

Diversity Council Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, June 24, 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 (Zoom), and David Rackliffe

Absent: City Council Member, Marck Dickau, and Council Member Jeff Israel

Guests: None

I. Call to Order

Interim Chair Patton called the meeting to order at 6:30pm. There was a quorum.

II. Approval of Minutes

a) Minutes from the May 27, 2025 Regular Meeting

It was suggested that the voting on the meeting minutes from May 27, 2025 was moved to the end of the meeting to allow time for all members to review them before voting. Council Member Kamens made the motion which was seconded by Council Member Lopes. All were in favor and the motion carried.

III. Council Attendance

Present Council Members were noted. Council Member Rackliffe was on route to the meeting.

IV. Public Participation

There was no Public Participation.

V. Current Business

a) Update on the start of the Cash Mob

- Discuss selection process
- Discuss cadence

The revival of a cash mob was discussed in further detail. The history and implementation process of the cash mob was reviewed. There is excitement from residents to have it brought back. Logistics of the cash mob include overseeing an online poll through the Bristol Talks Facebook Group. The Interim Chair had previously added a video feature on the businesses in the running to grow interest ahead of the event. Communication with the area businesses is crucial, including the days that would work best for them (staffing, hours, prep time), and what promotion or special offer they'd like to focus on.

Running the cash mob again requires scheduling and monitoring posts and online polling. Additional discussion includes the frequency of the cash mobs as part of the larger picture of the community building events that the Diversity Council will offer in a year. Dave Haberfeld, who previously ran the event, has offered to be a consultant for it.

Additional discussion continued, including best ways to select cash mob participants, the rotation of businesses that are not initially voted in and limiting winners to once a year in order to provide more exposure and opportunity to be chosen. Cash retail and restaurant businesses will be the focus. Ideas for selection included providing descriptions of the businesses and opening up voting based on the information and fun facts provided. The Council expressed an interest in speaking with the Executive Director of the city's Economic and Community Development Department (ECD) for a list of businesses to work from. The Council wants to provide a mix of both new and existing businesses for cash mob voting. A summer kick off date was discussed, with the cash mob alternating between other Diversity Council events throughout the year. Additional cash mobs could be added to the event schedule depending on the demand.

b) Next Diversity Council Event

- **Discuss thoughts on options and best dates**
- **Town Hall with candidates: Words Matter Event; Softball Game (BPD, BFD and Teachers)**

Ideas for the next Diversity Council Event following the April 2025 Meet and Greet were discussed. A softball game was in high favor among Council Members with the thought of holding it at the end of the summer. Ideas for community involvement included a back-to-school backpack and supplies drive or donations, and a bit of a local fair feel. Previous similar events had ESPN involvement with autograph signings, and they could be invited to participate in some way for this event. Muzzy Field was a favorite location if it is available. Possible event name: We Are One.

The Words Matter event was also encouraged, with writers, poets and English teachers among those the Council considered to lead the program. The focus would be on how the words we use with each other hold weight, meaning and power, and how one's perception and experience with them varies how those words are received. This event would be considered for between Thanksgiving and the winter holiday season and be the last Council event of the year.

The Interim Chair will invite Josh Mederios, Director of the city's Parks, Recreation, Youth and Community Services Department, to the next meeting to discuss the logistics of the sports game idea. The Council was asked to bring additional ideas for specifics for these event to the August meeting.

VI. New Business

a) Commitments on Partnerships and Liaison Representation (July)

The Council Members identified the next city meetings they would attend as follows:

Council Member Rackliffe - Youth Commission and Economic and Community Development

Council Member Lopes – Inland Wetlands Conservation

Interim Chair Patton – Board of Park Commissioners and City Council

Council Member Kamens - City Ordinance and Arts and Culture Commission

At this time the Minutes from the May 27, 2025 Regular Meeting were voted on with Council Member Rackliffe making the motion to approve. The motion was seconded by Council Member Kamens. All were in favor and the minutes were accepted into the record.

VIII. Adjournment

The meeting was called to adjourn by the Interim Chair at 7:45pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Arsego
Recording Secretary