



FAIRBANKS DIVERSITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
MAY 9, 2017 – 5:30 PM
FAIRBANKS CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
800 CUSHMAN STREET, FAIRBANKS, ALASKA



The Fairbanks Diversity Council (FDC) convened at 5:30 p.m. on the above date to conduct a Regular Meeting at the City Council Chambers, 800 Cushman Street, Fairbanks, Alaska, with Vice Chair Jeff Walters (Seat M) presiding and with the following members in attendance:

Members Present:

Shirley Lee, Seat B	Douglas Toelle, Seat J
Juanita Webb, Seat D	Jo Ann Borges, Seat K
Travis Cole, Seat E	Kelvin Lee, Seat O
Herbert Butler, Seat G	Angela Foster-Snow, HR Director
Rosalind Kan, Seat H	June Rogers, City Council Member
Marna Sanford, Seat I	

Members Absent:

Ana Maria Richards, Seat A (excused)	Rita Davis, Seat L (unexcused)
Montean Jackson, Seat C (excused)	Amber Taylor, Seat N (excused)
Trina Bailey, Seat F (unexcused)	Mayor Matherly, Chair (excused)

Also Present:

D. Danyielle Snider, City Clerk	Christina Rowlett, HR Admin
Dan Welborn, Deputy Police Chief	

CALL TO ORDER & READING OF THE FDC MISSION STATEMENT

Mr. Lee read aloud the FDC Mission Statement.

Vice Chair Walters introduced new members, Juanita Webb and Herbert Butler. Each of the new members gave a brief bio about themselves. Vice Chair Walters asked Ms. Rogers to speak to City Ordinance No. 6045 in regard to FDC composition which was recently adopted by the City Council. Ms. Rogers spoke to the changes in the FDC ordinance and cautioned against reducing the overall membership of the FDC.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Butler, seconded by Ms. Sanford, moved to APPROVE the Agenda.

Vice Chair Walters called for objection to APPROVING the Agenda and, hearing none, so ORDERED.

CITIZENS COMMENTS (Limited to 3 Minutes)

Frank Turney, 329 6th Avenue – Mr. Turney spoke to the handouts that were distributed regarding jury discrimination. He spoke to the Foster v. Chapman case as it related to jury discrimination. He recalled that in 1997, three African-American jurors were eliminated from his own court case, and he spoke to his observation that there are rarely Native Alaskans in the jury pool. He encouraged FDC members to research jury discrimination, and he stated that there is a great deal of information available on the topic. Mr. Turney stated that for trials in Fairbanks, chances are an all-Caucasian jury will be selected.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

- a) Regular Meeting Minutes of April 11, 2017

Mr. Toelle, seconded by **Mr. Cole**, moved to APPROVE the April 11 meeting minutes.

Vice Chair Walters called for objection to APPROVING the Minutes and, hearing none, so ORDERED.

FAIRBANKS POLICE DEPARTMENT & HUMAN RESOURCES REPORTS

Deputy Chief Welborn gave a brief report on FPD vacancies and staffing struggles. He shared that Officer Elzey has decided to stay on for a while instead of retiring. He stated that FPD has had to pull in every available officer to deal with the many incidents that have occurred recently in Fairbanks. Members asked questions of Deputy Chief Welborn. Deputy Chief Welborn spoke briefly to mutual aid among local law enforcement agencies. He stated that there are currently ten officer vacancies at FPD, two recruits in the academy, and four in background. When asked by **Mr. Lee** whether FPD's wages were competitive, Deputy Chief Welborn stated that the Public Safety Employees Association (PSEA) labor contract is at the Supreme Court level right now. He stated that he and Chief Jewkes have been thinking outside the box on ways to retain employees, such as using salary savings to fund an annual retention bonus for employees. He stated that FPD is currently in crisis management mode right now; he stated that they estimate the department will not be at full staff until the year 2020. FDC members and Deputy Chief Welborn discussed overtime, competitive wage packages, PSEA insurance premiums, and community policing efforts.

