

Minutes Diversity Steering Committee Tuesday, December 2, 2014 3 p.m.

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 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

Ginny Belousek, Diversity Office
Jerry Hart, Senior Management Group
Rosa Inchausti, Diversity Office
Steven Methvin, Assistant City Manager
Jeff Millen, TOA President
Jon O'Connor, Human Resources
Suzanna Olson, Human Resources
Mercedes Payne, TSA
Louis Telles, Human Resources
Brad Whitley, Firefighter Union

I. Human Rights Campaign Municipal Equality Index (MEI)

Rosa reported on the recent announcement of Tempe's MEI score of 100. Rosa thanked everyone for their work towards Tempe's perfect score and asked that members pass along the good news with thanks to the entire workforce.

II. Exit Interviews Update

Jon reported that Diversity Steering Committee members have access to exit interview information via an Excel spreadsheet on SharePoint. Currently there have been approximately fifty-two exit interviews conducted over the past year. Jon invited members to look at the collected data.

Ginny asked if exit interviews were offered for lateral moves. Jon replied no, but that possibly another process could be created to address lateral moves. Jerry added that employees making lateral moves might be reluctant to be forth right. HR is advised of all lateral moves and would be aware of any glaring problems.

Rosa said the exit interviews are an additional tool to show possible trends within departments. The next phase will include how to best get the exit interview information to directors and city managers, possibly via a quarterly report.

Jon confirmed the only redacted information are employee names. Steven inquired if a reason for leaving was included, i.e. retirement versus career advancement. Jon said the first interview question asks why the employee is leaving. Steven asked for the percentage of employees completing exit interviews. Jon said that approximately 20-25% of departing employees opt to conduct exit interviews. Jon reported that enough data has now been compiled to look at creating an exit interview report.

III. Pay Inequities

Rosa said that this was an agenda request from employee workgroups regarding some perceived pay inequities within the city. The establishment of the Diversity Steering Committee originally was to look at these type of inequities and make solution recommendations.

Rosa asked the members if they had been hearing about pay inequities as being a current issue, and what solutions could be offered. Mercedes said that TSA has been dealing with pay inequities in a certain department. One issue has been when a vacant position is given a different name so that the same job duties are associated with a higher pay. Those involved were unsure if the situation was a reclassification. An additional TSA conversation included how to get job openings posted faster.

Jon shared two issues recently discussed at the Six Sided Partnership meetings. The first involved a public works employee who for a variety of reasons was given a pay increase. The question was raised regarding how that could happen. Personnel Rules include a provision allowing the City Manager to make pay adjustments. Six Sided members asked how often that happens. Jon answered that those types of circumstances are very rare. In this specific situation, Jon explained that although he was not aware of all the issues involved, the reason was that compensation was needed to retain the employee. The second issue involved possible increases required to attract certain level employees.

Ginny shared a situation that was discussed in a TSA meeting, in which an employee was moved to another department to be eligible for a pending reclassification. Jon said it was unfair to not include specifics of these situations instead of vague discussions. The committee felt this was done to protect employee names. Rosa asked Jon for suggestions on how to hold these discussions while being sensitive to certain employees. Jon replied that names needed to be used so issues are addressed specifically but those names should be redacted for the purpose of meeting minutes.

Some situations that happen within the Personnel Rules can make employees unhappy when those changes don't benefit them. Jon said that HR is currently being hit with numerous reclassification requests. In the past, reclassifications were seen as being used to give back door salary increases. Because of that, reclassifications include very specific steps and are an extremely cautious process.

The committee's consensus was the only way to appropriately address issues is to have all the pertinent facts and not rely on hearsay. Louis added that some reclassifications actually lower employee salaries. Steven said he had just signed a Senior Planner reclassification that would allow additional employment opportunities. Mercedes said employees would like to hear those reasons from senior management. Better communication within departments would help alleviate some of the misconceptions.

Steven asked if the process involved discussing issues at Six Sided Partnership meetings and then disseminating that information to employees groups by their representatives. Jon replied that issues are usually raised at either Six Sided Partnership or Diversity Steering Committee meetings. State law requires that as public employees, information can be requested at any time.

Louis reported that HR Analysts now advise of potential compression situations before issues actually exist. Rosa said that TSA has a provision that requires a 7.5% salary range difference between supervisors and subordinates. Louis confirmed that provision has occasionally caused wage compression situations. If the differential between supervisors and their staff is too low, the incentive to advance can be weakened. Jon said that Renie has implemented a new step that has HR Analysts perform an impact review on remaining employees when special situations arise.

