

**WMSWCD Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee Meeting Summary
December 14, 2021 1:00pm to 3:00 pm, WMSWCD Zoom meeting**

Attending: Scott Gall & Laura Taylor (Co-Chairs); Ari DeMarco, Jan Hamer, Mary Logalbo, Terri Preeg Riggsby, Randi Razalenti, Emma Russell

Welcome/Check-In/Announcements – Terri shared that at Oregon Association of Conservation Districts (OACD) they are starting to focus on climate change, and it would be great to get the District involved in some of the work that the District is doing in this effort.

Jan noted that he went to a Special Districts Association of Oregon (SDAO) training on microaggressions that was very helpful and had a handout that would be good for staff and board to have on hand for reference.

Action item: Randi will follow up to find a recording on the SDAO site to share with staff and will also check-in with Jim Cathcart regarding following up with the Board as Jim sees fit.

Approval of October 12, 2021 Meeting Summary – The minutes were approved as written.

Advisory Committee Forming Plan – Mary grounded the group in why the District is forming an advisory committee, and shared the following from the recent Long Range Business Plan (LRBP):

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 1: Embed equity and inclusion in all that we are and all that we do.

i. GOAL 1.2: Proactively implement decision-making strategies that lead to more equitable and inclusive outcomes.

1. a. Seek advice from diverse community leaders and members on how to best deliver our work by forming an advisory committee that provides biannual recommendations on our operations and workplans. (top priority tactic)

In the LRBP, the goal is to find what an Advisory Committee (AC) would be centering on, who we should be recruiting and why. Jim Cathcart and Mary would like a “core group” which will be a planning group for the AC, and would like this to be comprised of: one DEI Co-Chair, Terri as Board Chair and the board representative from the DEI Committee, and Renee Magyar as a Leadership Team representative and Communications Manager. The planning for this will begin in January 2022.

Remaining DEI Committee members that aren’t in the core group will be asked to facilitate equity lens reviews for three pieces: What topic(s) we want to center the Advisory Committee on; Advisory Committee make up (what community members and/or leaders); recruitment plan.

The communications budget has \$2,000 devoted to facilitators, particularly for facilitating board discussions in the AC process which could include anything from plan finalization to facilitated conversations with AC members. We may not be ready in time by the end of the fiscal year to use these funds, so Mary let the group know that these monies may be available for other needs. Randi flagged we have identified that we would like more funds for an upcoming training so that we can afford two facilitators and will circle back around with the group outside of the meeting on this for sake of time limitations.

Action Items: Laura & Scott to discuss who can serve on the core group for the Advisory Committee and get back to Mary. Mary to be in touch with remaining DEI Committee members to serve as facilitators for equity lens review for the core group closer to the dates that these would occur.

Partner Funding Equity Lens Review Findings & Suggested Next Steps – Mary, Kammy, and Laura explored the partner funding program with the District’s equity lens. The overarching question was how to make access to the partner funding more inclusive. Mary opened up to the group to bring up anything that they wanted to discuss from the notes that were made available in this regard, but especially wanted to get input on suggested actions listed in the notes.

For this action item: Create a partner funding webpage that provides an overview of the program and a list of recent awardees and funding amounts; Randi mentioned putting this on Renee Magyar’s radar for the new website sooner than later would be good. Terri mentioned that remembering that some of the partners that we fund are very much a niche to the District, helping the District meet its goals in a partnership, and it’s important that we keep a portion of our partner funding to do on-the-ground work that these partners are able to support that the District does not have the capacity to handle, and to give the partners who have historically been funded a heads up before changes are implemented. Mary assured that this is part of the thinking while implementing the changes. Laura noted that specifying which fiscal year the District would plan to make any changes to the partner funding program would be helpful. The DEI Committee will be updated as the process moves along.

Diverse Supplier Certification Review and Tracking- Randi noted that there are many components to this topic (listed below), and suggested that due to lack of time to get into all the details at this meeting, it may be best to have a subcommittee to tackle this over the winter. Randi gave a brief overview of the list below, pointing out it would be best at this meeting to focus on creating the subcommittee, and if possible to begin to discuss guidance on how to apply preference to these categories for request for proposals.