Ms. Foster-Snow provided the FDC with a City-wide hiring and vacancy report, and she invited FDC members to participate in public safety interviews. She stated that she is working on an FPD recruitment bonus plan to introduce to the City Council that would help offset relocation costs for recruits from the Lower 48. **Ms. Foster-Snow** spoke to the stringent process that recruits must go through in order to be hired at FPD; she stated that some candidates do not fully complete the process or meet all the requirements. She spoke to efforts to increase the applicant pool and attract recruits. She stated that the best way to gain new recruits is by word of mouth.

Vice Chair Walters requested that New Business Item (a) be moved up on the Agenda to be discussed before the Diversity Topic of the Month. No members objected to the change.

NEW BUSINESS

- a) Jury Selection Process – Guest Speaker Justin Racette, Assistant Public Defender

Assistant Public Defender Justin Racette explained how jury pools in Alaska are selected; he stated that pool selection is linked to Permanent Fund Dividend (PFD) applications. He explained how the whole jury selection process works and to the system by which jurors are dismissed. He stated that he does not have demographic information for jury pools in Alaska.

Members asked Mr. Racette questions and the group discussed the different aspects of and problems with the jury selection process, especially as it effects minorities. **Mr. Butler** pointed

out that jury discrimination is a long-standing issue, and there is nothing that can be done except for individuals to become more educated about it. Mr. Racette stated that individuals may be dismissed for a number of reasons, and that a common reason is because they are close to someone in or related somehow to law enforcement. Members discussed with Mr. Racette the importance of an individual being judged by his/her peers.

Vice Chair Walters suggested that a letter be drafted to let the court know that the FDC exists and has discussed issues regarding jury selection. He stated that the item could be rolled to be discussed under Unfinished Business at the next FDC meeting.

Mr. Butler left the meeting at 7:12 p.m., and Mr. Toelle left the meeting at 7:13 p.m.

Vice Chair Walters, seconded by **Ms. Rogers**, moved to POSTPONE the Diversity Topic of the Month, Invocations at Public Meetings, to the next FDC meeting.

Vice Chair Walters called for objection and, hearing none, so ORDERED.

b) Term Limits and Duties of Vice Chair

Vice Chair Walters stated that he does not think the Vice Chair term should be for three years; he stated that he would like the FDC to review the role and duties of the Vice Chair and discuss it at the next meeting.

c) Diversity Council Media Relations Policy

Vice Chair Walters stated that there has been some confusion about what members should do if they are contacted by the media. He indicated that it may be helpful to put a policy in place.

Ms. Rogers stated that in her experience, she only speaks to the media from a personal standpoint unless she has direction or authority from the City Council or FDC to speak on behalf of the body.

Clerk Snider stated that there may not be a need for a policy. She stated that as a general rule, members should not speak on behalf of the FDC to the media unless they have been directed by the FDC to do so. She stated that members may redirect media to the City Mayor's Office or invite them to attend an FDC meeting. She stated that members should feel free to give out general information about the FDC.

d) Parliamentary Procedure Overview

Clerk Snider referenced the handout on parliamentary procedure in the agenda packet. She stated that it is an enormous topic. She requested that members review the information provided, and contact her if they have any questions.

e) City Ordinance No. 6045, Amending FDC Composition (Informational Only)

This item was discussed near the start of the meeting following the introduction of new members.

FDC COMMITTEE REPORTS

Vice Chair Walters asked Ms. Webb if she had been added to a Committee. Ms. Webb stated that she had not; she requested to be added to the Policies and Procedures Committee.

Ms. Sanford stated that the Policies and Procedures Committee will begin reviewing existing City policies, then job descriptions, and possibly budget items. She stated that she would like to look at City Council and Borough Assembly meeting agendas in advance and be proactive.

Ms. Foster-Snow stated that the Education and Outreach/Media & Communications Committee met and identified the items they need to address per the Diversity Action Plan (DAP). She stated that they discussed possible outreach during the Golden Days events. She stated that the group is just getting started.

