

Affirmative Action Monitoring Committee
Meeting Minutes
January 23, 2020 6:00 p.m.

Attendance: Pat Alston, Rosa Browne, Edward Ford, Laurie Palmer, Christine Sherwood, Faith Jackson, Director of Equal Opportunity and Diversity Management, and Justin Richardson, Director of Human Resources

Excused Absence:

Absence:

QUORUM: *Yes:* X *No:*

Call to Order: Chairperson Rosa Browne called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. She took attendance for the record and noted that there was a quorum.

Public Session: The committee welcomed new member, Laurie Palmer, and asked her to tell the committee a little about herself. Laurie Palmer said that she is a Middletown resident. Her husband works for the City, and she works at The Hartford in investment management. Rosa Browne asked the committee members to introduce themselves to Laurie Palmer. Pat Alston said she has a background in Affirmative Action and is interested in helping the City achieve its goals. Rosa Browne said she has been on the committee over 20 years. She is interested in diversity, equity, and inclusion, as well as fair employment. Faith Jackson said she is the Director of Equal Opportunity and Diversity Management. She has been in the position for 23 years. Additionally, in her position, she serves as the Fair Housing Officer, Affirmative Action Officer, contract compliance officer, and the veteran contact service representative for the town. Also, she manages the Walter C. Jones Fund, which is an unusual program. Justin Richardson said he is the Director of Human Resources. He's been with the City for almost six years. He's been the director for a little over a year and a half. Through this committee, he wants to make sure the City is up to its standards of diversity and is reaching its goals through equal opportunity. He wants feedback from this committee. Also, he wants the committee to know that its suggestions are taken seriously. In his role, he makes sure that the hiring managers are aware of the goals. Edward Ford said he's been on the committee since 2016. Now, he is a member of the Common Council. He just completed his Bachelor's degree in Psychology. This committee has been very productive. The members have been able to monitor things and cross check with the mayor saying either the City needs to do better or the City has done a great job. Christine Sherwood said she is a member of the Middletown community. She has raised four children in Middletown. Two of her children have gone to the public high school. As a community member, she feels it's important to weigh in and support this work. Laurie Palmer replied that it was nice to meet everyone.

Regular Meeting:

Approval of Minutes: Rosa Browne asked for a motion to approve the Meeting Minutes of October 31, 2019. Pat Alston motioned to approve the Meeting Minutes of October 31, 2019. Christine Sherwood seconded. The chairperson called for a vote. The motion was properly carried with one abstention.

Old Business: None

New Business:

2018-2019 4th Quarter and Year-End Report: Rosa Browne asked Faith Jackson to speak on the 2018-2019 4th Quarter and Year-End Report. Faith Jackson began discussion on the 4th Quarter Report. She reminded the committee that the City does not hire a lot of people throughout the year. In the 4th quarter, there was a total of eight new hires, nine promotions, and one transfer. Therefore, it was a fairly even split of positions being filled externally or internally. The committee questioned if the percentage is always so even, and Faith Jackson responded that the Year-End report will provide a more accurate snapshot of how positions are filled. She explained that the current workforce is young, so there will be very little turnover, and future hiring of new employees may be low.

For the 4th quarter, there were eight new hires, and there was some diversity. Three Black Males and one Hispanic male were hired. There were nine promotions, seven White Males and two White Females. Pat Alston asked for the job titles for the Official/Administrator and Professional EEO categories. Faith Jackson advised that the Official/Administrator promotion was Deputy Director of Water and Sewer who was a White Male. The Professional new hire was the Custodial Manager who was a White Male. The three promotions in the Professional category were the Public Health Manager, Police Captain, and Police Lieutenant, all White Males. The Hispanic Male was a new hire in Administrative Support, and the three Black Males were new hires in Service Maintenance. Pat Alston asked about Black Males being hired in Service Maintenance and if there were opportunities for upward mobility. Justin Richardson answered that for custodians, there are opportunities to move to Superintendent I, II, III, and IV. Additionally, Truck Drivers have opportunities to move to Heavy Equipment Operators.

Rosa Browne questioned why there wasn't any diversity in the Technician, Professional, and Official/Administrator categories. Justin Richardson and Faith Jackson explained that the positions are posted internally according to union contract. There may not be any diversity in the pool, which is why it's so important to have diversity in the new hires. Once a position opens up to the public, there's an opportunity to hire diversity, and once people are in the workforce, they can apply for positions posted internally. Christine Sherwood asked about the total percentage of minorities in the workforce. Faith Jackson answered that the City is at about 14%, and this is great improvement from years ago.