Ginny asked about inconsistencies in the differential between supervisors and subordinates at the deputy level. Jon said that even unclassified positions normally include a 10% promotional increase. Occasionally that increase does not reach the position's minimum range which would require an additional increase according to the Personnel Rules.

Members agreed that these situations all boil down to morale issues. Jon said that most situations fall within the parameters of what the Personnel Rules require. If that is not the case, members should determine if changes are needed. Additional transparency is also needed during the employment process.

Jon asked that requests questioning specific situations be given to Louis or Lawrence before the next meeting. HR can then pull that information together so specifics can be discussed at the DSC meeting with the understanding that specific names will be redacted. Steven asked the best way to communicate information. Mercedes said it starts with employee's managers. Louis said constant cultivating of communication is needed.

IV. Community Partnerships

Rosa shared that the Diversity Office has been hearing more from private entities such as Mountain Park Health Center who are interested in developing Diversity training and policies. Mountain Park's satellite office in Tempe is creating a Diversity Steering Committee. Mountain Park Health Centers use Virtual Relay Information (VRI) to enhance communications with differing populations. Tempe has established a vendor and is looking to acquire tablets so VRI can be used throughout the city. Mountain Park has used the VRI system to assist with a recent surge of Pacific Islanders to the Tempe community. The Diversity Office is looking to share information about the Pacific Island culture through an upcoming "Who's Your Neighbor?" program.

Ginny reported the Diversity Office was contacted by the Tempe Coalition of Managers who are interested in diversity training. Because of Tempe's wide diversity and leadership role, the Diversity Office is contacted by many organizations to assist with diversity information. Rosa reported hosting a successful exchange of international students from ASU. Suzanne asked about any regional exchange of information with neighboring communities. Rosa explained that the Human Relations Commission has a regional group that gets together quarterly to share information with neighboring communities' Human Relations Commission groups.

V. Inclusion Training Update

The 2015 Inclusion Training quarterly class schedule has been entered in ELM and is ready for registration. Rosa encouraged members to get involved as Inclusion Training Facilitators. Please contact the Diversity Office if you are interested.

VI. Challenge Day

Rosa explained the Tempe Human Relations Commission is bringing the Challenge Day program to Marcos de Niza and McClintock High Schools in January. Volunteer spots are available if you are interested in participating for one of the days.

VII. Strategic Planning Retreat

Rosa said that the Diversity Office will look into creating a Spring Retreat to look at the Diversity Steering Committee's Strategic Plan. It is a good time to re-evaluate the committee's goals. Please let Rosa know if you have any facilitator recommendations for a half day program.

VIII. Member Updates

Mercedes reported that TSA will be conducting a holiday recruitment Pizza Party.

Suzanne said she is working on having the benefit administration system ready to use for Open Enrollment. Suzanne asked for topic suggestions for education subjects. Mercedes said that TSA asked for additional information regarding Group 3 – ten year employees' health care benefits.

Jon said HR has been working on a PeopleSoft module to assist with Open Enrollment. It will help HR behind the scenes. Jon reported the next walking program begins soon. The Fire Union is separating from the City Benefits program by the first of January. Jon said the benefit consultants will be analyzing the impact to the workforce of losing the Fire Union. A past analysis showed the Fire Union to be a healthier group. Jon said the last 18 months of health claims have been very good which has allowed a small surplus in the health fund. HR will be doing more regarding educating employees on the cost of health care and how to efficiently handle their own health claims.

Jerry reported they are in the middle of the budget process for next year.

Brad reported on their Target Christmas program. On February 5th the Fire Department Retirement Party Casino Night will be held at TCA.

Steven said he appreciated the committee's open and direct communication.

Louis reported the next rotation of the Supervisor's Academy will start in January. The January classes are open to non-supervisory employees.

Jeff offered kudos to HR for addressing additional provisions when reaching the year maximum for an industrial, on duty accident.

Ginny reported that the MLK Dinner keynote speaker will be Jevin Hodge. MLK Diversity Award nominations are now being accepted. Ginny added that wellness points will be earned for participation in the Unity Walk on Saturday, January 31, 2015.

Next Quarterly Diversity Steering Committee Meeting – March 3, 2015