FDC MEMBERS COMMENTS

Mr. Lee stated that on May 22 there will be a food program for kids at the JP Jones Community Development Center starting at 11:30. He stated that the Prosperity House will be holding an open house from 2 to 4 p.m. on May 19; he stated that Mayor Matherly and others would speak at the event.

Ms. Borges spoke to the increase in local crime; she asked everyone to watch out for each other to help keep the community safe.

Mr. Cole stated that it is good that the jury issues are being discussed. He encouraged folks to start positive groups and activities in their community, and he stressed the importance of teaching respect.

Ms. Kan expressed concern about the number of items on the next meeting agenda. She stated that she would like to discuss the invocation issue at the next meeting, but that she does not want the meeting to be too lengthy.

Ms. Webb stated that she is honored and excited to serve on the FDC. She asked for confirmation on the meeting times for the Accessibility Committee, and she confirmed that she would participate on both the Policies and Procedures Committee as well as the Accessibility Committee. Ms. Snider confirmed that the Accessibility Committee meetings will take place on the third Thursday of every month at 4 p.m. in City Council Chambers.

Ms. Sanford stated that she believes it is part of the FDC's mission is to provide advice and recommendations to the local governing bodies and that addressing the invocation issue is appropriate. She shared that U.S. Senator Dan Sullivan is in town and will host a Town Hall meeting in North Pole on Friday, May 12.

Ms. Rogers expressed thanks for the good meeting and discussion. She suggested having a review of the Open Meetings Act (OMA). Clerk Snider stated that it may be best to have a review in the fall time after new members are seated.

Ms. Lee welcomed the new members. She asked who would be presenting the invocation issue at the next meeting. **Ms. Sanford** stated that she could reach out to Van Lawrence, the Borough ordinance sponsor, for information.

Vice Chair Walters stated that he recently attended the Gathering of Remembrance ceremony recently to remember the victims and families of unsolved homicides. He stated that Mr. Cole drummed at the event and Mayor Matherly and Chief Jewkes were present; he commented that the event was well done. He asked about the dates of Juneteenth and the Intertribal Powwow and about the involvement of the FDC at those events. **Mr. Lee** stated that the Juneteenth Celebration would take place on June 16 and 17. **Mr. Cole** stated that the Intertribal Powwow usually takes place in July the week before the World Eskimo Indian Olympics (WEIO). **Vice Chair Walters** recommended that the Education and Outreach/Media & Communications Committee start creating a calendar of local events.

Ms. Foster-Snow stated that a public member arrived after public comment and would like to speak to the FDC. **Vice Chair Walters** allowed the citizen to speak.

Will Biederman – Mr. Biederman stated that he is a product of a plea agreement. He stated that he was incarcerated for 14 years for a DUI; he commented that a murderer he knows only an 11-year sentence. He stated that something is drastically wrong with the system. He stated that he will be released in six days and that he plans to start a new business. Mr. Biederman stated that he has three children who are the blessing of his life, and he wants to raise them in a safe community. He spoke in support of bringing back Native-based programs for those who are incarcerated. He spoke to the problems he has seen in the halfway house, particularly with some of the staff; he stated that Natives are shunned, and they operate on a “good ole boys” system.

Ms. Rogers and **Mr. Cole** discussed the Native-based programs with Mr. Biederman. Mr. Biederman asked for the support of the FDC.

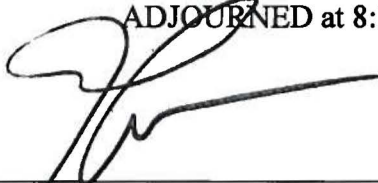
MEETING DATES

The next Regular Meeting of the FDC is scheduled for June 13, 2017.


ADJOURNMENT @ 8:10 p.m.

Mr. Cole, seconded by **Mr. Lee**, moved to ADJOURN the meeting.

Hearing no objection, **Vice Chair Walters** declared the meeting
ADJOURNED at 8:10 p.m.



Mayor Jim Matherly, Chair



D. Danyielle Snider, CMC, City Clerk

Transcribed by: DS