

Diversity Council Meeting

Tuesday, April 28, 2026 at 6:30pm

Meeting Room 1-2, City Hall, 111 N. Main Street & on Zoom

Present: Interim Chair Marcus Patton, Council Members Anthony Lope (Zoom), Sandy Kamens, Jeff Israel (Zoom), David Rackliffe, Carolyn Palmquist, and Danny Palmquist

Absent: None

Guests: Deedra Willingham from the B.E.S.T. Coalition (Zoom)

I. Call to Order

The Interim Chair called the meeting to order at 6:33pm.

II. Council Attendance

The Council took attendance. All members were present and there was a quorum.

III. Public Participation

Deedra Willingham introduced herself as a member of B.E.S.T. She was attending as one of Council Member Kamens' peers, and to learn more about the Council and potential ways that B.E.S.T. and the Council may work together for the community.

IV. Approval of Meeting Minutes

a. Meeting Minutes from March 24, 2026

The Interim Chair called for a motion to approve the Minutes from the March 24, 2026 meeting. The Motion to approve was made by Council Member Carolyn Palmquist, and it was seconded by Council Member Rackliffe. There were no edits or updates noted. All were in favor and the Minutes were accepted into the record.

V. Current Business

a. Mantel Clock Canvas Donation

Mayor Zoppo-Sassu has accepted the Council's donation of the Mantel Clock Canvas from the Council's 2025 Mantels of the Season display at the Clock and Watch Museum to the city, and suggested they present it at an upcoming City

Council Meeting. Council Member Israel was selected to lead the presentation as the clock's designer and builder. The Interim Chair has possession of the clock and will prepare it for the presentation. All Diversity Council members are welcome to attend the agreed upon June 9, 2026 City Council Meeting.

b. "Words Matter" Follow Up

The Council discussed the "Words Matter" event they held at the Bristol Public Library on March 31, 2026. Discussion included appreciation for the media coverage provided by The Bristol Press, the Bristol Edition, and Channel 8 TV News.

The consensus was that conversation at the event was robust, with the panel and interactive session encouraging good conversation which was the goal of the event. The Council would have liked to see more in attendance but still felt it was effective and informative while not being overwhelming.

Council Member Lopes provided his perspective from representing the Diversity Council on the panel for the event, and Council Member Israel raised interest in holding it quarterly.

The Interim Chair revisited the interest in live streaming future events. He has seen these community programs as a way to foster personal interaction vs. distancing with online as was done out of necessity through the Covid-19 pandemic.

Discussion followed including the logistics of managing the online audience comments and questions while also leading the in-person conversation. Council Member Carolyn Palmquist recommended the live feed be set up at the back of the room vs. the front with a designated liaison for help with the online attendees including fielding their questions and comments.

c. Cash Mob Event Scheduled: Bristol Scoops

- Execution and Appearance

The Interim Chair updated the Council on the Cash Mob event scheduled for May 6, 2026 as selected by Lola, owner of Bristol Scoops. It will be a full day from 2pm to 9pm, with two specials offered in two different time frames.

Promotion information has been communicated on Bristol Talks and other online platforms and will continue throughout event day. The Council was asked to share the information out to their social media as well. Creation of a Facebook Event was also suggested. It was noted that Vegan and dairy free options are available at Bristol Scoops.

VI. New Business

a. Tee-Shirt Purchase and Delivery

The Interim Chair would like the Council Members to see the tee shirt quality options to choose the one they prefer for themselves before placing an order. Shirt quality samples will be available for the members at their convenience in the foyer at Primo Press. The goal is for the Council to have the shirts in use for the next group event.

b. West End Association / Rockwell Festival

The Interim Chair had spoken with Dave Haberfeld of the West End Association and would like him present at a Council meeting to share his insights on planning and running the event. A Special Meeting for the Diversity Council may be planned to facilitate this discussion and exchange of information.

Discussion followed including extending an invitation to other community groups to join in the conversation, gauge interest and execution. Council Member Danny Palmquist shared about the Bristol Creative, a group of Bristol artists that meet monthly at Creative Art Jam Co. The Arts & Culture Committee was mentioned among others, followed by discussion about rebranding the Rockwell Event, and the potential to move it inside in the spring. There is no specific event date at this time.

c. Diversity Council “Passport” Idea

- Special Meeting Date Options
- Partnering Options

The Interim Chair spoke about the idea of a Diversity Council Passport that would promote in-person shopping at non-food based Bristol businesses. The Passport could serve as an alternative to the Cash Mob event which is traditionally and predominately food based.

Discussion followed including the type of passport (paper vs. electronic), the ways to record the in-store purchases (stamps, QR codes, shared worksheet),

and prize distribution (most visited vs. prizes at set number of visits). Peter Bailey was mentioned as a friend of the Council who is an IT professional for his input and knowledge on an electronic tracking option.

d. Council Roundtable News and Notes

Council Member Carolyn Palmquist reported on the Bristol Pride Seed Paper Making program held in conjunction with the Opportunity Collective at the Bristol Bazaar for Earth Day. Around 40 people attended and the Community Garden which opens Saturday, May 2, 2026 was discussed with those guests. Melina Floyd secured donations of tools and materials for the garden which will help with the spring cleanup of the space. Donations of new plantings are welcome.

Bristol Pride will be hosting a Crow Party on June 27, 2026 at the Bristol Historical Society. At a Crow Party, guests dress all in black and bring trinkets to trade. Snacks, music, and activities for kids will be provided. In October there will be a fantasy themed Pride Ball at Ventana's on N. Main Street.

Further discussion regarding Pride Month allies and connections followed. Members of the ESPN community were among those at the seed paper making event who expressed interest in more participation. The Interim Chair will connect with ESPN and report back to the Council.

The Vintage Co-Op is partnering with local authors and poets for a regular program called Authors & Antiques to showcase their books and serve as a community space. These programs will highlight one published writer at a time, with their signed books available for purchase in the store for a designated month. Additionally, one day that month will serve as an Open House style Meet the Author and discounted shopping day. April's one day event saw visitors from Woodstock, NY, West Hartford, Avon, and Wethersfield among the approximately 40 people in attendance.

The Interim Chair took a moment to express how and why these events, among others noted, contribute to the diversity and vibrancy in Bristol. Members were encouraged to think of possible new members to join the Council, and to revisit the role of Vice Chair for the committee.

IX. Adjournment

The Interim Chair called for a motion to adjourn. The motion to adjourn was made by Council Member Rackliffe and was seconded by Council Member Kamens. All were in favor and the meeting adjourned at 8:19pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Arsego

Recording Secretary