



Diversity Equity Inclusion Justice and Belonging (DEIJB) Committee

Meeting Minutes

August 11, 2023

City Council Chambers

9:00 AM

1. Mayor Bouley, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:04 AM.
2. Roll Call. Committee Members Present: Mayor Jim Bouley, Councilor Byron Champlin, and Councilor Zandra Rice Hawkins.
3. Approval of the July 24, 2023 Meeting Minutes.

Action: Councilor Champlin moved approval of the July 24, 2023 meeting minutes. The motion was duly seconded and passed with no dissenting votes.

4. Meeting overview by Committee Chair, Mayor Bouley.
5. Committee discussion.

Action: Mayor Bouley welcomed committee members as well as members of the public to the Diversity Equity Inclusion Justice and Belonging (DEIJB) Committee meeting. Mayor Bouley indicated that as discussed at the July 24th meeting, the committee would focus on drafting DEIJB recommendations as well as drafting the qualities, objectives and goals for inclusion in a Request for Proposal (RFP), and the potential hiring of a consultant.

Councilor Rice Hawkins provided an overview of what she saw as potential short-term goals for the committee based on her review of meeting minutes from committee listening sessions held in May of 2023.

- Ongoing and deeper DEIJB training for City staff, Police Department employees, City leaders and elected officials
- Land acknowledgement at City Council meetings
- Creation of a dedicated multi-cultural room at the Citywide Community Center
- Improvements to the City's website to include:

- Creation of a universal process providing information for residents to learn about and become involved in municipal boards & commissions including the creation of an online application form
- More outreach/improved public meeting notices on the web to include additional languages as well as more social media postings. Councilor Rice Hawkins stated that no comment Facebook posts would be one additional avenue. Discussion took place about including all upcoming meetings for the week ahead within the City Manager's weekly newsletter.
- ADA information on all boards & commissions agendas not just calendar postings
- Improvement in the placement of the language translation service on the City's website
- Regular training for members of boards & commissions
- Outreach to organizational leaders notifying them of municipal agenda items that may affect them broadening community awareness of items on a given agenda
- City of Concord investment in Main Street flags and/or banners honoring organizational celebrations.
- Meeting notifications and/or flyers in additional languages.
- Contracting with a language translation company so that an agency is on hand should translation services be requested for any given municipal meeting.
- Potential review of the City seal

Councilor Champlin provided an overview of short-term goals he felt would be appropriate for the committee.

- Prioritizing the creation of a DEIJB steering committee to include members of the community prior to making changes before adding additional voices to the committee.
- Drafting an RFP to hire a consulting firm to guide community conversations.
- Redesigning the City website to include the following:
 - Improving language translation services
 - Ensuring ADA information is on all public notices, agendas, and calendar postings
- Annual DEIJB staff, elected official and committee member training.
- The creation of an anti-racism message.
- Collaboration with the Concord and Merrimack Valley School Districts on community DEIJB efforts.

Councilor Champlin indicated he felt the creation of a multi-cultural room and/or meeting space at the Citywide Community Center would be more of a long-term goal and noted that he would like consideration to be given to expanding the hours the space would be available.

Committee discussion took place about the amount of information available on the City's webpage. Mayor Bouley, referencing comments made about the need to improve language translation services on the City's website noted that the City's website provides translation from English to over 100 other languages. Committee members noted that ideally the translation

button could be placed in a better location within the city's webpage. Public Information Officer, Stefanie Breton, explained that the location of the translation icon was a limitation of the City's website vendor. Ms. Breton further stated that members of City staff were in the beginning stages of working to redesign the City's website. Committee discussion took place about including municipal stakeholders in the web redesign process. Mayor Bouley asked Ms. Breton to work with the City Clerk to send out an update as to the status of the City's website redesign to ensure users are aware of the upcoming web page redesign. Discussion took place about the number of consultants available to provide the City with a disability audit of the City of Concord website.

