs. McBean-Clairborne asked Committee members to review the goals from 2007 and see if there are any changes that need to be made. They are also included in the goals of the Human Resources Committee.

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Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Plan

Mrs. McBean-Clairborne will schedule a meeting with Ms. Martel Moore to continue their work on the plan.

Brown Bag Lunch Video for Staff

Mrs. McBean-Clairborne said she is open to ideas and suggestions and is willing to meet with staff during a lunch hour, staff meeting, etc. Ms. Holmes said she would appreciate Mrs. McBean-Clairborne attend a staff meeting with the Office for the Aging staff. Mrs. McBean-Clairborne also requested this topic be raised at the Department Head meeting for a discussion and possible suggestions.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.