



MINUTES

President and Board of Trustees
Village of Arlington Heights
Committee-of-the-Whole
Board Room
Arlington Heights Village Hall
33 S. Arlington Heights Road
Arlington Heights, IL 60005
August 8, 2022
7:00 PM

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. ROLL CALL

President Hayes and the following Trustees responded to roll: Schwingbeck, Canty, Bertucci, Grasse, Scaletta, Baldino. Trustees Tinaglia and LaBedz were absent.

Also present were: Randy Recklaus, Avis Meade, Nicole Espinosa, Mary Rath, James McCalister and Becky Hume.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Update

Mr. Recklaus said the intent of tonight's meeting was to update the Board on some of the newer DEI initiatives upon which staff has been working. This is not a comprehensive review of everything we have done.

Internal

Sixty-five staff members speak 20 languages. We are now including additional language skills in what we look for in hiring, especially in forward facing positions. In the Village's recent hiring efforts, it has moved closer to the demographics of the community. 77% of our community is white.

<u>Ethnicity Categories</u>	<u>Community</u>	<u>% Employees as of 1/1/19</u>	<u>% Employees hired since 1/1/19</u>
White (alone)	77.1%	92.2%	80.4%
Two or More Races	3.9%	2.8%	2.2%
Hispanic or Latino	8.2%	3.1%	8.7%
Black	2.4%	0.7%	4.3%
Asian	10.3%	0.9%	4.3%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%

Ninety-two employees have been hired since January of 2019. The work force is more reflective of the community than in the past. Trustee Scaletta asked for more detailed turnover numbers in the next report. Mr. Recklaus said roughly ¼ of the workforce has turned over in the past 3 years.

DEI is an important value, so DEI was added in evaluations as a core competency for department heads and management. Inclusion criteria will be added for all of our employees in 2023.

Mr. Recklaus joined the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus' DEI workgroup and diversity taskforce. This group works to identify best practices in the region for municipalities on DEI issues and identifies joint efforts for regional impacts. He said he brings other staff, and this participation keeps the issue front of mind and allows us to glean information from other communities on their approaches.

The Village began tracking demographic information on vendors via the business license renewal and application process. Staff can use the data to recruit a larger number of qualified minority and women owned businesses into the vendor pool.

Community Outreach Taskforce

Community and Outreach Coordinator Avis Meade said the task force membership includes: the Village, Park District, Library and school districts 59, 25, 214, 21 and 23. Each entity leverages their own unique relationships to broaden the reach of the others to break down barriers to service. They were meeting virtually and just began in person monthly meetings where they share outreach and DEI initiatives. The group is currently working to identify underserved people in the community. The senior center has been one example of an entity that could serve families via exposure through a student connection. The group is still learning each other's goals and approaches.

President Hayes asked about the structure and if there were a defined

number of members. Ms. Meade said right now this is not fixed. They recently added a world language coordinator from D25, as they get deeper, more representation may be invited. Ms. Meade is leading the meetings right now, but there are different presenters at each meeting. President Hayes asked if the goal was to get to a more permanent structure with a mission statement and chairperson. Ms. Meade said it could go there, many of the groups just want a safe space to communicate and learn. The structure has not been defined yet.

Mr. Recklaus added there is a general outline, but the group is still in its first phase. There could be a couple people from each organization, but it's important to keep it a relatively manageable group. Initially, they are looking to develop joint programs. After that, they will look for partners in the community. There was a draft mission statement early on, but the group is still gelling.

Trustee Bertucci encouraged the Taskforce to have some kind of leadership with goals, objectives and a mission statement. Otherwise, meetings and groups are just meetings with no purpose. There are some other groups in the Village (He mentioned the Economic Alliance) where people mention they do not have an agenda.

Trustee Canty said it would be good to ask what problem are we trying to solve, which will inform the mission and keep things germane. You may or may not have the right people at the table. If you have a vision and mission, you'll know when you need to look to bring others into the group. There are other groups that want to be included. By asking the right questions, you can help identify if a subset or other group is needed.

