

Every quarter the Diversity Steering Committee meets to discuss current diversity issues as well as the ongoing implementation of the Diversity Action Plan. In the interest of city wide inclusiveness and

## **Minutes Diversity Steering Committee Tuesday, March 4, 2014 3 p.m.**

creating openness, the Diversity Steering Committee will publish a summary of items discussed. Please review the following items and contact your respective 6-Sided Partnership representative or a Diversity Steering Committee member should you have any questions or suggestions.

**Mission: To work with each other and the community to make Tempe the best place to live, work, and play.**

**Values: People...Integrity...Respect...Openness...Creativity...Quality...Diversity**

### **In Attendance**

Jackie Awosika, UAEA  
Ginny Belousek, Diversity Office  
Molly Enright, Confidential Employees  
Michelle Fedor, UAEA  
Jim Fish, GSA Co-Chair  
Jerry Hart, Senior Management Group  
Rosa Inchausti, Diversity Office  
Clarence Matherson, City Attorney's Office  
Jon O'Connor, Human Resources  
Mercedes Payne, TSA  
Michele Stokes, ADA Compliance Specialist  
Louis Telles, Human Resources

The Diversity Steering Committee (DSC) meeting began by sharing the recent Tempe Community Survey which states that "there was a significant increase, increase of more than 4% in satisfaction ratings for the City's efforts to promote diversity and inclusiveness from the 2012 survey."

Rosa then introduced the Diversity Department's new ADA Compliance Specialist, Michele Stokes. Michele shared that she worked ten years for the EEOC and recently worked for ten years with the Phoenix Parks and Recreation Department.

### **I. Human Rights Campaign Municipal Equality Index (MEI)**

Rosa explained that the MEI is a survey reviewing the best practices for municipalities regarding inclusion. Council members Woods, Navarro and Granville are looking at what can be done to increase Tempe's score. Rosa referred members to a handout outlining recommendations for 2014 asking members for DSC recommendations to bring back to the council members.

1. The first recommendation involves non-discrimination laws including employment, housing and public accommodations. Tempe already has protections in place for public accommodations. The passing of the Anti-Discrimination Ordinance adds the employment and housing components which would add twelve points to Tempe's 2014 MEI score.
2. The second section involves relationship recognition by creating a Municipal Domestic Partner Registry. Rosa explained the registry is something that is done through the City Clerk's office creating a formal recognition of domestic partners for the community, hospitals, police and fire departments. Rosa confirmed that Tempe's only hospital, Tempe St. Luke's, already recognizes domestic partners and the police department had not received any complaints regarding partner recognition.
3. Under the Municipality as Employer section, the areas that are being reviewed are requiring all city contractors to provide benefits to LGBT employees and adding transgender-inclusive healthcare benefits to Tempe's insurance package.
4. Under Municipal Services, additional points would be awarded if the Human Relations Commission was added to the Anti-Discrimination Ordinance appeal process. Rosa reported the Mayor's Office has designated Elizabeth Higgins as the Mayor's LGBT Liaison, resulting in an additional five points for 2014. Discussions with Police Chief Tom Ryff are looking into appointing GSA co-chair Detective Vince Boerbon as the LGBT Liaison for the police department. The Diversity Department is currently working on documenting the bonus point section regarding the offering of LGBT services to the youth, elderly and homeless groups.
5. In the Relationship with the LGBT Community section, bonus points are given for having an "openly LGBT elected or appointed municipal leaders". Tempe Presiding Judge Maryann Majestic has given her permission to be a role model in this section. Rosa announced that Councilmember Woods has been appointed to the Equality Arizona Board. Councilmember Woods' appointment, combined with work on the Anti-Discrimination Ordinance, will demonstrate Tempe as a city that is "pro-equality despite restrictive state law."

Jon O'Connor asked who consolidates the information and creates the standards for the MEI. Rosa replied that it comes from the Human Rights Campaign. The Human Rights Campaign is an outside organization who has done a great job of making the business case for being inclusive. The Human Rights Campaign began with a Corporation Equality Index for private businesses five years ago, followed by a Health Care Equality Index and now the Municipality Equality Index. Rosa reported the next MEI begins collecting data in April.

