



FAIRBANKS DIVERSITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
JUNE 11, 2019 – 5:30 P.M.
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 Mayor Jim Matherly presiding and with the following members in attendance:

Members Present: Lisa Slayton, Seat B Rita Davis, Seat L
 Montean Jackson, Seat C Kelvin Lee, Seat O (arrived at 5:36 p.m.)
 Juanita Webb, Seat D June Rogers, Councilmember
 David Rucker, Seat G Angela Foster-Snow, HR Director
 Sara Harriger, Seat K

Members Absent: Zee Nace, Seat A Stephen Greenlaw, Seat I
 Shelissa Thomas, Seat E (excused) Douglas Toelle, Seat J (excused)
 Svetlana Nuss, Seat F (excused) Jeff Walters, Seat M (excused)
 Rosalind Kan, Seat H

Also Present: D. Danyielle Snider, City Clerk Nancy Reeder, Chief of Police
 Mike Meeks, Chief of Staff Christine Evans, Victims Advocate

CALL TO ORDER & READING OF THE FDC MISSION STATEMENT

Chair Matherly called the meeting to order and asked Clerk Snider to read the Mission Statement.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Matherly led the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was not approved as there was no quorum.

CITIZENS' COMMENTS (Limited to 3 Minutes)

Helenmarie Matesi, P.O. Box 82818, Fairbanks – Ms. Matesi thanked the FDC for the opportunity to speak. She reminded everyone that the Juneteenth celebration would be held Saturday, June 15 at the Bernice Allridge Park from noon to 5 p.m. Ms. Matesi stated that there was a recent situation at Tanana Middle School involving the bullying of Black students. She stated that the situation escalated, and a White student announced on social media that he would bring a gun to school and kill all the “Ns”. She stated that a Black mother pulled her child out of the school and appealed to the NAACP as a result. Ms. Matesi explained that she and four others went before the Fairbanks North Star Borough (FNSB) School Board and asked to be assured that there would be staffing changes and transparency in their dealings with the issue to ensure that no children have to deal with that type of harassment. She stated that at the end of that evening, there was no comment forthcoming on the issue. She requested that the FDC issue a letter or a position statement

directed to the School Board asking for transparency so the public can be assured that there is an intervention plan in place. She spoke in support of a vocal no-tolerance policy. She stated that a teacher testified on behalf of the students and begged the Board to support the children and legislation that would help that type of situation. She stated that there was silence and no empathy or apologies from the Board.

Ms. Slayton asked Ms. Matesi to provide the FDC with a breakdown of what happened. Ms. Matesi stated that she does not know much. She stated that children had been being harassed from November to March. She stated that when the situation culminated into the internet threat, Black children were put into a classroom. She explained that the principle was removed, and Charlie Scott was dispatched there. She shared that a letter came to the NAACP Facebook page from the mother asking for help. Ms. Matesi stated that is when she became involved. She stated that she would like to know how she can help in the situation. She stated that she was the only Black student at a school in 1964, and she was not called the “N” word.

Ms. Jackson asked Mr. Rucker to address the issue that Ms. Matesi raised in his 5-minute presentation.

Frank Turney, 1434 Lacey Street, B, Fairbanks – Mr. Turney stated that he has been bringing up the issue of racial discrimination in jury selection in Alaska for years. He spoke about the Baston Supreme Court case which ruled that the dismissal of jurors without cause based solely on race is prohibited; he stated that later, the court added gender. He stated that it is a big issue, and he has not seen it on the FDC agenda. He indicated that he would like to see the FDC pass a resolution regarding jury discrimination, and he would also like to see a resolution go before the Borough Assembly. Mr. Turney spoke briefly to police shootings and in support of the use of non-lethal weapons by police. He discussed the shooting of Cody Eyre, a young Native man, and stated that police shot the man 40 times.

Lisa McEnulty, 172A University Avenue, Fairbanks – Ms. McEnulty stated that she attended the Council meeting the previous night. She stated she is a UAF student and a substance abuse counselor. She indicated that the media does not give enough attention to the shootings of Native men by police. She stated that 70% of Caucasian women do not know that racism exists, and she stated that what the FDC does really affects the Native community. She stated her husband died March 31 on Geist Road after police shot him 13 times. She stated that her husband had a gun to his head and was saying “sorry”, and when he shot the gun in the air, police shot him. She questioned whether police have enough training and field experience and stated that Alaska Natives and Native Americans are killed at a higher rate than any other race in the U.S. She stated that she attended a rally recently for missing and murdered indigenous women and stated that Alaska Native women and Native American women are more likely to be sexually assaulted or killed than women of any other race in the U.S. She stated that the Native community is suffering in many ways, and she stated that people do not understand unless they have the same color as her. She spoke in support of mandatory mental health training for police officers, and she stated that racism and discrimination still exist, even in the justice system. She stated that Native people will no longer be quiet.