Trustee Baldino asked if the group's focus is internal. Mr. Recklaus said no, the focus is not for employees. It is how to serve the community. He explained diversity is a state of being, equity a goal, inclusion is the action. The task force is working on the inclusiveness issue. How do we learn from the other taxing districts, can we partner in their events, use their databases in order to reach and serve more residents with our services? First, we want to see if we are doing everything we can together, then we can decide how we bring in other partners. Trustee Baldino asked if the intent is to bring in community at some point in some fashion. Ms. Meade said the group is still learning so we can identify ways to include the community. Trustee Baldino said with more contributors from the community more input can be achieved. Mr. Recklaus said those go hand in hand, each organization has its rolodex, but they are not the same. They may have different leaders, we have a Dr. Motto, they may have a person on their end. The library is plugged into things that we are not. The goal is to target that networking. After that, we can formalize it. Reports back to the Board will be forthcoming.

Trustee Grasse recognized that this is complex and it means different things to different people. She is excited to see where it goes with the community. Since the first Kaleidoscope study was done, belonging has become part of the conversation. We are seeing there is more involved. She loved the idea

of the different groups and acknowledging what we have in common and what we can learn from one another.

Trustee Scaletta said he understands the challenges as the organizations represent so many different people in different ways. He said what the groups learned from one another after the first round of meetings may help with the mission statement. Maybe what you will be learning initially, is what each organization can do better and how they can help one another. Even though we want it fast, it will be better if it is thorough. There is a lot of preparation that goes into these presentations. One group might be better at outreach for specific groups. You are headed in the right direction. The group needs to find the mission and make sure you are always following it, or redefine if necessary. The Economic Alliance isn't asked to do much by the Board, which may be the problem there. Ms. Meade said the Taskforce has taken the framework from the Mayor's Caucus. The group will get there, there is a lot of interest and discussion but it is still in the introduction stage.

President Hayes said whenever he does an interview for Board & Commission candidates, he tells them the work and ideas are a two-way street. He doesn't want commissioners waiting for guidance and suggestions. He wants them to be the creative thinkers and have them recommend to us how to improve the Village.

Mr. Recklaus praised Ms. Meade's performance in the last year and her leadership on this task force.

IDEA Employee Resource Group

Nicole Espinosa said this internal, employee focused group has a mission, defined goals and a 2022-2023 roadmap. It does not have a hierarchical structure. It is focused on: education, awareness, employee events, and policy recommendations. They hosted an Autism walk and have plans for a Heritage Fest, emails on DEI topics, a conversation on ageism, DEI exit interview questions, and DEI training for new hires.

Trustee Scaletta asked how the group is comprised. Ms. Espinosa said there are 10 members and they came through an open invitation to staff. The group is always open if anyone wants to join and is not restricted by department. Trustee Scaletta said it is genius that it is not led by HR. He is glad to hear there is support from different employees.

Trustee Bertucci said in regards to heritage, the Village's second biggest ethnicity is Asian. He wondered if we were doing anything to play on the 10% Asian population. Ms. Espinosa said in terms of Heritage Fest, it's a celebration of all the cultures, not just a few and will have a good variety of organizations, with a diverse representation. They will reach out to Futabakai and others. Mr. Recklaus said Futabakai is a great example of collaboration with a cultural group as D25 has a relationship with them. Similarly, the Village has coordinated between the Japanese Chamber and Consulate through the Village's Business Development Manager Michael Mertes. The

Asian community is the most under-represented group in the Village employee landscape.

Trustee Baldino asked what is scheduled in regards to ageism. Ms. Espinosa said it will be the first topic in the speaker series. The vision is to do one to three talks a year. The agism program is a TED talk that is 10 minutes long that covers ageism on the senior end and addresses those who are just starting. It speaks to how ageism impacts all of us.

Trustee Canty said she welcomed opportunities to help people to open their eyes and see things from a different perspective. She said she is seeing years of effort come into play and understands changes are slow to build and this is how it begins.

