

Diversity Council Special Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, July 29, 2025 at 7:00pm

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, David Rackliffe, and Jeff Israel (Zoom)

Absent: City Council Member, Mark Dickau

Guests: Carolyn and Daniel Palmquist, 678 Pine Street, Bristol
Mike Chaiken, Bristol Edition

I. Call to Order

Interim Chair Patton called the meeting to order at 7:00pm. There was a quorum. The Interim Chair reminded everyone that this was a Special Meeting and as such, only topics on the agenda could be discussed.

II. Approval of Minutes

a) Minutes from the June 24, 2025 Regular Meeting

Interim Chair Patton called for a motion to approve the Minutes. The motion to approve was made by Council Member Rackliffe and was seconded by Council Member Kamens. All were in favor with no changes or corrections, and the Minutes were accepted into the record.

III. Council Attendance

Present Council Members were noted.

IV. Public Participation

There was no Public Participation.

Council Member Israel took the opportunity to share information about the upcoming Bristol Interfaith Coalition Peace Walk on Saturday, August 23, 2025 from 11am to 1pm at the Federal Hill Green. He mentioned it might be a good opportunity for the Diversity Council to be present for introductions and sharing information about their goals, recruitment, etc. Council Member Israel has access to the Diversity Council's Facebook page and the Council agreed that he would post the event details there.

V. Current Business

a) Updates on city meetings attended

The Interim Chair was unable to attend the July meetings he had planned for. He will attend those meetings in August, with a focus on the City Council Meeting (Board of Park Commissioners and City Council).

Council Member Lopes was also unable to attend the July meeting he had planned for. He will attend the meeting in August (Inland Wetlands Commission).

Council Member Kamens attended the following meetings and provided the Council with a brief report about each of them:

City Ordinance and Arts & Culture Commission: The City Ordinance meeting included discussion about open burning and DEEP fire pit guidelines. The city needs to hold a public hearing as they consider adopting the DEEP's fire pit guidelines for Bristol. It was noted that open burning is illegal in the city.

The Arts & Culture Commission: a Halloween themed coffin race event on October 25, 2025 will take place, and the annual Halloween Spooktacular will not be held this year. BEST will set up at the Mum Festival at the end of September with room for Diversity Council information, and the Arts & Culture Commission is receptive to provide printing support to the Diversity Council for flyers and t-shirts for the members for events.

Council Member Rackliffe was unable to attend the July meetings he had planned for and he will attend in August. He is especially interested in attending the Economic & Community Development Board Meeting (Youth Commission and Economic & Community Development).

Council Member Israel will need to attend his meetings in September due to his current August schedule. (Those meetings will be noted at the next Diversity Council Meeting).

b) Update on Softball Game

The Interim Chair updated the Council on discussions he had with Morris "Rippy" Patton and Dr. Joshua T. Medeiros, Ed.D., CPRE, Superintendent of Parks, Recreation, Youth & Community Services, City of Bristol. While the We Are One softball game itself is a welcome idea with support from Dr. Medeiros, the limited time frame to plan a game on the scale they Council had discussed before the beginning of the school year was an issue.

Discussion followed, including Dr. Medeiros' offer of a free city field rental (field of the Council's choice for the event) for the game when it is scheduled. A review of the various organizations and connections made for this event previously was shared with Council Members to understand the broad and deep scope of the event which previously included support from the unions, the Police and Fire departments, and ESPN.

The Council agreed to revisit the We Are One softball game for spring 2026 vs. fall 2025. In the meantime, previous connections will be contacted to gauge interest in being involved in 2026. Members will individually contact the Interim Chair with their ideas and/or input for the event and were reminded to avoid any communication of three or members at one time as it would constitute as a meeting. The Interim Chair can gather the input he is provided with and bring it to the next Diversity Council meeting to share and discuss with all Council Members.

c) Update on the Cash Mob

The details of how to choose the first round of Bristol businesses were further discussed as the re-launch of the Cash Mob moves forward. Options included the Diversity Council choosing the business that would kick off the re-launch, or moving forward with a round of voting as was done in the past. The Bristol Talks Facebook Group would be the platform for the Cash Mob promotion and voting under the guidance of Dave Haberfeld who had run the

Cash Mob in the past.

Discussion followed, including the voting time frame, number of times one person can vote, holiday themes such as Cinco de Mayo, and celebrations of the various cultures, plus restaurant groupings and then retail groupings, and kicking off with businesses that have been open for one year or less.

It was also mentioned that with this being the revival of the Cash Mob, the Diversity Council can offer new guidelines while communicating to the residents what the new process is and how the Council envisions this look going forward. The frequency of when the Cash Mob would be held was also discussed.

VI. New Business

a) Recruiting Strategy

Interim Chair Patton opened a discussion about how to best recruit new members for the Diversity Council at this stage in their rebuild. The question was posed whether recruitment should be focused on bringing in people with specific skill sets, such as marketing and event organization, or more focused on their passion for what the Diversity Council's goals mission and goals are. Discussion followed.

The consensus about Council Members was to recruit people who have the shared passion. A flyer will be created to let residents know the Council is looking to increase its numbers, the Council's mission and goals, and contact information to be considered for membership. The Interim Chair will report back on responses received at the next meeting. Previous Council members will be considered if they reply to the notice.

b) Fundraising Strategy

Formatting of the Words Matter event was discussed along with how it would be held and funded. For larger events where more funding is needed, the Council needs to bring their request to the City Council and plan the preparation and presentation timeline accordingly. For the Words Matter event, as it is smaller in nature, Council Members agreed to personally contribute towards the refreshments as was done at the Unity in the Community event in April.

For the setting, the Council considered location options, including Creative Jam Art Co. where the monthly open mic nights are held on the last Wednesday of each month, as well as the Bristol Public Library which would be at no charge, and the atmosphere of the Bristol Historical Society.

Having this event in December with a holiday and celebration setting drew interest among the Council. Additional details were discussed including inviting local writers, poets, and people who use words as a profession to serve on a panel with the possibility of time allotted for attendees to also speak. The Interim Chair will research some location options and report back at the next meeting.

c) August Meetings

This item was discussed earlier in the meeting during Agenda Item V. A. and no further discussion was held on it at this time.

VIII. Adjournment

Interim Chair Patton called for a motion to adjourn. The motion was made by Council Member Rackliffe and was seconded by Council Member Lopes. All were in favor and the meeting adjourned at 8:28pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Arsego
Recording Secretary