



**Diversity Council
Special Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, May 28, 2024 at 6:00PM
Meeting Room 3-1 and on Zoom**

Attendees:

Jaymie Bianca – Chair, Council Members Marcus Patton, Alison Rae Willette – Vice Chair, David MacGregor Rackliffe, Jeffrey Israel (Zoom), Sandra Kamens (Zoom), Jordan Lopez, and Tony Lopes

Absent: Council Member Olivia Chapdelaine

Guests: Ofc. Nicholas Travisano – Bristol Police Dept, Ofc. D. Clarke, Bristol Police Dept., Ofc. MJ Fisher, Bristol Police Dept.

1. Call to Order

Chair Jaymie Bianca called the meeting to order at 6:04PM and welcomed everyone to the Special Meeting which would start with the Panel Discussion with the Bristol Police Department.

2. Public Participation

There was no Public Participation.

3. Current Business

a. Panel Discussion – Diversity and Inclusion with Bristol Police Officers

Jaymie Bianca thanked Council Member Marcus Patton for arranging with the officers from the Bristol Police Department (BPD) to be on the Council's Panel. She then asked each officer to introduce themselves and share how long they've been with the BPD.

Officers Nicholas Travisano, D. Clarke, and Ofc. MJ Fisher then responded to questions with Jaymie serving as moderator for the discussion:

Q. Why did each officer choose to be in law enforcement?

A. Officer Clarke had previously worked as a Corrections Officer for a youth facility and felt he could be of help to that population before they were incarcerated. Office Travisano currently serves as a School Resource Officer and had seen family members serve in law enforcement as a model for him. Officer Fisher also had family in law enforcement but not many women.

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Q. What's a typical day like for them on the force?

A. Officer Clarke said his day will vary based on the types of calls he receives, though they are typically medical and disturbance calls. Officer Travisano, being a School Resource Officer, sees the same people each day, and part of his work is addressing concerns presented such as students engaging in behavior where he, the school and the parents work together in an effort to curb the activity. Officer Fisher is a Field Officer Trainer which involves her training new officers, reviewing calls they've been on and filing the reports.

Q. What, if any, community involvement they participate in outside of working in the BPD?

A. Officers Fisher and Travisano both highlighted the Special Olympics, with the Torch Run coming up to open the 2024 Summer Games. Officer Clarke volunteers with the youth summer basketball program which is free to attend. It is in partnership with Youth Services and the Bristol Boys and Girls Club.

Q. What advice or encouragement would they each provide to someone interested in pursuing a career in law enforcement?

A. The unanimous response from the Panel was that being a police officer requires a desire to serve others. The situations an officer encounters and assists with are most often when people are in need, and in a difficult time. It was also stated that it's a great career. Officer Mark Kichar was named as an excellent recruiter for the BPD. Anyone interested in joining the force or law enforcement was encouraged to contact him.

The officers then answered more questions from those in attendance.
Questions included:

Q. (from Council Member Marcus Patton): What do you find most rewarding about your work?

A. The officers were in agreement that they love serving the community and see their work as a calling. They are drawn to helping people.

Q. (from City of Bristol City Councilman Erick Rosengren): How helpful would it be for law enforcement to have pre-call information if someone they're helping is on the spectrum?

A. Very helpful. The goal of law enforcement is to best assist the public and most often it is when someone is in distress. Knowing any information before arriving on the scene will be useful. This

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information can be communicated through the initial 911 call, and that is applicable for all calls for help. Council Member Jordan Lopez later mentioned a blue informational envelope available in the cars driven by those on the spectrum. The information on or in the envelope alerts law enforcement when interacting with the driver.

Q. (from Council Member Marcus Patton): What would they name as an area of concern in Bristol that a program could be started to address?

A. Possibly a Citizens Academy type program that would illustrate some of what an officer experiences on the job. The goal being to build a bridge between citizens and officers.

Q. (from Council Member Marcus Patton): What kind of services does the BPD have, such as a resource or available services list?

A. The officers replied there are several resources but they are open to learning about and using more. The Council advised of the Resource List they're comprising that includes contact information from everything to housing and food resources, to what city hall departments to reach out to for various services.

Q. (from City of Bristol City Councilman Erick Rosengren): What are their thoughts on implementing a Summer Resource Officer(s) in the community?

A. The officers agreed this would be a welcome idea. They referred to discussions about returning to foot patrols once the department is fully staffed again. It was noted that recruitment is ongoing with excellent candidates applying. They noted that they like the idea of interacting and being proactive which is what foot patrols allow for.

Q. (from Council Member David MacGregor Rackliffe): What, if any, partnership exists with area services like The Prudence Crandall Center for Women which now has an office in Bristol, to assist with victims of domestic violence calls?

A. All the officers felt it would/will be an amazing resource for them and will certainly help with support for victims after the initial police response and handling of the call.

Parting comments from those in attendance included Thanks for the Officer's service to the community. The Panel Discussion ended at 6:45pm.



4. New Business

a. Announcements

Chair Jaymie Bianca announced her resignation from the Council after two years of service. She stated her appreciation for the opportunity to serve as Chair and the Council Members involvement and input in that time. Jaymie cited furthering her education, current teaching career demands, and accommodating family as reasons for resigning. She will remain available for the transition to a new Chair through mid-June. She also asked the Council to consider candidates to be the next Chair, and noted that an interim Chair is possible.

Alison Rae Willette also announced her resignation as Council Vice Chair citing work demands and a return to school to pursue a teaching career. She can remain available for a short time as well.

Jaymie's letter of resignation has been filed with the City Clerk's Office. Allison will arrange for one as well. There was discussion over the required residency of Council members, and it was confirmed that members need to be Bristol residents.

b. Upcoming events

The following events were noted among the Council:

The Special Olympics Torch Run through the City leading to the opening of the games at Southern from Thursday to Sunday this coming week.

Juneteenth Celebration at the NE Carousel Museum has just been announced. *(Details were noted after the meeting and added to the Minutes for the record)*: Wednesday, June 19, 2024 from 4:00 - 8:00 PM

5. Adjournment

The Chair called for a motion to adjourn. The motion was made by Council Vice Chair Allison Rae Willette and seconded by Council Sandra Kamen. All were in favor and the meeting adjourned at 7:02pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sharon Arsego
Recording Secretary

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