Angel Stickman, 172A University Avenue, Fairbanks – Ms. Stickman stated that police need better training to deal with people who are mentally ill or are in crisis. She stated that police shot at her brother-in-law then dragged him on the cement while he was taking his last breaths. She stated that Native Americans and Alaska Natives are being killed in police encounters more than any other racial group, yet the killings are going almost entirely unreported by the media. She stated that the police who investigate shootings afterwards are the same police who shoot people. Ms. Stickman stated the shootings are not justifiable. She stated that police are supposed to keep people safe and questioned why they do not make her and others feel safe. She stated that it needs to stop because it is wrong, and many people are dying. Ms. Stickman stated that her son is Native, and she fears for his safety in the future. She stated that she is a year away

from a degree in social work, and she spoke to the need to educate students in the schools about real Alaska Native history.

Ms. Rogers asked Ms. Stickman for her contact information. **Ms. Rogers** stated that she will contact the News Miner and request that they contact Ms. Stickman.

Ms. Webb stated that she is part of a group called Wallbusters which passed legislation addressing police training. She asked both Ms. Stickman and Ms. McEnulty for their contact information.

Julie Smith, 717 9th Avenue, Fairbanks – Ms. Smith introduced her son who is 1/4 Native American. She stated that her son looks very Native, and he is tall for his age of 12. She stated that there are boys younger than him who are being stopped, questioned, and harassed by police officers. She expressed concern for her son and others, no matter who they are.

Hearing no more requests for Citizens' Comments, **Mayor Matherly** declared public testimony closed.

Ms. Slayton asked if she could ask a question to the body. **Mayor Matherly** replied that the order of business needs to be followed. **Ms. Slayton** continued anyway and read aloud Fairbanks General Code (FGC) Section 2-234. She requested that Ms. Jackson or Ms. Harriger, in their capacities as Chair and Vice Chair, respectively, take over chairing the meeting instead of the Mayor. Clerk Snider clarified that, according to the FGC, the Mayor is the Chair of the FDC. **Ms. Rogers** stated she has served on the FDC since its inception and that the Mayor is the Chair of the FDC and presides over meetings; she stated that the Vice Chairs preside over meetings when the Mayor is absent. **Ms. Jackson** and **Mr. Lee** concurred with Ms. Rogers.

Ms. Slayton stated that she has served on the FDC for two years, and it has not always been that way. She stated that the Mayor has missed a lot of meetings and indicated that the Mayor has only recently taken interest in the FDC. She stated that she would like to see less interest in the FDC on the Mayor's part; she stated she has lost confidence in him and anything he says. **Ms. Slayton** stated she was proud to join the FDC in the beginning, but she has been disturbed by words and actions of the Mayor. She spoke specifically to her disappointment over the Mayor's veto of Ordinance No. 6093. She expressed her belief that Mayor Matherly knew throughout the process that he would veto the ordinance if it was adopted, yet he dragged the FDC through meeting after meeting. She stated that he has yet to address the FDC about the issue. **Chair Matherly** interjected and stated that the FDC needs to stick to the agenda. **Ms. Slayton**, speaking directly to Chair Matherly, stated that his agenda will only be around for a few more months. **Mr. Rucker** stated that is taking it a little too far; **Ms. Slayton** apologized.

MAYOR'S COMMENTS & REPORT

a) FDC Member Appointment Process

Due to the Clerk's oversight, this item was addressed after Calendar of Events.

Chair Matherly stated that the Mayor is the Chair of the FDC, and he has attended 18 of the 25 FDC meetings that have occurred since he has been Mayor. He stated that there are times his schedule does not allow him to attend FDC meetings. He stated that in his absence, the Vice Chair or Second Vice Chair presides over meetings. He stated that he would be happy to meet with Ms. Slayton if she would like; **Ms. Slayton** declined. **Chair Matherly** stated that he has recently received some inquiries about the FDC appointment process, and he asked Ms. Foster-Snow to speak to the process.