Committee discussion took place about the option residents have via the Notify Me icon on the City's website that allows one to sign up for either community news and/or committee meetings.

Councilor Rice Hawkins spoke in support of the creation of a universal process providing information for residents to learn about becoming involved in municipal boards & commissions including the creation of an online application form. Mayor Bouley spoke in support of developing a universal process that would include all appointing authorities, not just those committees appointed by the City Manager and/or the Mayor. For more of a long-term goal, Councilor Rice Hawkins indicated she would like to review committee memberships with a goal of ensuring individuals most impacted by actions of a given committee serve on the committee.

Committee members discussed the process to make suggested DEIJB changes stating that recommendations by the committee would be submitted to the full Council, via the Council agenda process, for City Council's consideration.

Mayor Bouley spoke in support of DEIJB training for City staff, as indicated by Councilors Rice Hawkins and Champlin, within their suggested short-term goals. Consensus was that regular ongoing/annual training was a great idea.

Specific to the suggestion of expanded community access to space, Mayor Bouley indicated his personal philosophy is that access to community facilities like the library, the West Street Ward House, the Green Street Community Center, and the Citywide Community Center should be open and free. He further stated that historically the City has charged for usage of community center-like buildings and/or space. Mayor Bouley spoke about the difficulties involved when considering access fee changes to building and/or field use fees when considering the large pool of users, as well as the services included when renting some park spaces versus other park spaces. Mayor Bouley referred to requests from a variety of organizations that didn't want the City to compete with them, such as childcare and fitness organizations for example, when the Citywide Community Center was built.

Councilor Champlin indicated that one concern discussed by the Municipal Fee Committee, when considering the elimination of usage fees, was the problem with spaces being reserved and then never used by whomever reserved the space. Councilor Champlin indicated that he considers the creation of a dedicated multi-cultural room at the Citywide Community Center, or anywhere else within the City, a long-term goal to allow time to address the variety of issues that need addressing. Councilor Champlin stated that he would like the City to consider partnering

with a non-profit organization to manage the potential space which would eliminate the need for management by municipal staff. Councilor Champlin further stated that it was within his suggested long-term goals for the City to consider partnering with someone to create a multi-cultural center or welcoming center within the City.

Committee members discussed the need for additional space during peak hours when spaces are largely already reserved. Mayor Bouley reviewed current Concord School District rental rates and reiterated his thoughts that the City and school districts should work together to address community space needs. He further stated that when Concord School District most recently updated some of their elementary schools it was understood that the schools would be available for community use.

Public Comment

Victoria Carrington, a Concord resident, indicated that the City of Concord's website is difficult to navigate. Ms. Carrington spoke in support of including stakeholders as well as organizations skilled in providing web redesign services.

Jessica Livingston expressed her frustration with committee discussions, City government, the City's website, as well as current municipal policies and procedures. Ms. Livingston indicated she did not think the community was engaged, and she stated that she felt as though the community did not feel as if they had a voice. She encouraged committee members to include those in attendance at DEIJB committee meetings as they have been doing the work within the community for years.

Kate West, a Concord Heights resident, spoke in support of expanded public transportation and indicated how difficult it is to attend City meetings because there are no municipal complex bus stops. Ms. West spoke in support of additional bus stops, the addition of bike lanes in the downtown area, benches and coverings at all bus stops within the city, and better access to Council Chambers. Ms. West also spoke in support of municipal child care programs as well as municipal exercise facilities.

Joan Gilmore, a Beaver Meadow School area resident, referred to work done several years ago by the Welcoming Concord Initiative and stated that much of the work of the DEIJB Committee is attempting to do has been done. Ms. Gilmore encouraged committee members to refer back to that work instead of "reinventing the wheel"

Jessica Livingston spoke in support of the creation of a multi-cultural space and indicated she would like to see the committee move to approve that space today. She further stated that she would like the committee to move forward today with appointments, comprised of a diverse group of community members, to a broader DEIJB Steering Committee. Ms. Livingston expressed her opinion on the need to make the City's website more navigable.

