

Diversity Council Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, October 28, 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 (Zoom), Jeff Israel, Sandra Kamens, and David Rackliffe

Absent: City Council Member, Mark Dickau

Guests: None

I. Call to Order

Interim Chair Patton called the meeting to order at 6:34pm, and requested a motion to move up item **III.**

Council Attendance. The motion was made by Council Member Rackliffe and seconded by Council Member Kamens. All were in favor, and Council Attendance was taken.

III. Council Attendance

Present: Interim Chair Patton, Council Members Kamens, Israel, Rackliffe, and Lopes (Zoom)

Absent: City Council Liaison, Mark Dickau

There was a quorum.

II. Approval of Minutes

a. Approval of Minutes from September 30, 2025

Interim Chair Patton made a motion to approve the Minutes of the September 30, 2025 meeting. The motion was seconded by Council Member Israel. There were no changes or updates to the Minutes. All were in favor and the Minutes were accepted into the record.

IV. Public Participation

There was no Public Participation.

V. Current Business

a. City Meeting Updates

Council Members reported on the following city meetings they attended since the previous Diversity Council meeting:

Council Members Rackliffe, Lopes and Israel were unable to attend meetings, and Council Member Kamens had no additional updates.

The Interim Chair attended the October 2025 City Council meeting noting it was the last meeting for Sebastian Panioto who had served as Diversity Council Liaison in the past. Interim Chair Patton extended the Diversity Council's appreciation for Sebastian's service to this Council during his time on City Council. City Council Member Erick Rosengren asked the Interim Chair to share the details of the Cash Mob which the Diversity Council is facilitating.

Hope for the Homeless, a comedy show fundraiser, will be held on November 20, 2025 to benefit the homeless within the city. A young girl is collecting bottles and cans to purchase and assemble 100 supply bags for the city's homeless. Promotion for this fundraiser will be done through various city channels including the Diversity Council's Facebook page.

b. Cash Mob Day 10/29/25

Cash Mob returns Wednesday, October 29, 2025 at Guac 'n Roll on North Main Street from 10am to 10pm. Discussion of Diversity Council member's availability followed. Interim Chair Patton will be there most of the day posting on social media and assisting the Guac 'N Roll team as needed.

For the Cash Mob, free salsa and chips and refreshers are being offered with each take out order, while supplies last. Other businesses have expressed interest in participating in future Cash Mob events based on the current conversations around this event. Members shared how residents have been recognizing them in regards to promoting the event and Guac 'n Roll shared that people coming have been asking about it.

c. Update on "Words Matter" Event

Council Member Rackliffe requested the "Words Matter" event be rescheduled for the first quarter in 2026 due to demands on his schedule for the fourth quarter of 2025 for other non-profits he works with. Interim Chair Patton took a poll of the members to see about changing the event date, and discussion followed.

Seeing that there were no objections to moving the "Words Matter" event to the first quarter of 2026, the Interim Chair made the following Motion:

Motion to postpone the Diversity Council's "Words Matter" event from fourth quarter 2025 to first quarter 2026.

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

VI. New Business

a. Diversity Council meets with Iris White (Superintendent of Schools)

Interim Chair Patton and Council Member Rackliffe met with Iris White, the Superintendent of Schools, to discuss inviting high school students to be part of the Diversity Council, and what that would look like. Both Council Members agreed that Superintendent White was very receptive to seeing this initiative moving forward with Bristol Central High School and Bristol Eastern High School. Logistics discussed included identifying school advisors, making those connections with the Superintendent's help, and facilitating meetings to best allow for the consistent student attendance and participation. Additional discussion followed.

b. Holiday's Mantels Program at American Clock and Watch Museum

The Diversity Council has confirmed they can participate in this event at the invitation of the American Clock and Watch Museum. It is a social event for the Council and not considered an official meeting provided that no business is discussed or voted on. All Council Members agreed to hold to those requirements to keep this as a non-Council Meeting.

Council Member Israel was among the members who went to the museum to see the space and the mantel designated by the Museum for the Council. They will be in a room that features the clock and watch work and pieces by makers of African American heritage, and the museum has encouraged the Council to incorporate items from their exhibit into their mantel design.

Mantel designs and themes were then discussed at length, including inviting artwork submissions from area students, and the best way to facilitate that. The Interim Chair will approach art teachers with the idea and guidelines and report back to the Council within the week. The turnaround time for planning and collection of art work is tight with setup days being November 17th and 18th, the Open House is November 20th, and the event is open to the public on November 21st. The running theme is "It's Always Time for Diversity".

c. October Meetings and Follow-Ups

Interim Chair Patton will attend the November City Council Meeting, and the NAACP Meeting if he is able to leave a previous commitment in time to attend. Council Member Kamens will attend the November Public Works Meeting. Council Member Rackliffe will attend the November ECD Board Meeting and the City Council Meeting. Council Members Israel and Lopes will need to consult their schedules before committing.

d. Vote on the proposed 2026 meeting schedule

The Council discussed the proposed 2026 Diversity Council meeting schedule. It was agreed to not hold a December 2026 meeting. The possibility of not holding a summer meeting was also discussed, but the Council opted to move forward with meetings from January to November 2026, and revisit the summer meeting dates as they got closer. The option to cancel one of those summer month meetings was left open for later consideration. It was noted that all meetings will be at 6:30pm and the time will be added to the official schedule for submission to the Town Clerk's Office.

With no further discussion, Council Member Rackliffe put for the following Motion:

Motion to approve the proposed 2026 Diversity Council Meeting Schedule with the exception of the December 2026 meeting which will not be held.

The motion was seconded by Council Member Kamens. All were in favor and the motion was accepted into the record.

VII. Adjournment

With no further business to discuss, the Interim Chair entertained a motion to adjourn. The motion was made by Council Member Kamens and was seconded by Council Member Rackliffe. All were in favor and the meeting adjourned at 8:06pm

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Arsego
Recording Secretary