

Diversity Council Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, May 27, 2025 at 6:30pm
Hybrid Meeting: In-Person and on Zoom
Meeting Room 1-2, City Hall, 111 N. Main St., Bristol, CT

Attendees: Marcus Patton – Interim Chair, Council Members Sandra Kamens, Tony Lopes, Jeff Israel, and David Rackliffe

Absent: City Council Member, Marck Dickau

Guests: Mayor Jeff Caggiano
Peter Bailey
Cheryl Thibeault, City Council Member, District 3

I. Call to Order

Interim Chair Patton called the meeting to order at 6:34pm. There was a quorum.

II. Approval of Minutes

- a. Minutes from the March 25, 2025 Regular Meeting
- b. Minutes from the April 8, 2025 Special Meeting
The Interim Chair called for a motion to approve both the March 25, 2025 Meeting Minutes and the April 8, 2025 Special Meeting Minutes. Council Member Rackliffe made the motion to approve. The motion was seconded by Council Member Kamens. There were no corrections or edits. All were in favor and the Minutes were received into record.

III. Council attendance and introductions

Council Members introduced themselves.

IV. Public Participation

Peter Bailey, 217 Bradley St., Bristol came to the meeting after attending the Unity in the Community discussion held in April, and is interested in learning more about the Diversity Council.

V. Current Business

- a. City of Bristol umbrella vs Task Force after new information
 - Fundraising Opportunities
 - Membership Growth

The Interim Chair updated the Council on discussions with the mayor regarding their request to become a Task Force under the Mayor's office. Discussion followed, including adding members to the Council. A Task Force is created with a specific mission and start and end which is not an immediate fit for the Diversity Council. The Council's reasons for wanting to move to a Task Force are fundraising and to grow membership without needing political party representation. The Council's long-term goal is to transition into a not-for-profit organization.

Mayor Caggiano arrived at 7:15pm and discussion continued with him present with points of clarification on the choice of becoming a Task Force or a Council being made. The mayor emphasized that he sees the benefit of the Diversity Council and supports them, and that organization and community involvement is key for them. He will also appoint additional members that the Interim Chair brings to him. He likes to

meet the candidate before appointing them.

The recommendation is to remain as a Council under the city to retain access to the resources they have now. Additionally, the Council can raise funds in their current format and present their plan (whether to accept a donation or to create a fundraising opportunity) to the Board of Finance for approval. Additional guidance on the process was provided by the mayor and City Council Member Cheryl Thibeault. The City Council Member also offered the Diversity Council notes regarding costs to consider and plan for when they do move from being under the city to becoming a not for profit.

Additional discussion included clarification of what constitutes a meeting among members of any city board, council or commission, and sharing of information between members and the public to best align with the Freedom of Information Act requirements. All meetings must be made public with Agendas and Minutes, etc. posted.

The consensus was that the Council would be best suited to remain in the format that they're in now and use the time and resources to set themselves up to be the not for profit which is their ultimate goal.

b. Diversity Council Event: Meet & Greet (Review)

- Discuss thoughts and opinions on Meet & Greet event

The Council discussed feedback on the Unity in the Community event held in April. Overall, the event was encouraging in both content and attendance of between 40 to 50 people. Logistical ideas for future events were discussed, including marketing and ways to follow up with attendees. Kudos were given to the moderator, journalist Mike Chaiken.

VI. New Business

a. Strategies and Ideas for Future DC Events and Schedule Cadences

- Cash Mob
- Town Hall Event
- Words Matter (Cultural Conversation Words and their Meanings)
- Council Members Present and Discuss Ideas

The Council discussed bringing back the Cash Mob as community engagement in support of Bristol businesses. Options on how to enhance participation and promotion of the businesses was discussed. A town hall event was also discussed as an idea. A Words Matter community conversation was encouraged more towards the holidays.

Discussion about ways to best bring the community together followed. Logistics on running the cash mob, and both the types and timing of events to follow after the Unity in the Community event were also discussed.

The Interim Chair called for a vote to adopt responsibility to run the Cash Mob. The motion was made by Council Member Lopes and seconded by Council Member Israel. All were in favor and the Motion was accepted into the record.

The Interim Chair expressed thanks for City Council Members Cheryl Thibeault, Erick Rosengren and the mayor who consistently attend meetings and show their support for the Diversity Council.

b. Commitments on Partnerships and Liaison Representation

- Council Members select June Partnerships and Meeting Attendance

The Interim Chair provided members with a list of all the city's boards, councils and commissions with information on meeting dates and times, as well as their focus. Council Members were asked to review the list and decide which meetings they'd like to attend as a liaison for the Diversity Council. The goal is to gather information as well as share about what the Diversity Council is doing when speaking in

the Public Participation segment of those meetings. This will be continued at the next meeting.

VII. Notable Events, News and Notes

The events as listed in the posted Agenda can all be found online at <https://bristolallheart.com/events/> which is continually updated as events are submitted. Residents are encouraged to visit the site to see the variety of community events taking place at any given time.

VIII. Adjournment

The Interim Chair called for the meeting to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Council Member Lopes. All were in favor and the meeting adjourned at 9:10pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Arsego
Recording Secretary