

## **BCA Equity and Inclusion Committee Minutes**

**Tuesday, April 6, 2021 4 pm**

**Held via Zoom**

Equity and Inclusion Committee Members: Jaqueline Posley, Jon Weisbecker, Milton Rosa-Ortiz, Bryan Parmelee, Patrick Shank, Lori Rowe, Lisa Lillibridge, Jackie Reno (absent), Mary-Katherine Stone (absent), Mildred Beltre (absent)

Staff present: Doreen Kraft, John Flanagan

1. Approve Agenda- Jacq Posley moved to add Doreen to speak to scope of committee to agenda. Moved by Lori Rowe, seconded by Jon Weisbecker
2. Public Forum-No public present.
3. Doreen discussed meeting with BCA staff, noted that staff is exhausted. Discussed Mayor's speech, looking forward with lens of racial equity. Asked how this committee fits into that, working in parallel with REIB. Mentioned that Tyeastia and her team have produced the Racial Equity toolkit. Asked that we consider this tool in the charge of the committee. Suggested we take a step back and consider as a committee as the board how we see ourselves functioning. Asked what diversity means in Vermont context and how do we hold ourselves accountable to our intentions. Milton responded that we should not be reinventing the wheel but to also in some way contribute and feed back to REIB. Understands exhaustion of staff but thinks we should be transparent about what we are doing from a public-facing perspective. Lori responded that this committee needs to be educated about what is happening at BCA. Understands BCA has gotten more complicated over the past year.
4. Patrick brought up the survey previously discussed, how it would be helpful to get an overall view of programs, stakeholders, who we are serving. Asked who else would pick up this work for BCA. Doreen responded to Patrick that this is the right place for this work to happen, reiterated that she wants to step back and understand our path as a committee. Agreed the survey should be used. Will make a few recommended changes toward simplification and return to the board.
5. Jacq transitioned to agenda item regarding reviewing assessment of current initiatives.
6. Jon W brought up fact that it would be good to allocate financial resources to evaluate and keep up with DEI work.
7. Doreen mentioned anecdotal tracking of numbers; Lori added that knowing what groups we are missing in our outreach is important.
8. Doreen mentioned that now is the time for budget planning, discussing with BCA how we can use this lens to shift our approaches. Believes we should stay aspirational in what we ask for for this work. Lisa added that all BCA committees are each doing their own work on each BCA team. Thinks its hopeful that this is long, slow work but also a wonderful opportunity for the interconnectedness of our group to work collectively toward our goal.
9. Jacq reiterated that we are going to tweak the spreadsheet before sending to BCA department heads. Suggested we could share at the first board meeting in the fall or in June.

10. Jon W reiterated that we should be putting financial resources into DEI, staff timing. Believes we could use an expert who is paid to put the time and work into that. Jacq agreed. Doreen suggested we discuss this as a board. Lori wondered if since the Mayor is making this a priority, there might be more flexibility in the process of creating this position at BCA. Milton wondered if this might be seen as redundant. Jacq noted that since REIB cannot focus on BCA specifically, finding someone who can focus on BCA specifically would be beneficial.
11. Lisa asked if this committee is the right place to ask a specific measurable from each BCA department. Milton agreed that many initiatives might already be happening, but that we don't know.
12. Doreen wondered what a consultant would be doing. Wondered if new approach to programming enhancement/support would meet new desire of reaching larger BIPOC audience. Jacq asserted that a paid consultant would be beneficial to achieving the work the committee will assess a need for. Jon believes an outsider would be helpful to observe our work and identify gaps, give us an outsider baseline of where we're at. Noted that internal self-reflection can be difficult. Doreen relayed that Tyeastia did commit to doing this work with BCA, but does not currently have the time. Mentioned that a consultant has a steep learning curve to get up to speed to even get to the point to be helpful. Jon asked if it's a realistic expectation to have someone come in and do an evaluation. Noted that if we have budgets to bolster other staff, there should be funds toward these efforts. Lori wondered if this consultant position could perhaps be part of REIB's growth, less of a learning curve to understand what BCA is doing in the context of the City. Milton agreed a BCA/REIB liaison would be beneficial. Agreed with Jon, but also asserted we will need funds to move any DEI work forward. Putting money behind our words. Mentioned the committee, as the board, is separate enough to be looking in at BCA.
13. Bryan believes we need to ask the Mayor for more of the REIB resources. Doesn't believe we should be shy about asking the Mayor. Doreen proposed inviting the Mayor to the committee.
14. Committee discussed response to artists from Milton. Jacq gave overview of his response. Milton said he wants to close this chapter. We need to show what has happened, what is happening, and what will happen in order to respond adequately. Speculated that the survey might help. Jacq proposed discussing the frame of this response at the next meeting. Milton agreed he could create a frame that we would fill in with information from the survey. Jacq proposed the entire committee sign the letter, welcome members of the board to sign as well. Lori suggested it has more power coming from the committee but not the board. Milton asked we wrap up the letter by saying the committee will be addressing this work on an ongoing basis. Doreen offered to update Milton on what's happening at BCA regarding DEI. Milton agreed. John F offered to join.
15. John F proposed first Tuesday of every month. Board tentatively agreed.
16. Motion to adjourn, moved by Lori Rowe; seconded by Bryan Parmelee. Adjourned 5:01.