



FAIRBANKS DIVERSITY COUNCIL  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
APRIL 13, 2021, 5:30 – 7:00 P.M.  
HELD VIA ZOOM WEBINAR AND AT  
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 via Zoom Webinar and at the City Council Chambers, 800 Cushman Street, Fairbanks, Alaska, with **Mayor Jim Matherly** presiding (via Zoom, left at 5:39 p.m.) and with the following members in attendance [Z = Zoom; P = In Person]:

Members Present: (Z) Kennita Williams, Seat A (Z) Doug Toelle, Seat J  
(Z) Robert Dorton, Seat B (Z) Sara Harriger, Seat K  
(Z) Juanita Webb, Seat D (P) Angela Foster-Snow, HR Dir.  
(Z) Andrew Aquino, Seat G (Z) June Rogers, Councilmember

Members Absent: Jose Martinez II, Seat C Vacant, Seat H  
Shelissa Thomas, Seat E (excused) Kelvin Lee, Seat I  
Rita Davis, Seat F

Also Present: (P) Ron Dupee, Police Chief (P) D. Danyielle Snider, City Clerk  
(P) Rick Sweet, Deputy Police Chief (P) Mike Meeks, Chief of Staff  
(Z) Kristi Merideth, Dispatch Mgr. (Z) Tim Zinza, Engineer III  
(Z) Myrlene Wheelock, Lead Operator (Z) Kirsten Loaiza, Engineer II  
(Z) Jill Copeland, FPD Officer (Z) Amy Davis, FPD Lieutenant

**CALL TO ORDER & READING OF THE FDC MISSION STATEMENT**

At the direction of Chair Matherly, Clerk Snider read the mission statement and called the roll.

**Chair Matherly** stated that the plan at the last meeting was to honor women working at the City in roles filled traditionally by males, but there was no quorum at the meeting. He stated he will need to leave the meeting to fulfill another obligation, so Second Vice Chair Williams, Clerk Snider, and Ms. Foster-Snow will guide the meeting. He introduced several City staff attending via Zoom who would be presenting to the FDC later in the meeting. **Chair Matherly** stated that the City has a strong presence of diversity, and City staff recently participated in diversity training. **Chair Matherly** excused himself from the meeting.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

FDC members recited the Pledge of Allegiance together.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**Mr. Aquino**, seconded by **Ms. Webb**, moved to APPROVE the Agenda.

There being no objection or proposed changes, the Agenda was APPROVED.

**CITIZENS' COMMENTS** (Limited to 3 Minutes)

Clerk Snider stated that there were no citizens in the Council Chambers. An opportunity was provided for citizens to comment via Zoom, and no citizens wished to provide comments.

**MAYOR & CITY STAFF REPORTS**

a) Introduction of Chief of Police Ron Dupee and Deputy Chief Rick Sweet

**Ms. Foster-Snow** introduced everyone to the newly confirmed Chief of Police, Ron Dupee, and Deputy Police Chief, Rick Sweet. She stated that the hiring and selection process was daunting, and she spoke highly of both Dupee and Sweet. She shared that Mr. Aquino was a part of the hiring committee. She turned the floor over to Chief Dupee.

Chief Dupee stated he is excited to be present to support Ofc. Jill Copeland and Lt. Amy Davis for their presentations later in the meeting. He stated he is glad to have DC Sweet at his side, and he stated that they are excited to work with the FDC to achieve goals for the City of Fairbanks.

DC Sweet stated that he and Chief Dupee are committed to following through with the plan they shared with the FDC a few months ago. He stated that the Fairbanks Police Department (FPD) is working with the Administration to get training on local diversity awareness.

**Ms. Foster-Snow** stated that when she began at the City six years ago, there was only one female police officer at the FPD, and now there are four.

**Second Vice Chair Williams** congratulated both Chief Dupee and DC Sweet.

b) Honoring Women Working at the City

**Ms. Foster-Snow** introduced each of the following City employees before they spoke to the FDC:

Amy Davis, Investigations Lieutenant, FPD – Lt. Davis stated she has been with the FPD for nearly a year. She stated she spent 10 years of her career in Bethel, and she feels fortunate to have not experienced challenges in her career with being a female in a field typically dominated by males. She stated she looks forward to working with the Fairbanks community, as she served on various boards in Bethel. Lt. Davis stated she has specialized in sexual assault and domestic violence cases as well as homelessness.

Jill Copeland, Police Officer, FPD – Ofc. Copeland indicated that her family recently relocated to Fairbanks, so she got to experience -30 degrees pretty quickly. She stated she has been with the FPD since the beginning of February, but she spent about 10 years as a police officer in San Diego and another year-and-a-half as a police officer in Daytona Beach. She stated that she has been impressed with her peers and supervisors at the FPD, and she feels that she has been treated with a lot of respect. Ofc. Copeland stated she has also been fortunate in her career to have been embraced

within her field, and she feels that competence and dependability help a person gain respect. She thanked the FDC for having her.

Kirsten Loiza, Engineer II, Engineering Department – Ms. Loiza stated she has been with the Engineering Department for nearly four years, and she is primarily involved in the design and construction for capital improvement projects, which includes the reconstruction of roads, sidewalks, and utilities. She stated that the City of Fairbanks has a diverse environment, and she has felt supported by her supervisors and coworkers. Ms. Loiza stated that her supervisor, Robert Pristash, has pushed her to gain engineering experience and expand her role and responsibilities. She stated she loves math and science and solving problems, and she knew that engineering was the career path for her. She stated that she hopes other women who pursue engineering as a career are as rewarded as she has been in her choice of career.