Rosa Browne then asked about the purpose and impact of the Sustainable City training. Faith Jackson said the participants for those trainings were not strictly City Hall. Managers from other businesses throughout town attended, as well. Justin Richardson said that the City has new software for tracking employment requisitions, and hiring managers are more aware of the hiring goals. Rosa Browne said she was still concerned that black and Hispanic hires were only appearing in the Service Maintenance category. The promotions in Official Administrator, Professional, and Technician were all white. Faith Jackson explained that it's important for the committee to understand the internal hiring process. If there is a vacancy in UPSEU or 466, that position has to first be posted internally. The only people who can apply for the position are internal candidates within the specific union. If no one applies for it internally, the job is then sent to the public.

Christine Sherwood asked about the recruitment strategy when positions are posted to the public. Justin Richardson answered that the Police and Fire Departments frequently go to job fairs, as well as the Economic Development Specialist. The City just went all digital for its application process. Now, people can sign up for the list serve, and when a position is available, they will be alerted. In addition to that, positions are posted to Indeed, a free job posting website. Also, they have a partnership with all the community colleges, and they are working on building a partnership with Albertus Magnus College, which will extend their reach into other Connecticut colleges. Christine Sherwood asked if the online

application system would filter out applicants who don't meet specific requirements. Justin Richardson answered that their system does not have weighted questions that would disrupt an applicant's ability to complete the application, unless the position has a very specific certification or license requirement. Christine Sherwood said she would test the system. She then asked who determines whether years of experience outweigh a requirement for a degree. Justin Richardson said he is the one who determines that and that he goes through every application. Faith Jackson said there have been occurrences of people who have applied for a position and been informed they don't qualify and then contact her office for an explanation. She will then follow up with Human Resources. Justin Richardson said that the Personnel Rules have a protest policy. Any applicant, internal or external, has the opportunity to protest a determination by Human Resources that he or she is not qualified. The applicant has a certain number of days to protest. Then, the application is reviewed by the Deputy General Counsel. Christine Sherwood said she was questioning this because people who have spent years working upward through job ranks shouldn't be disqualified because they don't have a degree. Justin Richardson agreed and said many positions allow the substitution of work experience for education.

Faith Jackson moved the discussion to the Year-End report. For fiscal year July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019, there were 77 available job opportunities: 31 were filled by new hires, and 46 were filled internally with 35 promotions, seven lateral transfers, and four demotions. Therefore, 40% of the opportunities were filled externally, and 60% were filled internally. Also, the only way for a person to get promoted is through applying for an internal position, which is why the union contract requires that the job be posted internally first, and that's a fair process. She added that she watches the recruitment process, and if there's diversity all the way through to the interview level, but no diversity in the hires, she will contact Justin Richardson and question it. Faith Jackson and Pat Alston said years ago on the State level, if there were, for example, three positions available and diversity in the interview stage, the hiring manager would have to explain why one of the positions didn't go to a minority. For this year, the City achieved 28% of its set hiring goals, which is great. Because the City doesn't do a great deal of hiring, goals are set accordingly to the underrepresented, based on the availability of unemployment in market and city workforce for each EEO job category. Rosa Browne asked if the committee had any other questions regarding the 4th Quarter or Year-End report. There were none, so Rosa Browne asked Justin Richardson to speak on the vacancy report.

Vacancy Report: Justin Richardson distributed the vacancy report. He clarified that going forward, he would like it to be called the recruitment report because that more accurately describes what it is. Christine Sherwood asked if Middletown salaries were competitive with other towns. Justin Richardson answered that it depends on the position. For example, the salary for Police Officer is over the current market trend and is very attractive to both entry level and lateral officers. Firefighter used to be below market but is now equal to or just a little bit above market. Administrative positions are low at the beginning, but the union contract allows for rapid acceleration. Pat Alston asked who writes the interview questions. Justin Richardson said for positions such as director and deputy director, he will write and seek out questions from other municipalities. Also, for those positions, there is typically a panel. Each applicant is asked the same questions so the process is fair. Pat Alston asked if he observes the interviews. He answered that it depends on the position. In most cases, the hiring managers do their own interviews. Human Resources requires that the hiring managers ask the same questions to each applicant. Christine Sherwood asked if there is a document that has each question, the answer the applicant gave during the interview, and then interview notes. Justin Richardson said that he strongly suggests that each hiring manager does that during the interview. Also, he recommends that the managers document the interview, so if a candidate does poorly in an interview, it's documented, and the managers and Human Resources have reason for the candidate not being selected. Pat Alston asked if there is a tracking sheet for applicants that show the applicant and score. Justin Richardson answered that the only positions that