Components to tackle:

- Look at our existing certification categories that we include on our contracts/RFPs and determine if any of them should be removed and/or if more research is needed. Other categories include:
 - o LGBTQ+ if available, Randi believes she previously found on COBID site, but cannot find it now. Does it matter if COBID isn't tracking but we want to track this?
 - o Certified B Corps (flagged by Mary previously but Randi was unable to find more info on the COBID site before the meeting)
- We will be reporting out monies spent in our annual report next year for women and minority owned businesses (this likely includes DBE – but needs more research); are there any other categories we are tracking that we want to propose to add to this report (such as veteran, etc.)?
- Recommendation from the Committee on guidance of how to apply preference to these categories that are tracked when it comes to requests for proposals (RFPs); can this same process be applied if the bidders aren't officially certified but have self-identified?
- Do we want to make any changes/additions to the language on the RFP/contracts in regards to how this information will be used?
- Work with Communications & Outreach Manager well in advance of the next Annual Report for best practices for reporting out this information.

The District currently has an optional section on contracts for those we contract with to self-identify under certain categories. The categories that we currently list on contracts come from the Certification Office for Business Inclusion and Diversity (COBID): Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE), Emerging small business (ESB), Minority business enterprise (MBE), Women business enterprise (WBE), Service Disabled Veteran Certification (DSV). We let the contractor self-identify or check a box if they are certified on the COBID site as one of these entities.

Terri recommended that we look into bigger organizations that we partner with to see if they have something like this in place already to reduce burden on staff, but of course we can make changes to fit our own organization's needs.

Laura suggests using a scoring rubric to help with the RFP process. Regarding pitfalls/challenges other agencies face in doing this work, it would be good to have one on one conversations with those that have used the processes to make selections.

Jan noted that keeping tracking information about organizations, and particularly individuals that have identified confidential and to assure those filling it out understand that the information will be confidential.

Action items – Randi will circle back with Mary about next steps.

Updates-

Bias Awareness Facilitator's Guide: Randi gave a brief background to the group regarding Bias Awareness training that is in process of being incorporated into the District's hiring process and the background for the purpose of the facilitator's guide (this information can be accessed from the DEI Committee's October 2021 meeting minutes).

Randi shared the following comments: consider including a suggestion of who in the hiring process should be the facilitator and lead the process (is this the supervisor of the position or someone else?), and also for that person to consider the timing of these group discussions and who should be involved in those discussions. Examples would be the interview team discussing biases before interviews begin, or the scoring team discussing biases before scoring resumes and/or before deciding on the candidates to put forth in the interview pool, etc. I think being clearer on who should be involved in the group discussions would make sense. For example, those that are doing admin work only on the team may not make sense to have at one of these group discussions since their biases in theory should not affect any outcome of the hire. It also may be more beneficial for the interview team to have a

separate discussion from the larger group that includes the scoring team.

Laura noted that folks doing any evaluation of the candidates should participate in the training fully, so it may be best to not be the facilitator.

Mary flagged from the current draft guide: "This is a confidential space and identities and opinions shared here will not be discussed outside of this group meeting, nor will they affect the ability of a group member to participate in this or future hirings"; that if there is something blatantly racist or sexist that comes up, if this would still be protected and confidential. Terri noted that this would become a human resources issue if this gets to that level.

Ari asked if having action items to the facilitator's guide of how to address the biases discussed could be helpful, and the group agreed this was a good step to include in the guide.

Action items – Ari will work on the language of the sentence that Mary flagged as concerning to soften it a bit and be clearer in respect to the concerns raised. Ari will also include an action item in the guide to solidify any steps that need to be taken before any biases can take place. Ari will include in the guide that the core hiring team can assign a facilitator to the bias discussions. Ari will share an updated version and follow up on feedback regarding separate discussions for interviews vs. resume scoring over email, as the group went well over allotted time on this discussion.

Openness at the Workplace Board/Staff Training Update: Terri is working with consultants HR Answers on getting this training for the staff and board. The timing will be good to have this coincide with the opening of the office, as this topic was flagged by SDAO as a watch-out for the office reopening. Terri will get back to the group on what the timing would look like for availability to conduct a training.

Demographic Mapping: Mary reported that we were unable to get the demographic data in time for Isa to work on before Isa's internship ended. Adrianna from Tualatin SWCD let Mary know about a resource that we can use to help with this: <https://www.socialexplorer.com>, and Adrianna has offered to help with this as needed. Mary will circle back with the DEI Committee once Mary is able to look into this more.

Education Programming Niche Finding: The plan is going to be forming soon for this effort and Mary will be sharing more about this at the next Board meeting.

Action Items Review

See above

Next Meeting: February 1, 1:00pm-3:00pm

Notes taken by Randi Razalenti