

Diversity Council Meeting

Tuesday, January 27, 2026 at 6:30pm

Hybrid Meeting: In-Person and on Zoom

Meeting Room 1-2, City Hall, 111 N. Main St., Bristol, CT

ATTENDEES: Interim Chair Marcus Patton, Council Members Anthony Lopes, Sandy Kamens, Jeff Israel, David Rackliffe, Carolyn Palmquist, and Danny Palmquist

ABSENT: None

GUESTS: None

I. Call to Order

The Interim Chair called the meeting to order at 6:32pm.

II. Council Attendance & Welcoming New Members

Council Member Roll Call was completed with introductions by the Council's new members. Danny Palmquist shared his interest in understanding more about marginalized groups. Carolyn Palmquist shared her interest in reconnecting to the community and providing use of their talents to the Council. The Interim Chair thanked them for joining the Council and welcomed them on behalf of all the Commissioners. Interim Chair Patton advised members that an additional new Council Member may be added in time for the February Meeting.

III. Public Participation

There was no Public Participation.

Council Members Jeff Israel and Dave Rackliffe joined the meeting at 6:35pm.

IV. Business Update

a. Mantles Conclusion

Appreciation for the Council Member's contributions to the 2025 Mantles event at the American Clock & Watch Museum. Thomaston Savings Bank won the votes from the visitors to the Mantles Event and donated their winnings back to the museum.

Discussion followed regarding how to best display and/or store the working clock mosaic representing the rich and diverse communities in Bristol. The Interim Chair noted that the art student's involvement in their mantel display has sparked discussion with the museum in regard to a possible invite to the school's to have a display of their own in 2026.

b. Dave attend MLK breakfast

Council Member Rackliffe shared his experience attending the MLK Breakfast featuring Bristol School Superintendent, Iris White. She spoke to her own background and philosophies, and the event's focus was on the young children and their involvement in the event. Council Member Rackliffe believed the event was a reflective and well run event.

Council Member Carolyn Palmquist also attended and added that singers included Melina Floyd as well as area students.

c. Dave and Marcus met with Superintendent and Equity Leadership Team

The Interim Chair and Council Member Rackliffe provided background and an update on their attendance at an Equity Leadership Team online meeting as guests of Superintendent Iris White. Leading up to the virtual meeting, the two members met with the Superintendent to better understand the goals and function of the Equity Leadership Team.

Members of this team are volunteers and include educators from the various are schools. The team was formed to address overlap with their interests and those of groups like the Diversity Council. Representation included math intervention, Spanish and ESL, ELA, special education leaders, a Dean of Students, among others.

The Diversity Council's history and current position was shared with the group. Discussion followed including the possible return of school clubs that had been active in the past, including the Gay Straight Alliance which Commissioners Carolyn and Danny Palmquist offered a resource for, root causes and areas of concern that the team could address. It was noted that the Community Conversations the Council had held, and which several educators had been a part of, was still being regarded as an impactful tool. Interest is high in holding a similar event again.

The Team shared tangible examples of diversity and community related contributions made and/or contributed to the previous year. The student liaison opportunities were also encouraged. The Team will be at the February Diversity Council Meeting, and the Council was asked to consider questions to be posed at that time.

V. Current Business

a. 1Q Cash Mob Option

A review of the Q4 2025 Cash Mob event in terms of how the businesses were chosen, voting logistics, and the outcome. Guac 'N Roll was the winning business and has reported a significant impact on their business, including a 30% increase in business on the Cash Mob day, and the community's recognition of them which they see started which before the Cash Mob date.

Further discussion followed regarding the parameters for choosing the next pool of businesses for voting and how to best define metrics and define a successful event with each winning business. A pool of businesses for the next voting round will be presented at the next Diversity Council meeting to be posted on social media at the end of February 2026.

b. 2026 Diversity Council Strategy

Discussion regarding the Council's membership included a goal of doubling their current number (7). Strategies includes advertising the events and programs held by the Council and building awareness of their council through their social media presence. Council members were encouraged to invite their contacts, resources and those they speak with in the community to listen to or attend a meeting and consider joining as a member.

Budgeting for and requesting budget funds for bigger Diversity Council backed events was also discussed.

c. “Words Matter” Event and Execution Plan

The “Words Matter” event will be held at the main Bristol Library which is provided to the Council free of charge. Council Members agreed to provide refreshments as private donations for attendees. With the addition of two new members, Council Member Lopes joined the planning team with Council Member Rackliffe and Kamens. Discussion followed regarding the event’s ideal format to encourage conversation at the event and encouraging additional discussion after. The Interim Chair encouraged the involvement of the Equity Leadership Team, who expressed an interest in being involved.

March 24th and March 31st are the two possible dates for the “Words Matter” event. Room availability at the library is a determining factor, and if it is held on the 24th it will replace the Diversity Council’s regular meeting for that day. Council branded t-shirts will be provided for the members to wear at this event.

VI. Adjournment

The Interim Chair called for a motion to adjourn. The motion was made by Council Member Rackliffe and was seconded by Council Member Kamens. All were in favor and the meeting adjourned at 8:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Arsego
Recording Secretary