

**WMSWCD Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee Meeting Summary
September 23, 2020 11:00am to 1:30 pm (scheduled until 1:00pm), WMSWCD Conference Call**

Attending: Scott Gall (Chair); Terri Preeg Riggsby, Mary Logalbo, Renee Magyar, Randi Razalenti, Cole Carr, Laura Taylor, Jan Hamer

Welcome/Check-In/Equity Shares – The next DEI-focused open-ended voluntary talk for staff has been scheduled for Tuesday, September 29th. These talks are scheduled for one hour and will happen about once per month and we will try to accommodate schedules of staff as best we can for all to have the ability to participate. Mary announced that the letter that was mentioned in last month’s minutes regarding board participation was approved by the Board and has been sent. East Multnomah SWCD and West Multnomah SWCD with the help of Indi Keith are putting together a one-pager based off the *Whose Land is Our Land?* document to share with boards, decision makers that are looking at board eligibility requirements, and others. This may take until the end of November for Indi to get a first draft out.

Approval of the August 2020 Meeting Summary – The group discussed if there needs to be consistency between more generalized minutes vs. very specific minutes calling out individuals making specific statements. There weren’t any strong opinions of doing one method over the other and the group had general consensus that the “voice” of the minutes may change depending on who is taking them. Randi, who generally takes the minutes, tries to keep the minutes general and to the point – catching key pieces that may need to be referenced later rather than capturing all the details. Randi pointed out that the last minutes particularly highlighted action items that weren’t officially made as action items or delegated to an individual, and that Randi often pulls out action items from the discussion and assumes that these are action items. It’s suggested the DEI Committee do a combination of things to remedy this situation: 1) use an example from Terri of a log to keep track of action items and devote time on the agenda to reviewing action items, and 2) actually make time to cover action items at the end of the meeting, as this often is not discussed during the meeting.

- **Action item:** Terri send Randi and Scott action item list included on agendas used on other committee as example that DEI committee can use

Randi wanted to note in these current minutes, that last month’s minutes call out a pronoun policy, and the District does not officially have a policy on pronouns. Randi also noted that last month’s minutes had an action item for the board to weigh in on desired attributes of board members at the September meeting, but that had been overlooked and did not make its way to the agenda and will likely be deferred given new information on this topic.

Mary wanted to correct on August’s minutes under recruitment of associate board directors that the second bullet point have the word ‘Alternatively’ changed to ‘Additionally’, and throughout the document where ‘cultural leaders’ is written to replace with ‘leaders of diverse communities’.

- Unofficial action item: Renee to check in with Mary about marketing document language in relation to the use of words ‘cultural leaders’

DEI Chair Position – Scott announced that he wants to give another staff member the opportunity to Chair the DEI Committee, and will be willing to help get this person up to speed and help with background tasks to make the transition easier. Mary served as Chair for about a year, and Scott for also about a year. Scott was looking to get feedback on term limits and selection process as well as any general thoughts on this subject.

There was general consensus that rotating the Chair of the committee should be a more routine and inclusive process. There was also general consensus that one year might be too short of time, and may be just when you are getting your footing in the role. It was suggested that two years might be a better length. The timing of recruitment for a Chair for the DEI Committee would ideally be aligned so that anyone interested could include these commitments in their annual work plans and take other items off of their work plans to make space for it. Ideally it would be best to recruit in October/November (to ensure time to put in annual work plan in February) for a role that would begin with the fiscal year in July. Scott noted that he would be willing to serve as Chair until that time as needed.

Randi suggested that co-chairs amongst staff could be a way to help with the workload all going to one staffer – which one Co-Chair would serve as facilitator/preparer for one meeting and the other do the following meeting with some sort of spreadsheet in place to capture items for the next person to pick up on to lessen the workload of one individual. This could also be someone for that person to bounce ideas off of. Mary found having a Co-Chair to be beneficial to the process when she served in this role. Terri suggested that possibly part of the year some of the

Chair support could potentially come from interns. Cole noted having a specific internship devoted to DEI work could be beneficial, and Mary noted that the Organizational Health planning team for the Long Range Business Plan (LRBP) update has also flagged that ideally there would be a permanent position in this role. The LRBP could potentially end up developing a work plan for a DEI intern as a start.

- Unofficial action item: Scott will take this various feedback and come back to the Committee in November with a process to react to.

