



Diversity and Inclusion Task Force Meeting Minutes

The DITF (Diversity and Inclusion Task Force) met at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, July 8, 2021 at the Murray City Center Council Chambers, 5025 South State Street, Murray, Utah.

Members in Attendance:

Kat Martinez - Council Member - District #1
Katie Gardner
Daniel Haas
Josceline Mascarenhas
Jessica Miller - Absent
Justin Powell
Brian Prettyman
Jaleel Roberts

Others in Attendance:

Jennifer Kennedy – City Council Director
Pattie Johnson – Council Office Administrator

Mr. Haas welcomed all and began the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

Approval of Minutes: Mr. Haas called for a motion to approve the June 10, 2021 minutes. Ms. Gardner motioned approval, Mr. Roberts seconded the motion. (Approved - all in favor.)

Discussion Items:

Recap of findings from last meeting: Mr. Haas recalled creative energy and expertise at the past meeting where general and specific ideas were formed. Ms. Martinez confirmed the DITF had access to the July recommendations that would be kept with previous ideas. A final prioritization would occur before the DITF presentation to the City Council

Employment with the City: Dress Code, Recruitment and HR (Human Resource): Mr. Haas analyzed job opportunities on the City's website. He compared the phrase: *Murray City is an equal opportunity employer and affords equal opportunity to all applicants for all positions without regard to race, color, gender, national origin, religion, age, marital status, genetics, disability, veteran status, or any other status protected under local, state, or federal laws* - to the federal standard, which conveys if an entity is an EOE (*Equal Opportunity Employer*). He felt the Murray description was shorter in content and missing the exact words *gender identity* and *sexual orientation*. He explained there is an interpretation from the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission that says these notions are included in the word *sex*. However, he noted every federal employment announcement does state *gender identity* and *sexual orientation* within EOE statements. He said not having those particular words was noticeable, so he suggested they revisit the issue. In addition, policies and procedures for hiring are not depicted on the website. A point of contact was provided on some job listings, but in most cases, there was no point of contact at all. He felt it was unclear to *who* applicants are applying; or whether a *point of contact* person was the hiring authority. Also, there was no information regarding what the City's workforce looks like,

therefore; he was interested in knowing if the City's total workforce reflects the City's overall demographic population. He recommended the City measure these details so they could determine if there are issues related to hiring with diversity and inclusion.

There was a discussion about Murray's HR Department having just three employees to handle all City staff, and not one department has a stand-alone HR Department. There were questions about who the hiring managers are, and whether future hires default to department heads, or to the HR department. There was agreement that some Murray City job descriptions on the City website are slightly outdated, so a review of job descriptions was recommended. There were no red flags regarding verbiage, and it was validated that the standard application format looked the same; but it was suggested that the lengthy lists of essential functions be reviewed.

The DITF found favor with seeing a walk-through complaint process well-defined in the handbook and that Murray has a Personnel Action advisory board. The board oversees filed grievances and considers safety procedures; but the purpose of the board was questioned because all meetings since February 2020 were cancelled with no minutes available. Ms. Kennedy clarified the board meets only when there is a complaint to consider; and due to the pandemic, the board did not meet in 2020. There was a comment that as part of the recommendation to update job descriptions there be a requirement to remove specific barriers and add points of diversity.

The size of the Murray City HR Department was further analyzed about whether staff size was adequate compared with the total of city employees and if HR staff was overwhelmed or well-structured to provide needed support for good success. There was a comment that typically one person in HR can represent hundreds of employees but there was no HR person to oversee HR staff; and no accountability for HR when problems involve HR staff. A conversation followed about how challenges might be resolved or left unresolved.

Hiring a full-time diversity officer to oversee HR was considered. It was expected that a PhD and HR background would not be required but would provide added strength, and the person should be hired by specific qualifications and not appointed. There was agreement that in order for a diversity officer to have the ability, autonomy, and authorization to do what needs to be done, the position should still report to the Mayor. The efficacy of having an equity officer was discussed related to other public institutions that provide the backing of this position; and it was noted that many communities are now hiring for this position. Ms. Kennedy confirmed that annual equity and inclusion training is provided by HR and required for all Murray City employees.

The Task Force observed their conversations often led to the possibility of hiring for a specific or new position to handle certain criteria. The gathering of data for proposed long-term projects would have long term impact; and there was hope that proposed positions would remain to drive DITF goals long after the Ad Hoc committee was dissolved. There was a suggestion to contract with Salt Lake County for equity services because the County currently has a large diversity and inclusion team with subcommittees, full staff, and multiple offices. Ms. Martinez would look into the matter. In addition, she would research statistics regarding race and gender, and collect hiring data related to Murray City employees and within the police department that should match the look of the community.

The DITF talked about whether HR is present in most interviews and if interviews should occur with a diverse panel or have prequalifying questions. It was thought that recommendations could be made for

standardizing best practices to ensure that a diverse panel, and not just department staff, could help determine a choice candidate. Pre-defined questions, targeted questions, and standard templates of questions regarding the application process need to be analyzed; a diverse panel with standardized questions would aid in the interview procedure. In addition, a diversity officer would ensure that a wide range of guidelines and agreeable broad terms would provide a balanced approach to the interview process. Different positions require different questions, however, discriminating against x y and z reasons, like tattoos would help guide the hiring process.

For the next meeting the DITF would request from each City department information related to their specific hiring policies and best practices for interviewing, for the creation of new guidelines and standardizing interview questions. The goal is to determine whether a diversity problem exists within the Murray hiring process. There was thought about requiring mandatory discrimination training for all department heads to achieve a good balance. Ms. Kennedy would assist in collecting this data from City department heads.

There was understanding that Murray has an unofficial business-casual dress code. It was considered whether or not invisible rules exist, and if a protocol might be needed related to disabilities - to better define the City's guidelines. This would not include Police and Fire departments who have actual dress policies in place.

In conclusion there was a conversation about applying for government positions and the hiring of more diverse pools. For example, those systemically excluded, who entered the country and live in Murray like Dreamers, refugees, and youth who cannot become US citizens for a while due to immigrant status. Because they are not eligible to work or be officially paid, it was proposed that some City jobs, such as a lifeguard, be made mandatory volunteer positions to provide them with job opportunities. It was felt that these individuals should also find inclusion in Murray's workforce by utilizing skills of the non-American experience. There was a suggestion that grants might incentivize businesses to hire refugees and those desperate to work; and this was a missing step in the employment process to help those with workable skills and educations from other cultures. It was agreed that this was a task that Murray could not take on alone, but the City should find a way to value the education and work experience of these individuals. Ms. Martinez noted the Chamber of Commerce would be the best resource for incentivizing businesses in this manner for these types of grants.

Adjournment:

Ms. Gardner would conduct the next meeting on August 12, 2021. Mr. Haas motioned to close the meeting at 7:42 p.m. All were in favor.

Pattie Johnson
Council Office Administrator III