

**DRAFT -- WMSWCD Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee Meeting Summary – DRAFT
August 10, 2021 1:00pm to 3:00 pm, WMSWCD Zoom meeting**

Attending: Scott Gall & Laura Taylor (Co-Chairs); Ari DeMarco, Mary Logalbo, Renee Magyar, Randi Razalenti

Welcome/Check-In/Announcements – Mary shared she’s officially re-joining the DEI Committee. Mary also asked which DEI Committee members might be available to take an equity lens to partner funding (Laura, Scott, and Randi all volunteered to participate). Renee requested to make a note for a future DEI Committee meeting to discuss what we measure and how we measure tracking contracting w/ minority owned and women owned businesses, including monies spent.

Action Items: Mary, Scott, Laura, Randi use equity lens to examine partner funding;

Scott & Laura make a note to circle back regarding what and how we measure tracking contracting and monies spent for minority and women owned businesses.

Approval of June 8, 2021 Meeting Summary – Approved with minor changes provided in track changes Word document to the DEI Committee.

2021-2022 Fiscal Year DEI Work plan- The Committee discussed items that were highlighted from the DEI Committee work plan that were accidentally omitted from the plan that was provided at the June 8th meeting.

Item #5 – DEI internship; The Committee asked for funding for this position but didn’t receive it. That still leaves time this fiscal year for planning and preparation for next fiscal year on such elements as the position description and how that person would be supervised. Time restrictions on staff to develop the position description was identified as a significant factor as we will be busy filling at least one permanent position.

Item #11 – Set board and staff recruitment and retention goals that are reflective of demographic data; Mary noted difficulties with getting the upcoming census data completed. It is possible that Isa Rojas can alter hours in their internship to stay with the District and help with this project after the census data comes out.

Mary also noted the issue of getting the demographic data of the board and staff while maintaining anonymity and respecting comfort level of those involved. Ari suggested looking at internal data regionally with other natural resource organizations to help keep the information anonymous.

Randi suggested that staff and board only participate on a voluntary basis in demographics, and we can document findings similarly as to the voluntary information we receive from applicants. Temporary employees need to be considered whether or not they get included in this information since their positions are only six months of the year. If we do this internal surveying annually, this would keep information up-to-date for both temporary employees and any turnover amongst staff and board.

Ari noted that voluntary data could potentially lead to not getting the data from people of color, who are more vulnerable when reporting such data. If using a more regional pool, people of color may have more comfort in reporting as it would provide more anonymity. Ari also suggested to consider that if data doesn’t reach a certain threshold of reporting, the report may not become available to the public unless it meets a certain threshold to help with anonymity.

Action Item: Isa & Mary report on census data project status at the next DEI Committee meeting.

Item #12 – Set up mechanisms to understand how those interacting with our organization feel about their interactions; this item was unintentionally skipped.

#13 – Evaluate the percentage of contracts and the total dollar amount of purchases made with minority owned business enterprises (MBE) and women owned business enterprises (WBE) that the District contracts with; Randi noted the simplest way to examine the monies spent would be to track this as we’re spending and code this in QuickBooks so we can easily pull a report. Tracking number of contracts has a lot of flaws that need to be further discussed. An example is the use of umbrella contracts – there are numerous scopes of work under each umbrella contract, and we need to understand what is meant by the term ‘contract’ to know if we are truly looking at the number of “contracts” or is it actually the number of signed agreements, whether those be scopes of work, memorandums of understanding, etc.

Action item: Randi to alert staff to put “MBE” and/or “WBE” on applicable receipts and invoices to easily track and report expenses. Also cover this at the next all-staff meeting letting staff know to do this for anyone that overlooks the email or to discuss further questions. Also see action item in Check-in section in this regard.

#14 – Develop and support affinity groups that meet the District’s needs; due to lack of time, it was decided to follow up about this at another meeting.

Action items: Follow up on items #12 and #14 from the DEI Committee work plan at a future DEI Committee meeting

Follow-up on Staff and Board Trainings – Scott reported that seven staff responded to the anonymous survey regarding trainings desired/needed for the District’s DEI work. The highest number of types of trainings marked as “urgently needed” were regarding understanding and avoiding tokenism, followed by white supremacy culture. There were comments in the survey regarding combining these two trainings. There were also comments in the survey regarding the permanent position that the District will be hiring for soon, and that this is a good push to have training in these areas sooner than later to help with that process. An additional comment listed that Scott felt was one to particularly take note on is that we may be able to incorporate in a training how to manage polarized viewpoints. It was noted that many of the desired trainings could potentially get combined if they work together. Mary noted that deeper dives into some of the topics that were found are more urgently needed would be best rather than base level trainings. Randi noted that topics that could intersect with hiring should be prioritized sooner than later. It would also be helpful to note with the trainers that we will be debriefing on the training, so that the training isn’t relying too heavily on group discussions during the training as some trainings have in the past. Having a facilitator present at breakout sessions can be helpful.

It was requested that a training around physical and learning disabilities would be added to the list of desired trainings. It was noted there may be other avenues for some of these trainings that are already available through NRCS or SafePersonnel.

Action Item: Mary will touch on the discussed items and show the full survey results to Capacity Building Partnerships regarding getting some upcoming trainings booked and identifying what those trainings should look like.

Intertwine Alliance funding – Laura presented that we have partners that want to incorporate DEI work in their plans. Jim Cathcart requested for the Committee to discuss if they can pull \$1,000 out of the training budget to spend on this. It was noted that the amount of budget requested for the DEI trainings were pulled from what was spent last year, and that it was likely all funds would be needed this year. Since Jim’s request, Kammy was able to secure \$500 out of her conservation program budget to support this funding. Renee noted that the remaining \$500 can be taken out of the communication sponsorship/support of community organizations budget since this funding is aligned with that budget.

Action item: Scott will follow up with Jim on this request about the proposed budgets to pull from.

Action Items Review

See above

Next Meeting: October 12, 1:00pm-3:00pm

Notes taken by Randi Razalenti with assistance from Mary Logalbo