

Affirmative Action Monitoring Committee
Meeting Minutes
January 28, 2021 6:00 p.m.

Attendance: Pat Alston, Rosa Browne, Laurie Palmer, and Faith Jackson, Director of Equal Opportunity and Diversity Management, and

Excused Absence: Justin Richardson, Director of Human Resources

Absence: Christine Sherwood

QUORUM: **Yes:** X **No:**

Call to Order: Chairperson Rosa Browne called the meeting to order at 6:16 p.m. She took attendance for the record and noted that there was a quorum.

Public Session: None

Regular Meeting:

Approval of Agenda: Pat Alston motioned to approve the Meeting Agenda for January 28, 2021. Laurie Palmer seconded. The chairperson called for a vote. The motion properly carried.

Review of Informal Minutes: The committee reviewed the Information Meeting Minutes for October 22, 2020. Rosa Browne indicated a change on page three, line four: “The met with the mayor...” should be revised to “They met with the mayor...” Pat Alston said she had a question about the minutes. On page two, there is mention of a pre-employment physical. She asked if every employee is required to have a pre-employment physical. Faith Jackson said she was no sure of the answer to that. She suggested that they ask Justin Richardson at the next meeting or email him. Pat Alston then asked about Michelle Barillaro mentioned on page three. She asked who that was, and Faith Jackson answered that she is the Human Resources Generalist. Pat Alston pointed the committee’s attention to page four where Justin Richardson said he would send the committee the recruitment process. She said she didn’t receive anything and asked if Rosa Browne receive anything. Rosa Browne said she had not received the recruitment process from Justin Richardson and that she had requested it twice. Pat Alston said it appears that he is ignoring her.

Rosa Browne motioned to approve the October 22, 2020 minutes with the noted correction. Pat Alston seconded. The motion carried with one abstention. However, it should be noted that Informal Meeting Minutes do not require approval.

Old Business: None

New Business: None

2020-2021 1st Quarter Report: Rosa Browne asked Faith Jackson to speak on the 2020-2021 1st Quarter Report. Faith Jackson began discussion on the 1st quarter. She explained that the City does not do a great deal of hiring and even less since COVID-19. In this quarter, there were three new hires: two Firefighters and one Police Officer, all White Males. There were eight positions filled internally. Four were through

promotions, three were transfers, and one was a demotion. One goal was achieved through promotions when one White Female was promoted into the EEO3 – Technicians category. Goals can only be achieved if there are job vacancies in that specific category. Seventeen employees left employment this quarter. She added that they are working on the 2nd Quarter Report at this time, which looks very favorable where three Hispanic Males were promoted.

There was discussion on the amount of people who separated from employment. Faith Jackson added that at times, when people vacate a position and the mayor asks the departments to reduce their budgets, they do so by not filling positions. Rosa Browne asked how the City takes raises into consideration during budget time. Faith Jackson answered that increases are dictated by union contracts and are therefore built into the budget.

Faith Jackson asked if there were any other questions about the 1st Quarter Report. Pat Alston asked for more information about the demotion. Faith Jackson answered that the demotion was a voluntary move from Building Superintendent I, salary grade 6, to Park Maintainer I, salary grade 5.

There was no further discussion on the 1st Quarter Report.

Vacancy Report: Rosa Browne moved the discussion to the vacancy report. She said she wanted it to be on record that Pat Alston sent a list of questions/requests to Justin Richardson and copied her on it. She read the list of questions:

- Review of recruitment sources
- Who selects candidates to be interviewed
- Who reviews the applications
- Panel selection
- Instructions to panel
- Who creates the questions
- Are the questions based on the job description and the candidate's ability to perform the job
- Do you use preferred criteria
- Who observes the interviews
- Is there an applicant tracking form
- Is there a reason given for rejection of goal candidates, not to the candidates but on a form submitted to the EEO/AA office

Faith Jackson showed the committee a Recruitment Action Sheet, which is a form that tracks the applicant pool for the each position and the progressive stages from applicant pool, total qualified and not qualified, number who passed the test, failed it, were a no show, or withdrew, and number interviewed. She explained that the pool loses diversity as the recruitment progresses through the written and oral testing process. Rosa Browne asked about the City's efforts to improve that system. Faith Jackson said that was a question for the Director of the Human Resources Division. She explained that her part is to put the EEO goals on the Employment Requisition, which goes back to the department head, so he or she can be aware of the hiring goals. Then, the requisition goes to Human Resources for them to post the job and initiate the recruitment process. This entire process is handled online. She added that she can't answer how broadly they recruit for a position, such as Firefighter. However, it's important that they go to job fairs.

