

Diversity Council Meeting

Tuesday, May 26, 2026 at 6:30pm
Meeting Room 1-2, City Hall, 111 N. Main Street & on Zoom

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

Absent: None

Guests: Sharon Arsego, 21 Seymour St., Bristol
Peter Bailey, 217 Bradley St., Bristol

I. Call to Order

The Interim Chair called the meeting to order at 6:31pm.

II. Council Attendance

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

III. Public Participation

Sharon Arsego shared information regarding an initiative focused on promoting dementia awareness, and a goal to make Bristol a more dementia friendly city. Arsego had attended a workshop on the subject at City Hall which is her place of employment, and felt that the initiative aligned well with the Diversity Council's goal to both continue the conversation about diverse communication styles and inclusion for all Bristol residents.

Discussion followed including what it is like for someone living with dementia, and how the training is designed to help raise awareness in general as it relates to interactions with people experiencing dementia. Diversity Council members shared personal knowledge of the disease's impact in the lives of immediate family members. Fellow guest Peter Bailey suggested it would be a good to pair up with the City's Commission for Persons with Disabilities on this.

The Interim Chair appreciated the information and the training packet that was provided. He will look through them, and Arsego will follow up with the trainer's name and contact information.

Note: The name of the trainer is Lynn Litwinczyk, M.S. CCC-SLP, from Bristol Hospital, and the program is called a Dementia Friendly Community (DFC) Session.

IV. Approval of Meeting Minutes

a. Meeting Minutes from April 28, 2026

The Interim Chair called for a motion to approve the Minutes from the April 28, 2026 Meeting. Council Member Kamens made the motion to approve. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Israel. There were no edits or updates noted. All were in favor and the Minutes passed into the record.

V. Current Business

a. Cash Mob Results

The Interim Chair noted the following Cash Mob results, and some viral news about their business, with the Council:

- Bristol Scoops reported a bump in sales starting the Wednesday before the Cash Mob. That was the original Cash Mob date (it was rescheduled due to the prediction of poor weather). The Council also noted the generous offerings made by the business for purchases made that day.
- Bristol Scoops went viral before the Cash Mob as news of their Jamaican/Caribbean ice cream roll slices spread. Social media and many news outlets covered the story with over 100k views on social media. Customers drove long distances and waited in the rain specifically to purchase the dessert.

The Interim Chair praised the owner, Lola Normil-Mangal, for leaning in to her heritage where this dessert originates from. She is a baker and has incorporated those skills with the existing ice cream shop menu to build it out. Discussion followed, concluding with the suggestion that the City's Economic and Community Development Department be made aware of the shop's boom and growth needs. The Recording Secretary agreed to notify the department Director.

b. West End Association / Rockwell Festival Options

The Interim Chair reported that he'd spoken with Bristol Poet Laureate and co-founder of Creative Bristol, Tom Lagasse, about their interest in hosting an art/community event in lieu of the loss of the Rockwell Festival this year. Creative

Bristol has since pulled back on organizing an event based on the expected magnitude given time frame if it is to be held this year.

Further discussion on the subject of the Council hosting a similar event led to the same understanding regarding time frame and size of the project. It was agreed that further discussion on hosting the event would be tabled at this time, but they will consider a Spring event in 2027.

Council Member Kamens revisited tabling opportunities at area events including the Rockwell Summer Concert Series and the Mum Festival. Discussion followed. The Diversity Council "Passport" idea and a list of other possible talking points and handouts were considered as information the council could share while attending the events. The Interim Chair noted that members would need to commit to coverage and to consider their schedules accordingly.

c. Tee-Shirt Purchase Options

The Interim Chair brought in tee shirt samples for the Council to see in person. Each member is encouraged to choose their preferred shirt while the Diversity Council logo will be the same on all of them. The shirts are approximately \$10 to \$20 each, are being purchased with the personal funds of the Council and from Primo Press in Bristol.

VI. New Business

a. Cash Mob 2nd Quarter Overview

The Council discussed returning to the original Cash Mob voting process of accepting nominations from the public and doing this style of voting once a year as "The People's Choice". This would be instead of the Council choosing the type of business or other factors and then providing the list for voting. Discussion followed. Council Member Carolyn Palmquist suggested a Cash Mob for farm stands that could include honey and maple syrup businesses as well. Additional discussion followed that included timing of available produce and general logistics.

A motion was brought forward to make farm stands the focus of the next Cash Mob. Council Member Rackliffe made the motion which was seconded by Council Member Lopes.

It was agreed that members would first reach out to vendors at the Bristol Farmers Market starting June 20, 2026. Once those conversations take place it will be discussed further with the Council.

All were in favor and the Motion was accepted into the record.

b. Diversity Council “Passport”

Dan Mena was meant to be at tonight’s meeting and was unable to attend. This item will be revisited at the June meeting.

c. Back-to-School Community Backpack Event (Hubbell School)

Regina Capozzi is a Social Worker at Hubbell School reached out to the Interim Chair to gauge their interest in participating in the 2nd Annual Community Back Pack Event for students on August 22, 2026 from 2:00pm to 2:30pm.

There is no fee to participate and a \$5 donation per adult that attends is being requested. Funds raised will go towards programs at the school. Ms. Capozzi was unable to attend tonight’s meeting to present her request and answer questions in person.

The Council agreed that more information is needed before committing to the request. Due dates and best type of support the Council can provide would need to be confirmed. The Council was pleased to receive the invitation from Ms. Capozzi as their goal is to be a resource for the community.

b. Council Roundtable News and Notes

The Miss Connecticut Pageant will be held at the Rockwell Theater at BAIMS the last full week in June, with the main event being held June 27, 2026. Reigning Miss CT Teen Haylee Patton will be relinquishing her crown, former Diversity Council Chair Jayme Bianca is competing in the Miss CT portion of the event, and former Mayor Jeff Caggiano is one of the judges. This is the first time the Miss America and Miss CT Organizations have held their pageants in Bristol.

Council Member Israel will not be able to attend the June 9, 2026 City Council Meeting to present the Council’s Mantels of the Season mosaic clock to the city. Other Council members agreed to attend in his place.

June 23rd is the next Diversity Counsel Meeting. The Interim Chair won’t be able to attend the July 28th meeting. The Council discussed canceling the July Regular Meeting.

The Motion to cancel the July 28, 2026 meeting of the Diversity Council was made by Council Member Rackliffe and was seconded by Council Member Kamens. All were in favor and the Motion passed into the record. The Recording Secretary will make the proper notification to the Clerk's Office.

The following meeting is August 25, 2026.

An overview of the proposed Diversity Council "Passport" idea was provided for the benefit of guest Peter Bailey. The possibility of a digital passport lent the Council to consider Mr. Bailey for assistance as he is a Systems Architect in IT and friend of the Council. Discussion followed and Mr. Bailey was invited to attend the next meeting when Dan Mena is expected to then hold a more detailed discussion.

IX. Adjournment

With no further discussion at this time, the Interim Chair called for a motion to adjourn. The motion was made by Council Member Rackliffe and seconded by Council Member Lopes. All were in favor and the meeting adjourned at 8:32pm

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Arsego

Recording Secretary