**A. Anti-Discrimination Ordinance Update** – Rosa reported that Tempe’s Anti-Discrimination Ordinance passed at the Thursday, February 27, 2014 City Council meeting with no opposition. When Phoenix passed a similar ordinance, approximately five hundred people spoke protesting the ordinance. DSC members were commended for their continued work and support on these types of diversity issues. Rosa reported the Mayor and City Council are considering which groups should be involved in the appeal process, when violations occur regarding the Anti-Discrimination Ordinance. Possible groups being currently considered are the Human Relations Commission and/or the Mayors Commission on Disability Concerns.

**B. Grossing Up**

Jon O’Conner began by explaining grossing up which has been further confused with recent federal changes. Tempe has offered domestic partner benefits for the past fourteen years. Because neither the federal government, nor the state of Arizona recognizes same sex marriage, benefits provided to domestic partners are taxed versus the usual pre-taxed status for married couples. Jon referenced a Tempe employee with a domestic partner, whose net pay is approximately \$920.00 per pay paycheck. In this example, the cost of paying tax on the domestic partner benefits costs the employee approximately \$60.00 per paycheck. Supreme Court decisions made in the last year, supported employees who are married in a state that recognized same sex marriages, not being required to pay the federal tax on health benefits.

Grossing up is financially compensating employees for the cost of tax differences. Jon reported a preliminary estimate of the current city cost of grossing up Tempe employees would be approximately \$90,000.00. If the compensation amounts were deposited into employee MediFlex accounts which are already pre-taxed, instead of paying monies directly to employees, the cost would decrease to approximately \$50,000.00. Grossing up means employees are not penalized for being in a domestic partner relationship.

Rosa reported Tempe currently has thirty-two active employees who have domestic partnership documents on file, six of which are same sex couples. Jon said it would be administratively prohibitive to make the adjustments per paycheck so the grossing up amounts would be paid once or twice a year. Jon explained the City would probably lean towards the MediFlex contributions because it was not only cheaper but easier administratively due the fact that ASRS retirement contributions would not be involved. Jackie compared this practice to the issue of part time employee equity benefits.

Rosa asked if the DSC members would support the grossing up concept. The consensus was the DSC would support grossing up.

**C. Transgender Benefits**

Rosa reported she went to the Health Care Committee and asked for Tempe’s health care provider to provide some preliminary figures regarding the cost associated with offering transgender benefits to Tempe employees. Rosa will be contacting Bob Enderle, HR Director for Medtronics to get information about their company provided transgender benefits and it’s impact.

Jon explained by offering transgender benefits, our health insurance company would cover transgender surgeries as well as the psychological visits that are required. The City of Tempe is self insured and would therefore incur these costs directly. Jon reported that the extra cost to add transgender benefits would be approximately \$80,000.00 per year, equaling an increase of about \$5.00 per employee per month.

Jim Fish asked if this coverage would cover employees only or include dependents. Jon confirmed dependents would also be covered. Members wanted to know how many other cities carry transgender benefits. Jon replied that neighboring cities in the Valley do not include transgender benefits but San Francisco is one example he knows that does carry transgender benefits. The possibility was discussed that offering transgender benefits may attract individuals who are interested in transgender surgeries which would make it an even more expensive benefit to be shared by all employees.

Continuing discussions wondered if offering transgender benefits might open the City to adding other elective surgeries such as gastric bypass or In Vitro Fertilization (IVF). The consensus was employee questions would include wondering why some procedures are covered and some are not. Jon stated the utilization of procedures such as IVF would be a much higher number than transgender surgeries, making IVF cost prohibitive. Rosa confirmed the process to determine if an individual is a candidate for transgender surgery is very stringent including a year of psychological testing. Jon said that he received an extensive document from Cigna establishing guidelines. Jon volunteered to send the Cigna document to DSC members. Molly said her thinking was about what would be the greatest good for the largest number of employees while being practical and viable.