have ranking of the candidates are within the Fire and Police Department, or possibly Public Works where there is a practical exam. For other positions, like administrative positions, applicants are given a passing score if minimum qualifications are met. The committee members further questioned if there were evaluation sheets when interviews are conducted. He answered yes, and those sheets are kept on file with his office as a part of the recruitment file. Rosa Browne asked about the evaluation of different skill sets, such as when someone has high technical skills but low communication skills. He answered that those wouldn't be factors during an oral interview because the applicant would have to have already met the minimum qualifications. Rosa Browne further clarified that her question pertained to people who have a very high technical skill set but English is a second language. She asked how different skills are weighed. An applicant can be brilliant technically but because English is a second language, he or she might not meet the City's standards during an oral interview. There was further discussion on this issue, and Faith Jackson added that would depend on the job requirements. If a key part of the job is to communicate the technical jargon with others, then the person's communication skill would have to be considered and ranked. Each position should have a rating sheet and dispositions. There was further discussion on this, and Rosa Browne emphasized the importance of balancing skill sets and mastery of English. She explained that there needs to be checks and balances.

Justin Richardson agreed about the importance of checks and balances and said that Faith Jackson's office monitors the recruitment in each of the different phases. Faith Jackson explained that her office reviews the flow of the applicant pool after the posting has closed, once the candidates are determined to be qualified or not qualified, and after testing and/or interviews. Christine Sherwood said that she believes Rosa Browne is talking about a sheet the hiring manager fills out for every interview indicating the question, the response, and the overall evaluation of the candidate, and that sheet is then submitted to Human Resources. Justin Richardson explained that for every recruitment, Human Resources screens the applicants, tests, if required, names are then submitted to the managers, managers interview and report back to Human Resources on those who passed the interview and those who didn't and why. That's all reported back to Human Resources and goes on file. There is not a specific document, but there is a process. Every recruitment is different. There are documents, but there are different systems for different positions. Rosa Browne asked how the outcome of an interview is measured. Her concern remains that the quarterly reports all look the same where the Official/Administrator, Professional, and Technician usually show promotions of White Males. Hiring of Black Males and Black Females seems contained to Service Maintenance. Justin Richardson said that goes back to the internal applicant pools.

Rosa Browne asked if Human Resources tracks managers who always seem to hire White Males. Does Human Resources call the manager and say he or she has been observed for a certain number of recruitments and has not hired a Hispanic or black candidate when there has been diversity in the pool. Faith Jackson advised that if she sees qualified minorities in the pool who made it to the interview process, she will question Human Resources and/or the hiring manager about the interviewed individuals who are not getting hired. In the past, she has even gone to the mayor when she has noticed this trend. Justin Richardson agreed that constant reminders are key.

Justin Richardson continued with the recruitment report. He said the Board of Ed has done quite a bit of recruitment. Edward Ford asked about the Assistant to the Superintendent of Schools position. Justin Richardson said that the position has gone through the interview stage. There has not been a decision yet on the interviews.

Pat Alston asked Justin Richardson to bring to the next meeting a couple samples of the evaluation sheets used. He agreed. Rosa Browne asked if there was a formula used to calculate and evaluate oral interviews. Justin Richardson said there is no formula used. Pat Alston asked if Human Resources tracks

the ways that applicants find out about postings. Justin Richardson answered that they system indicates if an application comes through Indeed. Eventually, Human Resources will start using Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. While the applications are digital, they do still do paper mailings of the postings to the local churches and other organizations. If people come into the office to fill out a paper application, they are directed to a kiosk in the lobby where they can apply online.

Christine Sherwood asked about the possibility of using a referral service. Justin Richardson agreed it was a good idea but that it costs money. He added that technical jobs within the City, like engineering or planning, go out to list serves to other towns, as well.

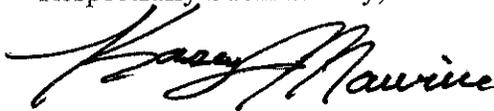
Miscellaneous Article(s): There was brief discussion on the miscellaneous articles.

2019 Attendance: The committee reviewed the 2019 Attendance.

Announcements: The next regular meeting of the committee will be April 23, 2020.

Adjournment: Christine Sherwood motioned to adjourn the meeting. Edward Ford seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 7:36 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kasey Maurice". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kasey Maurice,
Administrative Secretary III