Linda Purdy, Outreach Coordinator for 603 Legal Aide, spoke in support of expanded use of the Citywide Community Center. Ms. Purdy further stated she did not feel that the DEIJB committee needed to hire a consultant stating she thought there were people in attendance at the

meeting today that could easily provide consultant services. Ms. Purdy further stated that the \$140,000 in the City budget could fund current staff and/or additional staff to expand the hours of the Citywide Community Center.

Committee members discussed Councilor Rice Hawkins’s suggestion that members of the DEIJB Steering Committee should be paid a stipend. Community members in attendance at the meeting spoke in strong support of paying those appointed to a broader DEIJB Committee a stipend for their participation. Community members also indicated they did not feel a consultant was necessary. Mayor Bouley indicated that the only committee he knew that received any stipend was the Board of Assessors.

Charm Emiko spoke in support of the formation of a broader DEIJB Steering Committee as well as paying those that serve on the committee a stipend.

Melissa Hinebauch spoke in support of the creation of a DEIJB Steering Committee.

Cara Meeker, a Concord School Board member, spoke in support of a larger committee and further stated that if a consultant was hired, it would be important to provide guidance as to exactly what would be expected of a consultant.

Meredith Cooley spoke in support of making dynamic changes to the City’s website. Ms. Cooley indicated that, in her opinion, there was a lot of broken trust for municipal government within the City. Ms. Cooley also spoke in support of moving forward and acting on some of the short- and long-term goals as suggested by committee members.

Councilor Stacey Brown, speaking as a resident, indicated that Council has the ability to suspend their rules and act on potential appointments to a broader DEIJB Committee at their meeting to be held on August 14, 2023.

Committee members discussed membership of a broader DEIJB Committee indicating that representation from the following groups should be considered:

Change for Concord Renter(s)	Project Story	Disability Rights Community
LGBTQ Representation	School Board Members	Participants of Welcoming Concord
Multi-Cultural Festival Rep	Homeless Representation	Concord Family Health Center
Social Worker	Second Start	Citizen Training Representative
Teacher(s)	Veteran	Transportation Representative
Interfaith Council	Students	Islamic Center
Riverbend	Overcomers	Multi Language Representatives
Large Employer	Women’s Justice	Concord Housing
Citizenship Program Rep	Senior	Welcoming City Representation
Arts Community Rep	Municipal Staff	Creative Concord
	Indigenous Representative	Legal Aid Representative

Mayor Bouley encouraged anyone that had additional ideas about groups that should be represented and/or individuals that should be considered for appointment to send their ideas to City Clerk, Janice Bonenfant, rather than submitting them to DEIJB Committee members.

Councilor Rice Hawkins moved to establish a DEIJB Committee stipend for up to 30 members of the proposed committee at \$2,400 per year. Councilor Rice Hawkins clarified that the stipend would be \$50 per hour for approximately 4 hours per month for \$2,400 per member per year which totals \$72,000 annually. Councilor Rice Hawkins indicated that she felt that the proposed 30-member DEIJB Committee could easily either suggest a member of the committee serve as a DEIJB leader for the committee and/or recommend the City issue an RFP for a DEIJB Consultant. There was no second to the motion. Committee members did however discuss the suggestion of a stipend. Community members in attendance at the meeting spoke in strong support of providing members of a larger DEIJB Steering Committee a stipend. Mayor Bouley indicated he was not sure that providing a stipend to potential members was the direction he felt was necessary and further stated that he needed additional time to consider paying members of a DEIJB Steering Committee a stipend. Councilor Champlin noted his agreement with Mayor Bouley and indicated the motion seemed premature at this point. Councilor Champlin clarified that he would like to consider it at a later time.

6. Adjournment.

Action: The meeting was adjourned at 11:50 AM. Committee members indicated they would review their calendars to determine the next meeting date.

A true copy: I attest:

*Janice Bonenfant
City Clerk*