

CITY OF McMinnville  
MINUTES OF DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
Held at Kent Taylor Civic Hall and online via Zoom,  
McMinnville, Oregon

Thursday, June 8, 2023, at 4:30 p.m.

Presiding: Committee Co-Chair Larry Miller & Committee Co-Chair Abby Thomas

Recording Secretary: Noelle Amaya, Communications & Engagement

Manager

Committee Members: Present	Absence
Christine Bader	Larry Miller
Caitlin Nemeth	Abby Thomas
Katherine Martin	Zack Geary
Karina Alcantara	Tony Lai
Efrain Arredondo	Dianne Rhee
Myrna	

Others in attendance: Jody Christensen, Special Projects Coordinator; Jennifer Cuellar, Finance Director

- 1) CALL TO ORDER: Committee Member Christine Bader called the meeting to order at 4:38 p.m.
- 2) APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Correction to the minutes was emailed to the Staff Liaison. Katherine Martin MOVED to approve the May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023 minutes. Efrain Arredondo SECONDS. Motion PASSES unanimously.
- 3) PUBLIC COMMENT: There were no public comments.
- 4) ARPA: Christine introduces the topic of ARPA and asks the group to appreciate the logistical and administrative challenges that lie ahead of us. Christine explains the draft work plan for DEI for the ARPA spend and the group goal to uphold the values listed in MacTown 2032.

Jody asks for Christine to read aloud the MacTown 2032 priorities related to DEI – Christine reads them aloud. Jody asks whether or not the committee has adopted those goals as their own.

Christine says not officially but implicitly. Noelle states why she invited Jody to the meeting – to explain her experience with third party grants. Jody explains the business-related projects (8212) that were borne out of their partnership with Representative Ron Noble who wanted to create systems that would help businesses recover from Covid. Ron Noble secured 750k for

McMinnville. They created four concepts. Business mentoring, a 60/40 loan forgiveness program, a traditional grant program, bi-lingual training. The question they asked themselves was “how do we get better about understanding what the needs are around workforce development.” They’ve contracted with MEDP to build the foundation that will help them better understand data driven workforce programs. They want to help companies describe what they need beyond the statement “I need people.” Those are the four programs CDC has stood up with their ARPA dollars. It took a lot of ingredients to get that “cake baked.”

Jody – this is why Noelle asked me to join the meeting today, to help peel the onion on what it’s like to set up a program like this – she wants to help the group talk through what they want to achieve and think about how this money could be used to make lasting change. She hopes between Jennifer and herself, they can provide the elements they need to get started in making change in a valuable way. Jody adds that she had the opportunity to help in a previous role on the racial justice committee when working for the State of Oregon. It’s so important to understand that little steps lead to big steps and she would like folks to understand what racism looks like in a process, when you can help people understand that – its profound.

Marin is a consultant that is working with the Community Development Department – from Advanced Economic Systems – he’s helping the City understand how to reach people who’ve never been able to access business education and grants. He’s helping business community members apply for a grants and learn how to make themselves competitive. Through his leadership there have been so many ah-ha moments. Marin helped them see the application system and process and how it may be intimidating. He asked them to think about how we make our spaces more accessible and navigable. He helped them think about translation – he helped them think about word choices. They worked together to think about how the City can be a better partner to their community members and build “thoughtfulness” into their systems.

Caitlin asks if we can talk more about how we’re doing that? Jody explains they created a separate more approachable space for people to come and get help in accessing the grant application with bi-lingual training sessions etc. Caitlin asks if there is a way to shorten an application process or simplify it altogether. Make it feel more like a conversation and less like a process, because the process is what is intimidating.

Jody explains that the City is required to track their decision making process. You can’t and nor should you create a system that can’t be duplicated and tracked for government transparency and auditing requirements. Jody believes that the ARPA funds have a one-time meaningful impact – she believes the assessment should go first to unearth investment opportunities. If the assessment does what it’s designed to do, it will a be a ‘treasure trove’ of opportunity to help us understand how to build or support different systems within the city. An assessment will be a valuable tool that will help us understand where that money goes.

Christine asks if we should find partners that have similar programs that we can infuse with money. Jody asks if any one of the programs she talked about might be one of the programs this committee could infuse. The money that Jody manages is ARPA – but state ARPA, the DEI’s project is City/Federal ARPA. These programs do have an administration level that requires that the City document and keep records, you have to secure applications, and there is a level of tracking that would be required. This is why they hired a consultant to help navigate that process and help them reduce barriers.