Ms. Foster-Snow, referencing the handout in the agenda packet, reviewed the appointment process, step-by-step. She stated that the Mayor's Office works closely with the City Clerk who collects applications and forwards them to her and the Mayor. She stated that folks can apply to serve on the FDC through the City website. She stated that she and the Mayor interview applicants, and recently a change was made to include the Vice Chair or Second Vice Chair in that interview process. She stated that applicants are invited to attend FDC meetings to meet members and see what the FDC is about. **Ms. Foster-Snow** stated that the FDC may help the Mayor identify communities or groups that are not well-represented on the FDC or communities that may be over-represented on the body. She mentioned that currently, the military and the Alaska Native communities are under-represented on the FDC. She clarified that applicants remain the applicant pool if there are not any vacancies at the time they apply or if they are not appointed right away. She stated that there are no current, City-appointed vacancies on the FDC, but there may be soon. **Ms. Foster-Snow** stated that once the Mayor selects a candidate, the appointment must be confirmed by the City Council.

Ms. Harriger asked about the FNSB's appointment process for FDC members. **Ms. Foster-Snow** stated that there is one current Borough-appointed vacancy, and the Borough Mayor appoints with confirmation by the Assembly. Clerk Snider stated that to her knowledge the Borough has had difficulty getting FDC applicants. She stated that the Borough appointment process is similar to the City's, and the City has shared its applicant pool with the Borough Mayor's Office in the past. **Ms. Rogers** encouraged members to bring up the issue when reporting at FNSB Assembly meetings. **Ms. Jackson** thanked City staff for responding to complaints and questions from the public.

FIVE-MINUTE PRESENTATIONS (Representatives from: City Council, Fairbanks North Star Borough, Military, Indigenous People, and FNSB School District)

Ms. Jackson requested that Mr. Lee, as an FDC Borough appointee, provide FNSB updates in the future to help bridge the gap between the FDC and the Borough. **Mr. Lee** agreed and stated that he will also let Mr. Walters, the other Borough appointee, know.

Mr. Rucker stated that school is out, but the School District administration is still working on many issues. He stated that his office, the EEO office, has been looking into the events that were brought up earlier in the meeting.

Ms. Jackson asked Mr. Rucker to talk a little bit about the district's Diversity Committee. She also requested that Mr. Rucker speak about the Tanana Middle School issue brought up earlier.

Mr. Rucker stated that there are a number of projects just beginning, and the district is moving toward putting diversity and inclusion into everything it does. He stated that the district's Diversity Committee is made up of about 15 members, and there are currently a couple of vacancies; he invited anyone interested to apply. He stated that the group talks through issues and makes recommendations to Superintendent Dr. Karen Gaborik. **Mr. Rucker** stated that he deals with not only EEO-related issues, but also civil rights issues as they relate to students. He stated that he began interviewing students a day after the incident at Tanana Middle School to find out what had been happening. He stated that there were other events that culminated that day, including an incident where a knife was found. He stated that a number of African-American students spoke with the school principle that day and on days following the incident; he stated the students reported they had been subjected to a lot of racial taunts and slurs. **Mr. Rucker** stated that as a result of his investigation, the students responsible were given consequences. He stated a new school principle will start in the fall, and the District is still reaching out to people, including the NAACP, to ensure

that school is a safe place for all students to learn and interact. He spoke to future goals and trainings, such as education on cultural awareness, and he stated that he is very optimistic.

Ms. Jackson asked Mr. Rucker whether the District has a no tolerance policy in regard to the type of rhetoric used by students that was mentioned earlier. **Mr. Rucker** replied that the District has had a no-tolerance policy for some time; he stated that the problem in this particular situation is that the students did not tell their parents or staff about what they were going through at school.

Ms. Rogers stated that the young women who testified earlier also testified before the City Council the previous evening. She stated that it hurts her heart to hear those things. She stated that she grew up in Fairbanks in an Inupiaq heritage and, sadly, this is not a new problem. She stated that it is not just the School District that needs to work on these problems, the entire community does. She stated that she would be happy to contact the News Miner on behalf of the two young women.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- a) FDC Representation at Juneteenth (June 15), Midnight Sun Festival (June 23), and Golden Days Parade (July 20)

Mayor Matherly stated that he will be attending the Juneteenth event on Saturday.