Mr. Recklaus explained DEI is scary for some people. Some employees don't want to touch this committee. Part of the challenge is demystifying the issue. It is not just black/white/religion. We have a diverse group already; employees are not automatically on the same page because we have so many different kinds of work groups.

Ms. Espinosa described the recent Fire Prevention outreach program which targeted the Latinx community. The events replaced smoke detectors and staff did a lot of translation to unmask many myths. For instance, in some communities if an smoke alarm rang, they would be charged, and so these people take their detectors off the wall. The work group helped families set up evacuation plans. The events and been fun and successful. Three are complete with 3 more planned.

Recently a presentation from JJ's List was held at the senior center, educating the public about interfacing with those with disabilities.

Mr. Recklaus described the newly installed pedestrian tunnel art. After some hateful graffiti appeared there, the Art Commission wanted to reclaim the space and came up with a new identity by commissioning an inclusion themed mural. 16 different artists are represented. These letters can be printed, so if one is damaged, it is not difficult to make another one and put it up. The dedication will occur August 15th. Social Media will amplify all the different letters and artists.

President Hayes said the mural blew him away. It's a really an exciting initiative.

Lastly, Mr. Recklaus described the Frank White project. The project was enabled because his life was amazingly well documented. Mr. White served the fire department for 40 years. He was a business owner, but his story was unique relative to other African Americans in this period. Staff is exploring highlighting another resident who was a former salve. The challenge is others may not have as much documentation as Mr. White did. Staff is still working on cultural competency training. The Planning Department is

starting a series to highlight women and minority businesses in town through social media.

President Hayes appreciated the update on this strategic priority. He said he wanted the community to be aware of it, as there has been a lot going on.

Trustee Canty stated her enthusiasm for the progress and asked is an outreach program for the police could occur that was similar to the Fire outreach. Ms. Espinosa said police did participate in a few of the events, although they were really focused on the safety plan. In the plans for round two, the police will be invited.

Trustee Baldino expressed his deep gratitude for hard work on this #2 Board priority. He asked what Mr. Recklaus was seeing at the Mayor's Caucus and the DEI task force subcommittee. Mr. Recklaus said communities have shared a mix of internal and external initiatives. We've done a lot of formal things that others have not done. Skokie has done a lot of outreach and we can learn from some of the mechanics. We were one of the first to do a DEI audit and will be presenting our information with Schaumburg. There are some groups similar to the IDEA group in other towns. We are one of the leaders on developing a Community Task Force, and others are interested. Some towns have experience in bridging partnerships and discussions between two large groups. Many communities are just beginning their journey.

Trustee Baldino asked if the Planning Department initiative would include the Chamber or the Economic Alliance. Mr. Recklaus said staff is still figuring out what we want to do, but will include the Chamber. Trustee Baldino asked if it was to recruit business or look for vendors. Mr. Recklaus said both, first we need to get a handle on how many there are, then who we do business with. The idea is to see how we can find vendors in different ways.

Trustee Scaletta thanked the presenters for the thoughtfulness of the initiatives and noted they were not just checking boxes. He liked that we're looking to improve and assessing challenges. He asked how the minority business were being validated. Mr. Recklaus said right now, they are self-disclosing. There are no reference points, but there's also no incentive to be dishonest. Trustee Scaletta said the definition of minority will need to be clarified.

V. OTHER BUSINESS

VI. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was called to adjourn by Trustee Scaletta, seconded by Trustee Baldino.

Resident Melissa Cayer said there are many errors in the County assessment software. She asked the Board to use their leverage to get it fixed. Trustee Scaletta completely agreed it is a bad system and the tax bills should not come out, but the Cook County Assessor is the person to talk to. He referred

her to the Elk Grove Township Assessor's office. He told her to point out all the ones that are wrong so that she can get it corrected. Ms. Cayer asked if there were any TIF updates. The answer was no. She said people will shy away from the Village's affordable Housing initiatives as people won't want to pay more to subsidize neighbors getting reduced rent.

President Hayes called for the vote on the motion to adjourn at 8:18 p.m. It was approved unanimously.