

North Adams Diversity Equity and Inclusion Working Group  
Thursday October 1st, 2020  
MEETING MINUTES

**Members in Attendance**

Amber Besaw  
Lisa Blackmer  
Alicia Canary  
Benjamin Lamb  
Jessica Sweeney

The North Adams Diversity Equity and Inclusion Working Group met via zoom webinar on October 1st, 2020 at 6pm EST.

**Call to Order – 6pm**

B. Lamb read a statement citing Governor Baker’s allowance to hold meetings using remote technology during COVID-19 and noted that this meeting is being recorded.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- September 24<sup>th</sup>, 2020
  - Motion to Approve: L. Blackmer, Second: A. Canary
  - Motion Carries, J. Sweeney abstained due to prior meeting absence

**COMMUNICATIONS**

- A. Canary had passed along an updated version of the developing definitions document

**PRIMARY BUSINESS**

**Final review of pre-participation survey for immediate distribution**

- B. Lamb noted the recommendation of A. Besaw to change synchronous to real-time.
- A. Canary offered up edits of format and language to improve readability which B. Lamb made to the survey in real time.
- L. Blackmer noted that answers will be different between elected officials verses employees and asked to have the survey made specific to councilors.
- B. Lamb noted that the goal was to not re-create this document every time, which is why the language used attempted to be inclusive of elected, appointed and hired individuals.
- A. Canary recommended changing language to “work in the city of North Adams” so it is universal. J. Sweeney agreed with this suggestion.
- A. Canary suggested removal of language around not asking identifying information.

- B. Lamb noted concern that not indicating this could make individuals concerned about answering fully if they think their answers would be presented individually verses as a collective.
- J. Sweeney agreed and suggested breaking up paragraphs for readability.
- A. Canary asked about the length of the training and wanted to make sure the question wasn't asking about the "full" training but how long an individual session might take.
- B. Lamb edited the question to indicate that there might be multiple shorter sessions to meet the desired training outcome.
- J. Sweeney asked about if we needed to bring up being "challenged" or not.
- B. Lamb noted that he included that specifically based on the discussions of the working group as this isn't meant to be an easy training, but in fact would need participants to step up and step in.
- A. Besaw noted it would be helpful for the trainer to know the comfort level of the participant pool and how much challenge they would be OK with experiencing in the training so they don't overstep or underchallenge.
- The working group reviewed the remainder of the questions and made language and grammar edits to the remainder of the survey
- B. Lamb requested a motion to approve the survey to be distributed to the Council and Mayor immediately so that the working group can review the results at their next meeting.
- L. Blackmer motioned to send to the council and mayor, A. Besaw seconded the motion.
  - o Motion carries

### **Discussion on draft budget**

- B. Lamb presented a very rough outline of a budget broken up into the council, committees/boards, and city departments to begin the discussion.
- L. Blackmer noted that most professional development programs are lower cost this year which should allow for the flexibility in existing city training budgets to accommodate at least some of this proposed budget. She believes we have \$4,500 total for training.
- B. Lamb noted that MMA alone is a significant cost in terms of hotel and parking that won't need to be paid from the city this year
- L. Blackmer agreed that there is a lot of remaining funds that would normally have been spent that won't be.
- B. Lamb also noted that we are focused initially on the council but thought it would be helpful to at least begin the discussion on broader implementation across committees and departments.
- L. Blackmer noted that the mayor has vocalized his support for this effort which is important.
- B. Lamb noted that this is very rough, but he would like to at least begin the conversation with the Mayor.
- A. Besaw asked why for the council it is by the person, and for the others it is by offering. It could be a point of contention with a trainer.

- B. Lamb noted it was somewhat intentional in that he felt that anything below \$1,000 doesn't feel adequate for a training, but for the others where the trainings could be repeated in similar form, the preparation involved is less per session. Ideally he saw this as selling it to a potential trainer as a full package.
- A. Besaw noted that she sees the point but recommended just removing the per-participant aspect for consistency. B. Lamb made the edit.
- A. Canary felt it was good for a conversation starter.
- General consensus of the group was in approval of bringing it to the mayor for conversation purposes at least.

### **OTHER RETURNING BUSINESS**

#### **Review of status and timeline and needs for next meeting**

- B. Lamb reviewed our next steps which include reviewing survey responses so we can begin to formulate the training design and the core competencies to be included.
- L. Blackmer noted she would potentially be away during the next meeting.
- B. Lamb welcomed L. Blackmer to send any written comment she may want to include in the conversation if she can't be there.

#### **Discussion of available trainings and opportunities to share and recommend**

- J. Sweeney shared information about the ArtPlace Summit training as a potential opportunity for learning.
- L. Blackmer reminded everyone of the MMA training and discussion on November 13<sup>th</sup> about immigration in the evening.
- B. Lamb noted he would be meeting with the director of the Immigrant Center this week to discuss individuals who may be interested in participating, specifically seeking individuals who live in North Adams.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

- None

### **ADJOURNMENT**

- Motion: J. Sweeney, Second: L. Blackmer
- Motion Carries
- Meeting Adjourned 6.58pm