Myrlene Wheelock, Lead Operator, Public Works Department – Ms. Wheelock stated she has worked at the City of Fairbanks for 18 years, the first 6 years as a temp. She stated she is from a farm in Minnesota, so she has been around equipment her whole life. She shared that working at the City has been awesome but being a woman in her career field has been a challenge. Ms. Wheelock stated that it has taken years for her to gain the respect of her peers.

**Ms. Foster-Snow** thanked all those who shared with the FDC. She stated that Clerk Snider will share her screen to highlight more female Public Works employees at the City. **Ms. Foster-Snow** recognized each the following Public Works employees: Courtney Sheen, Dispatcher Clerk; Jayla Gentry-Conley, Operator; Myrlene Wheelock, Lead Operator; Lynette Baugher, Night Lead Operator; Kyla Durham, City Plumber; Misty Buckles, Heavy Duty Mechanic; Lillibeth Lantz, Custodian; Tracy Morphis, Dispatcher; Carolyn Barker, Warehouse/Records Coordinator; and Candace Cullen, Temp Laborer.

**Ms. Rogers** applauded the women. She stated that it is good to hear the satisfaction that ran through all the comments, and it is heartening to hear.

**Ms. Webb** thanked those who presented. She stated that the work the women are doing makes her granddaughters' lives better and that people should never become complacent.

**Mr. Aquino** echoed the comments of others and thanked all those who shared with the FDC. He stated that grit and resilience result from barriers that have existed, and he commended Ms. Wheelock for her resilience. He expressed hope that the presentation could be shared with a broader audience and stated that successes should be counted. He indicated that future generations will see that the various industries are accessible.

**Mr. Dorton** stated he is proud to be a part of the Golden Heart City, and it is good to show the rest of the state how we treat our own.

**Second Vice Chair Williams** echoed the comments of others. She stated she is proud of all the women representing the City and the hard work that they do. She stated that representation is very important, and she would love for others to be able to see the presentation. She stated she

understands the challenges of working in a career where you are different than others. She thanked all those who presented for representing women well.

**Mr. Toelle** stated it is great to see faces to some of the numbers that are reported to the FDC. He stated that the information is something to be celebrated.

**Ms. Harriger** thanked all those who presented and congratulated them on their careers. She stated that she was delighted to hear of their satisfaction in working at the City of Fairbanks.

**Ms. Foster-Snow** thanked staff for attending and stated she hopes to get the information presented out to the community.

**Ms. Rogers** requested that when Ms. Foster-Snow contacts the News Miner, she ask that Kris Capps write about it in the “Our Town” section.

### **APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES**

- a) Regular Meeting Minutes of January 12, 2021

**Mr. Toelle**, seconded by **Mr. Aquino**, moved to APPROVE the meeting minutes.

There being no objection or proposed changes, the minutes were APPROVED.

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

- a) Diversity Action Plan (DAP) Work Session Scheduling

Clerk Snider stated that the FDC could hold the work session in place of a regular meeting, or they could schedule another date to hold the work session. Members briefly discussed dates and agreed to hold the work session on Tuesday, May 11 at 5:30 p.m. in place of the regular meeting.

### **FDC MEMBERS’ COMMENTS**

**Ms. Rogers** stated that she has been a member of the FDC since its first meeting. She stated she is pleased to see both the Chief and the Deputy Chief at the meeting, and she spoke about the history of the FDC encouraging the hiring of a Cold Case Detective at FPD. She stated that the City Council approved a position, but she has not heard regular reports on cold cases in quite a while. She requested that FPD provide regular reports the FDC on the City’s cold cases.

**Ms. Webb** thanked all those attending and those who presented.

**Mr. Aquino** suggested posting the photos and the quotes from the presentation to social media as a way to share the information with the community. He stated that it has been a smiling meeting.

**Mr. Dorton** congratulated Chief Dupee and DC Sweet, and he stated that he has a lot of respect for them. He commented that it is great to be a part of the process. He expressed excitement for

all the new things happening in the community, such as the Crisis Now project, and stated that he is happy to be a part of it.

**Second Vice Chair Williams** stated that it is good to see everyone. She congratulated Chief Dupee and DC Sweet and thanked them for all their hard work. She echoed Mr. Aquino's comments about the presentation.

**Mr. Toelle** thanked all those who presented or wrote down their thoughts about working for the City. He agreed that it was a "smiling meeting."

**Ms. Harriger** echoed other members' thanks and stated that it was a pleasant, informative meeting.

**Ms. Foster-Snow** stated that she had no comments.

### **MEETING DATES**


a) Next Regular Meeting Date, May 11, 2021

It was decided earlier that the FDC would hold a work session on the DAP in place of the May regular meeting.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

**Mr. Toelle**, seconded by **Ms. Harriger**, moved to ADJOURN the meeting.

Hearing no objection, **Second Vice Chair Williams** declared the meeting ADJOURNED at 6:19 p.m.

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Andrew Aquino, Chair

  
D. Danyielle Snider, MMC, City Clerk

Transcribed by: DS