DRAFT School Demographic Report Maps – This item was moved up due to time constraints and wanting to ensure ample time for it. Cole mentioned that he worked on this exercise with Mary, and went over the purpose of the project, data usage and considerations, and methods that were used to collect the data. Cole reviewed the student demographic data with the group. When the most recent 2020 census data comes out, there will be more of a true population to look at, and not just the students going to schools in our District. Cole noted that there are District zones that don't have school districts. This particular school data information is mostly relevant to our educational programs that Laura manages. Laura would like to see the percentages in addition to the numbers of students. Cole originally had the data labeled as such, but Mary had flagged it may be best to make it clear that this is a number of students and not reflective of the entire population of the area. A takeaway was that there is a 1/3 of a pie chart demonstrating that there are people of color in the District and that we need to think about how to reach these populations.

- Unofficial action item: Terri would like this data to be shown to the board at some point, but will let Mary, Michele and Jim decide on when that should be.
- **Action item:** Mary/Cole will work together to send the draft of the maps that have the percentages included for internal use to the DEI Committee.

Continued discussion of recruitment of Associate Board directors – Terri and Jim discussed this item at length and it was decided that the District needs to slow down on this process. This in large part due to the commentary of some of the board members at the August board meeting when discussing Director eligibility requirements. There was commentary that shed light that the values and policies that the District has in place to be a more equitable, diverse and inclusive environment may not hold true to some of the board members. It is unknown if those that made this commentary are aware that others who heard this commentary view it as contrary to the District's values and policies in place to ensure equity, diversity and inclusion. It is also unknown if the intentions of their comments align with the negative impact that they have had on those that heard their comments.

Before drafting marketing language, we should discuss who we are seeking with the Board. In order to recruit people from diverse backgrounds, we need to ensure that they will be supported by the Board. Mary expressed that the commentary in the August Board meeting needs to be addressed and directly dealt with one on one with one of the colleagues of the Board, with a follow up Board-wide discussion. Ideally a facilitated discussion on how diversity of opinions is important. When Indi gets the *Whose Land is Our Land?* one-pager out it needs to get presented to the Board so everyone understands the history. Terri would like us to start recording Board meetings and Randi is supportive of this and will follow up to ensure this happens.

Terri would like to be better prepared when commentary like this comes up with how to respond one on one and in a group setting, and asked for any ideas on how to have these conversations or phrases to keep in mind during these moments. Cole mentioned showing the reality of the diversity in the population like what was shown in the data analysis that he presented. Mary mentioned that the messaging of the population has been given to the Board and they may need a reminder that the District's Racial Equity Statement states that we are to be reflective of the communities that are in the District. Randi mentioned bringing policies of non-discrimination to the Board and hold them accountable like we would do with our staff.

Mary mentioned that Ping Khaw had recommended the following in regards to Board recruitment:

- Suggested to start small, think about adding on one or two associates to start
- Think about who you have relationships with in the community for outreach, and have the expectations and benefits ready to go over with them, being intentional and slowing down.

Originally it was thought that it would be good to have more variety of opinions on the board during the LRBP update planning process, but now it is looking like it would be best to wait until the LRBP update is through. There may be some relationships built through the Advisory Committee that is serving to help with the LRBP update. It would be best to do outreach directly with those we know instead of doing broad outreach. In the meantime, the DEI Committee should make recommendations to ensure diverse perspectives and the Board should have an open

agenda topic in order to understand if they really see the Associate Director position as a real pathway to becoming a Director. If they do, the Board should come up with setting term limits and clear pathways for associates to get to elected Zone Director positions.

- **Action item:** Randi will implement Board meetings to be recorded moving forward.
- **Action item:** defer this topic until we hear back from Jim/Terri (through Leadership Team and Board) – to let DEI Committee know when the timing is right for the Committee to pick this back up again.
- Unofficial action item: Those on the committee that have helpful advice/verbiage to use when talking to the Board about insensitive language used at meetings, send to Terri. Terri to follow up about the issues that rose out of the August Board meeting.
- Unofficial action item: Board discuss term limits for board members and associate director pathway to becoming Director.

Future DEI Committee meetings/times – Due to time constraints, Scott will follow up by email and send out a poll to find alternative days and times that work best for all. Scott has gotten feedback that the current usual day of the week of the meetings excludes some staff's participation and the time of day is a difficulty for a few staff.

Action Items (reviewed by Scott; additional action items, including unofficial items listed above) –

Terri send Randi and Scott action item list included on agendas used on other committee as example that DEI committee can use

Scott will draft something on the process for DEI Board Chair selection and share with the DEI Committee to respond to.

DEI Committee looks at developing an internship program centered on DEI Committee needs and goals around the time we look at next year's goal setting.

Cole/Mary to send maps with percentages to DEI Committee once complete.

Mary/others from the committee to send materials to Terri about how to approach difficult conversations about DEI.

Next Meeting: to take place in November, day and time to be determined but tentatively set for November 25th from noon-2pm.

Notes taken by Randi Razalenti