Pat Alston said she wanted to make a statement. When she asks Justin Richardson questions, he doesn't respond. Someone suggested to her that perhaps he doesn't respond to her because she is not the chairperson. Therefore, she wants to work with Rosa Browne to discuss an approach. She said her goal is to better understand the recruitment process to help more qualified, diverse candidates find employment in the City. That's why the committee needs to have those questions answered. Therefore, she sent the list of questions to Rosa Browne because she is the chair and he doesn't respond to her.

Rosa Browne said she wanted the questions and his lack of response in the minutes. At the next meeting, they want him to have the opportunity to respond and to address how to improve communication between the committee and Human Resources. Faith Jackson said she thought that was fair. Additionally, Pat Alston is on the Anti-Racism Task Force, which is using the NCCJ report as a framework, and employment with the City was a number one factor in the report. She added that minorities can't move upward in City Hall if they can't get through the door. Rosa Browne added that Middletown is a very diverse city, but that is not reflected in the workforce. She said she agrees with Pat Alston that there needs to be additional effort on the part of the City to make the workforce more reflective of the residents. Faith Jackson said that is the reason the City has an Affirmative Action Monitoring Committee. There's no reason the recruitment process can't be changed or improved. However, the committee can't say it needs to change until it understands how it works. Pat Alston agreed and said they need to look at the process to see where they can recommend change. Faith Jackson said that change happens very slowly. When she first started with the City, diversity was at 8%, and now it is at 13 to 14%. She added that certain positions, such as Custodian or Truck Driver, always have diverse pools. At times, a minority from the applicant pool will come to her office to complain, and she'll follow up with Human Resources. She always encourages the applicant to continue to apply for employment with the City.

Rosa Browne said the process needs to be more inclusive and accessible. Faith Jackson said in the case where there's diversity in the pool but not in those who were interviewed, they need to understand why applicants are not making it all the way through the recruitment process. Laurie Palmer asked if the testing was offered only in English or in other multiple languages. Faith Jackson said the tests are English. However, it is the expectation that a candidate speak and read English for the job, so the tests should be in English. There was further discussion on the reading and speaking level necessary to qualify for certain positions and if the vocabulary in the tests were appropriate for that level. Faith Jackson explained that certain positions require an understanding of technical terms. She reminded the committee that there are new testing procedures and that they can ask Justin Richardson these questions. However, the test is much more improved because the timing limitations for the sections are less strict and have been expanded.

Vacancy Report: Pat Alston said they didn't get the vacancy report until about an hour before the meeting. Justin Richardson emailed it to them around 5:00 p.m. She would appreciate it if it could be sent sooner so they all have time to review it. She said she quickly pulled up the report and noticed that the Chief of Police position has revisions to its description and will be reposted. She wanted clarification on that. Faith Jackson said she couldn't speak to that but job descriptions do get revised from time to time because they change. Pat Alston asked who would be in charge or rewriting the job description, and Faith Jackson answered that would be the department and Human Resources. However, she added that jobs do evolve and descriptions need to incorporate those changes. She reminded the committee that a few years ago, the City contracted with Segal Waters to review all the job descriptions. The Common Council never endorsed the new job descriptions and compensation study because there were a number of issues and inconsistencies. The committee decided to table any further discussion on the vacancy report. Additionally, the committee would like to request that it receive the report along with the meeting package so it has time to review it.

Committee Vacancy: There was no discussion on the committee vacancy.

2020 Attendance: The committee reviewed the 2020 Attendance. Rosa Browne asked Faith Jackson to follow up with Christine Sherwood again because she said she wanted to stay on the committee but she has not been in attendance.

Announcements: Faith Jackson made a recommendation to the committee members that they read the NCCJ report. The next regular meeting of the committee will be April 22, 2021.

Adjournment: Pat Alston motioned to adjourn the meeting. Laurie Palmer seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 7:21 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kasey Maurice". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "K".

Kasey Maurice,
Administrative Secretary III