Jody will share the reports that come out of Marin's work, and she'd ask the same for the DEIAC to share the results of the assessment work. She directs the committee to the Business Resiliency page.

Jennifer is excited about this programming and their work with MESO – which is focused on communities who don't have access to traditional streams of funding. She encourages the group work in tandem with Community Development on some of these already established programs. If the timing works out and we can keep their work going after they've learned something from their initial efforts, that would be a great idea for these funds to keep good work going.

Christine says they like this idea. The only caveat is that the work is focused only on businesses instead of including some of the community groups who might also want to do good work.

Jody explains that businesses need “capacity building grants” – which is the form of usually staff help or a person. Consider faith-based organizations that do a lot of community work and that have been good partners for folks experiencing homelessness. Jody feels like community events is how you build relationships, but CBO's need operational help – because they need *people* to put on community celebrations to build those relationships.

Katherine states that having face to face contact with people to get them comfortable is super important, because people won't often explore more options without first having the opportunity to chat with someone and get comfortable with the idea first.

Jennifer goes into answering the questions that the group had provided previously including challenges with administration costs. She states that she does not have the city resources to staff the backend of a program like this, but she would need a specific proposal of what that looks like.

Jennifer – “We simply can't pass out greenbacks to people – there has to be a paper trail, a tax ID number, a social security number, and if individuals are receiving grant funds, unless they are a non-profit the transaction would be a taxable event.” The rules are that if we pay a person more than \$650 in a calendar year than that is reportable to the IRS as a transaction. Money flowing through a nonprofit organization would be the only real way to do that. She agrees that Jody's assertion about a replicable process and having a system in place to demonstrate the impact of our work is how you get things to last – this is important for sustainability etc.

Christine acknowledges that we wouldn't be able to throw a “Cinco De Mayo” party without it being a taxable event to that individual. Noelle states that this is correct, except for if we funded a non-profit organization to put on that cultural celebration.

Jody recommends that we have an application for every process and include an interview as a part of our review process. The committee can embed the systems needed for government work but also address the accessibility component.

Jennifer – isn't 100% sure of the expectation of the committee, but processes or payment requests would have to go through the finance department and that includes a W-9 which contains personal sensitive information. It takes two weeks to turn a check once they get a

request.

Because of Washington's debt ceiling and new rules coming out from the federal government, we must budget out dollars or 'spend' them so that there is no risk that the government will take it back. Jennifer believes that this will allow us a little more flexibility in how we spend but we're still bound by the City's rules. We have more flexibility overall.

Christine states that it sounds like the committee has some options one of those being to piggy back on an already established grant program. Jody suggests that we can also look into working with Micro Enterprise Services of Oregon.

Katherine would like someone from MESO to come and chat with the group about the option. Efrain states that it sounds like we have to go through a non-profit who can administer the process for us and it's best if we act as a partner.

Jennifer states that there has to be a business purpose for any expenditure that comes through because if we have any auditing activity, there has to be a business purpose tied to our choices.

Jody suggests that the art alliance would be a great program for the cultural aspect of this work.

Christine asks the group to wrap this up and move on to the assessment conversation. Karina asks what happens after the assessment and if there are departments that aren't working with the a DEI lens, how do we get them to make changes or use the lens? Christine asks to hold that question for now.

Jody suggests coming back in August to tell the group what they've learned, they'll have a report from their focus group and will have recommendations – how their grant program is going and see if we can supplement their programming. Jody will send some program information from MESO in the meantime.

Christine provides an overview of the Assessment conversation. Noelle explains that there has been some confusion about the RFP process overall because of lack of a legal staffing. Noelle shares the assessment draft and asks the group to look over the five bullet points that should be included in the scope of work.

Noelle explains how that the group should have more detail in general. The part that the committee needs to weigh on is the "why" behind the assessment. This is important to be as specific as possible so that when we have a final product, we may use the results to direct City Council so that they can direct City staff to do the work.

Group discussion on the "needs assessment" aspect, the idea behind the tool itself, and how to include the priorities from MacTown 2032. Group discussion on the process for City Council to adopt recommendations and advise City Staff. Noelle will send the cleaned-up draft to the group for comment. Comments will need to come back to me individually via email. Christine asks about how we will advertise. Noelle explains that we will collect a list of the potential parties who might be interested in doing this type of work and score them according to our own metrics.

5) ADJOURNMENT at 6:19 pm.

s/s Noelle Amaya  
Noelle Amaya,  
Communications & Engagement Manager