

**DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION COUNCIL  
STEERING COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES**

**April 1, 2024**

**Simsbury Public Library, Weatogue Room**

**CALL TO ORDER 6:05 pm**

**ROLL CALL**

Mary Margaret Girgenti, Sara Batchelder, Rick Brush, Mei Knight, Poorna Choudhuri, Cheryl Cook, Nicole Kodak, Alex Reger, Carol Clark-Flanagan, Tenesha Grant, Meg Evans, Rebekah Hatch

Tricia Munroe, Town Clerk

Marc Nelson, Franklyn Barrueco, Town Manager's Office

Kevin Beal, BOS Liaison

Taya Batchelder, Simsbury Public Schools Liaison

**LIAISON UPDATES**

1. Town Manager's Office – final stages budget process; public hearing April 3<sup>rd</sup>, likely continued to April 16.
2. Board of Selectmen Liaison – offered grant application support to identify 501(c)3 and write grant for Eversource Community DEI grant for Juneteenth.
3. Equity Council Liaison – DEIB week is this week. Guests can contact Taya to attend one of the 47 sessions. Tenesha's work got Simsbury Public Schools awarded a grant for \$96k for joint Hartford/Simsbury middle school summer program.
4. Library Liaison - not present. Council discussed success of Human Library event (below).

**PUBLIC AUDIENCE**

Matthew and Kirby in Scout Troop 174 attending public meeting to earn citizenship/ membership badge.

**UPDATE FROM CHAIRS**

Thank you to Trish Munroe, Town Clerk, for coming in person to hold swearing in ceremony for DEI Council members prior to the meeting.

**ACTION ITEMS**

1. Review and approve of minutes: March 4, 2024  
Alex moved to approve. MMG second. All in favor. Minutes pass.

## SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. **Housing** - We were invited by Melville Charitable Trust and Farmington Community Bank Foundation to present to the Housing funder groups (Simsbury and Milford) March 14<sup>th</sup>. 25 funders saw Simsbury Housing Package, BOS update presentation, and the BOS Resolution declaring racism a public health crisis. We spoke to them about our work and shared key learning: residents want to be involved and not have developers tell us what to do. Cheryl and Rick look forward to supporting Town Housing Advisory Committee.
2. **Events** – Human Library held Saturday March 23<sup>rd</sup> was a success. There was a line at the door for opening at 10 am. 67 readers, 10 Books, 11 Librarians, 4 hours. Reader and Book evaluations were extremely positive. Unanimous requests to repeat this event, valuing the conversations with people not otherwise held.

Juneteenth Celebration planning progressing well.

3. **Data** – Data SC forwarded the work review and specific municipal examples to BOS and Town Manager. Town Manager and BOS Liaison shared that BOS plans to finalize their priorities 4/15. The Data SC will await direction from BOS/Town Manager.

## NEW BUSINESS

1. **Social Connections program - For All Ages** started Collaboration to End Loneliness in CT -- Rick shared this with the Council. He attended the first of three events March 23<sup>rd</sup>.  
Tenesha shared a new HJMS Circle of Friends club – students meet new people and create friendships just began.  
Members discussed this initiative. Volunteering often best way to engage people socially isolated. Outreach and inclusion work needs to be personal to get people involved and participating. We need to brainstorm how to engage folks not part of a group already

Council is interested in collaborating with For All Ages and especially the Social Connections project – connect them with Sips & Salsa fall event and we have 3 groups interacting for this event.

BOS Liaison – feels in line with inclusion part of mission. Noted dearth of groups trying to be more inclusive and groups of isolated people needing interaction – opportunity for synergy.

## OLD BUSINESS

### ADJOURNMENT 7: 17

Carol Moved. Sara Seconded. Meeting adjourned.

**NEXT MEETING:** Monday, May 6, 6:00pm, Weatogue Room