Ms. Jackson stated that someone left Juneteenth flyers on the table. She stated that Friday night there is a senior and veterans dinner at UAF to kick off the Juneteenth event. She stated that the picnic will be held on Saturday from noon to 5 p.m. at Allridge Park between 25th and 26th Street in South Fairbanks. She stated there will be booths, free food, music, and fun; she invited everyone to attend. **Ms. Davis** clarified that the park is located on Wilson Street.

Ms. Jackson stated that FDC members will wear badges at the event that say, "Ask me about the Fairbanks Diversity Council" and instead of sitting at a table at the Juneteenth event, members can walk around and socialize with folks.

Mayor Matherly talked about the FDC's presence at previous Golden Days events. He stated that he will not be able to join the FDC at a table this year because he will be in the parade. **Ms. Rogers** stated that the spot the FDC used last year near the Westmark Hotel was a good location.

From the audience, Ms. Matesi announced that there would be a Candidate Open House and "How to Run for Public Office" workshop at 9 a.m., Saturday, June 29 at the FNSB Assembly Chambers.

Ms. Slayton shared that June is Pride Month, and there are a lot of related events happening in the community.

From the audience, Ms. Smith shared that the Pride Fest would take place June 15 and 16 at the Ester Community Park. She stated more information can be found at fairbanks.com.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

- a) Regular Meeting Minutes of April 9, 2019

The minutes could not be approved due to lack of a quorum.

HUMAN RESOURCES REPORT

Ms. Foster-Snow stated she is excited to announce that the HR Department will soon roll out an electronic application process for City employment. She stated that the system will allow users to create a login and an account with multiple capabilities. She stated that the recruitment bonuses approved by the City Council for the Police and Dispatch Departments are working, and there are a number of recent applicants to the Dispatch Department. She stated that Dispatch has been understaffed and needs relief from overtime. She shared that one accounts payable position has opened up and will be advertised internally for 5 days starting the following day.

DIVERSITY TOPIC OF THE MONTH

a) Introduction of Police Chief Reeder and FPD Victim's Advocate

This item was addressed at the end of the meeting, just prior to adjournment.

Chief of Police Nancy Reeder introduced herself and stated that she came to Alaska in 1980 when she was stationed in Anchorage with the Air Force. She stated that she served as a police officer at the Anchorage Police Department (APD) for 35 years and was a Lieutenant when she recently left the department. She stated she has vast experience and knowledge in police work, and she wants to share that with Fairbanks. She stated she looks forward to meeting people, learning about the community, and working together.

Victim's Advocate Christina Evans introduced herself and stated that she is a part of pilot program through Victims of Justice, a program that has been in Anchorage for 25 years. She stated that she is a longtime Fairbanksan. She stated that her position is housed at FPD, but she is an employee of Victims for Justice and not a City employee. She stated that her program advocates for victims of violent crimes other than crimes that involve an intimate partner.

Ms. Jackson asked Chief Reeder for her ideas on how to recruit individuals for the police department from marginalized or unrepresented groups. She also asked about her ideas on how to build healthy relationships in the community so that people feel safe and supported by the police.

Chief Reeder stated she believes the answers to both of those questions are intertwined. She stated that FPD personnel are not representative of the community, and that is at the top of her recruitment agenda. She indicated that she has many ideas about that, such as going into schools to talk to students about law enforcement. She stated that she does not want anyone to fear the police, and she appreciates what the two young ladies had to say. Chief Reeder spoke to the need for transparency; she stated that there are going to be things that FPD may not be able to talk about during an investigation, but she wants to be as transparent as possible. She encouraged people to participate in FPD's ride-along program.

Ms. Jackson spoke to the "Coffee with a Cop" event. She stated that not everyone drinks coffee and spoke to the need to reach and communicate with underserved or marginalized individuals in the community. Chief Reeder expressed agreement with Ms. Jackson. She mentioned other possible events to include the community such as an idea for "Pizza with a Po-Po". Chief Reeder spoke more about perception and building bridges between police and citizens. She stated she believes Fairbanks is a great City, and FPD is a great department. She stated that everyone is in this together, and everyone can help recruit for FPD.

Ms. Rogers referenced the “Run from the Cops” event. She indicated that the name does not send a good message to the community, especially since some people fear the cops. Chief Reeder stated that it may be a good event, but she is sensitive to the concern and may consider renaming the event.