Jackie asked about someone who might be unwilling to pay for transgender benefits based on religious beliefs. Jerry added that since we are a municipality, taxpayer support would be required. The consensus was that adding transgender benefits is an equality issue but not an easy decision.

Jon reported that for plans to go into effect on July first, the decision would need to be finalized in one month. Ginny asked the committee if discussions were at a point that members were ready to raise the issue with their respective groups. Molly said the current pushback might be significant considering the City's current financial position. Jon added that increased health care costs are deducted from funds available for employee pay increases. The committee members were more in favor of grossing up versus the addition of transgender benefits. Jon pointed out the grossing up issue has not yet been brought to the Financial Department. The consensus was to table the transgender benefits discussion for now and not move forward at this point.

## **II. Women In Networking (WIN) Update**

Ginny reported the next Women in Networking program will be on women's health and will be presented in April or May. Ginny added that the previous program on self defense was very successful and well attended. The final program of this current series will focus on the tools needed to promote from administrative level positions.

### **III. Mentoring Update**

Ginny handed out mentoring packets explaining the deadline to apply is April 18<sup>th</sup>. The orientation will be in May with the program beginning in June. DSC members were asked to assist by attending departmental staff meetings to present the mentoring program to employees.

### **IV. Exit Interviews Update**

Jon explained exit interviews were implemented a year ago. Employees leaving the city are sent an e-mail and asked to conduct an exit interview either on line or request a face to face with a Human Resource Specialist. Jon handed out a compilation of some of the information obtained from completed exit interviews in the past year. This document included twenty-nine exit interviews conducted on line, eighteen of which retired from the city and nine who left due to career advancement. During the same time period, 120 employees have left the city equaling approximately a 25% exit interview completion rate. Human Resources plans on redacting employee names and putting the exit interview answers onto Sharepoint with access for the DSC. Jon explained that now that enough exit interview data has been compiled, it will soon be assigned to a HR Specialist to oversee the information on a monthly basis. Any concerns noted will be brought to HR and DSC.

Advancement opportunities were found lacking in exit interviews, possibly a downside to the recent economic downturn. Jerry noted 97% of responses said they would recommend Tempe as a good place to work. Members asked if there were any areas that really stood out. Jon replied not at this point. Jon confirmed the full spreadsheet on Sharepoint will have employee's departments included. Rosa asked that exit interviews be included in future DSC agendas for discussion purposes.

### **V. Member Updates**

Louis reported larger groups in employee orientations, reflecting an increase in recruitments.

Jim explained GSA meetings are becoming more of a regional group with participation from neighboring cities. There will be a GSA social this Friday, March 7, 2014 at 5 p.m. at La Boca. The Gay Pride Parade will take place Saturday, April 5, 2014. Recent GSA meetings have included discussions regarding which police departments will be marching in the parade. A new GSA name is still being discussed. Originally the idea was to change to something more inclusive but the group may want to keep the name to better align with local high schools GSA groups. Jim reported that he and his GSA Co-Chair Vince Boerbon, met with the Mayor's LGBT Liaison, Elizabeth Higgins and will continue to meet in the future. Rosa said the LGBT Liaison was important for community members to realize they had resources available at City Hall.

Jerry shared that he was encouraged to see more LGBT acceptance on national sports teams and hoped that awareness would trickle down to the college and high school levels.

Ginny reported on a successful Unity Walk on February 1, 2014. Ginny recently received a call from Queen Creek saying their Mayor would like to be involved next year. Ginny asked members to encourage their co-workers to register for the quarterly Inclusion Training classes via ELM. Additional classes can be created if work groups do not fit into the already scheduled classes.

Rosa said she has been asked to create a list of organizations to advertise Tempe Boards and Commission openings and asked members to e-mail their ideas to her.

Jackie reported that Financial Director, Ken Jones will be speaking to UAEA members on Thursday, March 6, 2014.

Molly reported that the Police Department hiring process is now open through March 17, 2014.

**Next Quarterly Diversity Steering Committee Meeting – June 3, 2014**