

Diversity Council Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, September 30, 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, Tony Lopes, and Jeff Israel (Zoom)

Absent: City Council Member, Mark Dickau, Council Member David Rackliffe and Sandra Kamens

Guests: None

I. Call to Order

Interim Chair Patton called the meeting to order at 6:44pm after a delay due to technical issues. There was a quorum.

II. Approval of Minutes

a) Minutes from the August 26, 2025 Regular Meeting

Interim Chair Patton called for a motion to approve the Minutes of the August 26, 2025 Meeting. The motion to approve was made by Council Member Lopes and was seconded by Council Member Israel. 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 with brief introductions by the members.

IV. Public Participation

There was no Public Participation.

V. Current Business

a) City Meeting Updates

The Interim Chair provided a review of items covered at the monthly City Council Meeting he attended in September. Items touched on were athletic acknowledgements, a proposed extension of Route 72 and Brackett Park. It was noted this is solely a State of Connecticut funded project. Additional discussion at that meeting included a father of a special needs child and his concern with the Board of Education's leadership in that area.

Upcoming events:

- West Cemetery Lantern Tour hosted by the Bristol Historical Society Saturday, October 4th
- Downtown Live Tribute Bands through the Fall season <https://downtownlivect.com/>
- Bristol Fall Festival hosted by Bristol Pride Saturday, October 25th <https://bristolpride.org/>
- Hispanic Heritage Month Festival hosted by the Bristol CT Downtown Committee Saturday, October 11th at Ventana's on N. Main Street

The remaining Diversity Council members present did not have September City Hall meetings to report on.

b) Cash Mob Results & Event Execution

Interim Chair Patton provided an update on the return of the Cash Mob. The voting ran for a week and the winner was Guac 'n Roll on N. Main Street. The owners are looking forward to hosting it. The Interim Chair, Dave Haberfeld and Council Member Lopes met with the owners to review the program and ideas to set them up for a successful event.

The Interim Chair made courtesy calls to all the Cash Mob candidates to make them aware that it was starting up again and to offer connections with the Council. The voting is conducted on Bristol Talks on Facebook with 600 +/- votes collected. The Bristol Edition also provided awareness of the event ahead of the voting. Interaction online and offline during the voting also increased. The Cash Mob date will be posted online and will likely be at the end of October.

c) BPS Partnership Opportunities

Discussion followed regarding partnering with the Bristol School System to collaborate with the youth from the schools for their diversity programs, and possibly bring them in on the Diversity Council leadership as a non-voting member as well. The consideration is to meet with Iris White to review this idea and the steps that need to be taken, and how and with whom.

The Recording Secretary will speak with the Town Clerk to clarify meeting guidelines and requirements as this may be offsite, and how to best proceed if a quorum is present. The Interim Chair will make the initial contact with the Board of Ed and Iris White to secure a date and time. A quorum of Diversity Council members would mean a Special Meeting of the Diversity Council would need to be held with the required Agenda and postings.

d) Dave and Sandy to lead "Words Matter" Event

Council Members Rackliffe and Kamens are taking the lead planning the Words Matter event set for 4th Quarter 2025. No update on the event is available at this time as both members were absent at the meeting. Updates will be provided as they become available and at the next Diversity Council meeting(s).

VI. New Business

a) Mantels via American Clock and Watch Museum

The Diversity Council was invited to participate in this annual event at the American Clock and Watch Museum. There are a limited number of mantels in the museum and the event is a fundraiser for both the museum and the organizations that participate. For the Council, this would be an opportunity to represent the diversity of the city throughout the winter holiday season and to a large audience. The event is a contest among participants, and the dates are November 21st, 2025 to January 4th, 2026.

Discussion of how to best proceed with that representation followed. The Diversity Council members agreed they'd like to see the space ahead of time. With more upcoming opportunities to volunteer as a group, the Recording Secretary offered to confirm with the Town Clerk regarding best practices with regards to the Council's full attendance and meeting requirements. Patti Philippon, Executive Director of the museum, was present at the meeting to provide clarification on the event.

After the discussion, the Interim Chair put forth the following Motion:

Motion to accept the offer from The American Clock and Watch Museum on behalf of the Diversity Council to participate in the Mantels for the Season fundraiser for the winter of 2025.

The motion was seconded by Council Member Lopes. All were in favor and the Motion passed into the record.

Mantel ideas were then briefly discussed. An on-site visit will be scheduled to best plan their display with a division of work for collaboration.

b) Future Cash Mob Dates and Candidates

Discussion of the Cash Mob frequency followed. Quarterly events and/or focusing on specific heritage holidays in that month or season were considered. It was encouraged that winning businesses would hold their Cash Mobs on typically slower days for them to provide a solid boost. Residents are asking about the frequency of the event. There was additional discussion around the logistics of who and how to include businesses for future Cash Mobs, including the possibility of Pop-Up Cash Mobs.

c) October Meetings and Follow-Ups

The Interim Chair will attend the NAACP Meeting and the City Council Meeting in October. Council Members Lopes and Israel need to check their schedules and the city meetings for the month to best decide which they can attend. The Interim Chair also welcomed notes from the members who attend a meeting and want to share the information from it. Attendance and city meetings are encouraged in the spirit of networking and collaboration opportunities with other Councils, Boards and Commissions while also learning more about current city issues, events and topics of discussion.

The Interim Chair will also attend the anniversary celebration of the Beulah AME Zion Church 10am on Sunday, October 26th at 138 Circle Street in the Forestville section of Bristol. His grandfather helped found the church, and the celebration is open to all.

The Recording Secretary will provide a proposed 2026 Diversity Council Meeting schedule to be voted on at the October meeting. The Town Clerk requires the schedule leading into the new year and the Diversity Council has October and November meetings for voting.

VIII. Adjournment

Interim Chair Patton called for a motion to adjourn. The motion was made by Council Member Lopes and was seconded by Council Member Israel. All were in favor and the meeting adjourned at 7:58pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Arsego
Recording Secretary