Mr. Rucker invited Chief Reeder and FPD officers to participate when the School District rolls out its National Coalition Building Institute (NCBI) initiative in September. He stated that the District would reach out to FPD at a later date.

Mr. Lee stated that he recently witnessed Victim’s Advocate Christine Evans help a woman in the community and walk her through the process, and he thanked Ms. Evans for that. He stated that he came from Anchorage and has been in Fairbanks for 5 years. He stated that he had a hard time not saying to people, “Well that’s not how we do it in Anchorage.” He asked Chief Reeder if she thought that would be an issue for her. Chief Reeder stated that she might say “we” sometimes when referring to her experiences in Anchorage. She stated that she believes the lessons she learned there would be a help, not a hindrance. She stated that she will have to be conscious of the issue when speaking to her staff at FPD.

Mr. Lee commended the selection of Ms. Reeder as the new Chief of Police. He stated Fairbanks needed some fresh blood, and he spoke in favor of transparency. Chief Reeder thanked Mr. Lee; she stated that nothing may be wrong at FPD, but she will take a look at everything to see if changes should be made. She stated that a lack of transparency leads to a belief of secrecy and a break in communication.

Ms. Jackson expressed hope that Chief Reeder would be a regular presence at FDC meetings. She stated it is a wonderful way for community members to hear reports and updates. She gave an open invitation to Ms. Evans also. Chief Reeder promised to attend as many meetings as she can.

Ms. Webb stated that an audience member has asked to make comments to Chief Reeder. **Chair Matherly** stated that there would be a brief social hour following the meeting. He stated that he would rather not put Chief Reeder on the spot. The audience member spoke out; **Mr. Lee** and **Mr. Rucker** agreed with Chair Matherly that it would not be appropriate to open the floor for audience members at that time. **Chair Matherly** stated that the meeting will soon adjourn, and the FDC will continue with its agenda.

Ms. Rogers stated that Ms. Reeder provided genuine responses throughout the interview process for the Police Chief position and sought out her truth before she spoke. **Ms. Rogers** spoke highly of the new Chief. She stated it is good that the two young women have come to meetings, and she encouraged them to keep coming.

NEW BUSINESS

- a) Set Work Session Date for Review of Diversity Action Plan

This item was addressed following the Human Resources Report.

Chair Matherly stated that some members of the FDC have expressed an interest in and a need for the FDC to review the Diversity Action Plan (DAP). He stated that the Clerk could send out some potential dates for a Work Session to members to help determine the best time to meet. **Ms. Jackson** stated that she and Ms. Harriger discussed steps forward and agreed that the DAP should be reviewed annually to make sure that it remains current. She stated that she would like to hold a DAP Work Session on a Saturday, possibly in the morning. **Ms. Rogers** requested that the proposed meeting dates occur after the fair in

August. Clerk Snider stated that she would send out a Doodle Poll to help identify the best date to hold a Work Session.

FDC COMMITTEE REPORTS

There were no Committee reports.

FDC MEMBERS' COMMENTS

Mr. Rucker stated he appreciates that the Mayor and City Council reappointed him to the FDC.

Ms. Rogers thanked Mr. Rucker for serving and stated that he has a great deal of expertise.

Ms. Harriger thanked members of the public for their testimony.

Ms. Jackson echoed Ms. Harriger's comment.

Mr. Lee thanked the two young ladies for testifying. He stated that he appreciates the position the Mayor holds and encouraged that the FDC always shows respect for the Mayor, even when members may not agree with him. He spoke to the importance of showing the public that the FDC respects its leader, and he thanked Chair Matherly for leading the group.

Ms. Slayton thanked the two young women who spoke; she stated that it must have been difficult to share. She stated that she shares their concerns.

Ms. Davis stated she had no comments.

Ms. Webb thanked all those who testified. She spoke to the importance of community support of the FDC. She thanked Ms. Foster-Snow and Clerk Snider for the work they do.

Chair Matherly moved back on the agenda to the Diversity Topic of the Month, the Introduction of Police Chief Reeder and the FPD Victim's Advocate.

MEETING DATES

a) The next Regular Meeting of the FDC is scheduled for Tuesday, July 9, 2019

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Matherly called for adjournment and declared the meeting ADJOURNED at 7:16 p.m.



Jim Matherly, Mayor/Chair



D. Danyielle Snider, CMC, City Clerk

Transcribed by: DS