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MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor Leahy and Members of the City Council
FROM: Eileen Donoghue, City Manager *EMD*
DATE: October 13, 2020
SUBJECT: Citizen Advisory Committee, Diversity Training, & HR Audit

Motion by C. Elliott on 9/22/2020 - Req. City Mgr. Provide Updates Regarding Appointments To Advisory Council; Diversity Training; HR Audit As They Pertain To Diversity, Equity And Inclusion

In recent months, as requested by the City Council, the City has remained active in implementing initiatives intended to promote diversity, equity and inclusion both within the City's workforce and in relations between the City and the community. This memorandum provides an update on the status several key efforts.

Citizen Advisory Committee

Immediately following the Council's passage of the ordinance chartering the Citizen Advisory Committee to the Lowell Police Department in late July, we initiated efforts to fill the Committee's nine positions. The opportunity to serve on the Committee has been actively promoted via e-mail to an extensive list of community partners, non-profit organizations, and community leaders, through social media and through tradition media channels. In the course of the roughly two and a half months that the position has been posted, we have received many applications from qualified prospective appointees.

The ordinance stipulates that the committee's membership must be comprised of two Lowell High School students, one UMass Lowell Student, one Middlesex Community College student, one non-profit leader, one faith-based leader, one business leader and two other members of the community. Despite receiving a fair volume of applications, we have encountered difficulty in recruiting applicants falling into certain membership categories required under the ordinance which has accounted for delays in initiating meetings of the Committee. To address these gaps, additional and more targeted outreach has been conducted within the groups where applicants are lacking.

The Human Relations Department and Police Department are in the process of conducting interviews of residents who have applied thus far, and hope to put forward initial appointments later this month. We are confident that, once fully formed, the Citizen Advisory Committee will be a productive platform for community input on public safety issues to be conveyed to the Police Department.

Diversity Training

Recognizing the importance of having a culturally competent workforce, the City has offered mandatory cultural awareness and diversity trainings to employees as a means of fostering equity, inclusion and sensitivity in handling of internal and external affairs. In recent months, the frequency of diversity trainings has increased dramatically to address important matters such as cultural awareness, racial equity and inclusion, unconscious bias, and macroaggression.

Within the past eighteen months, the City has offered four trainings on various diversity topics and continues to offer more. Included in these trainings is a series hosted by Enterprise Bank titled “The Series on Racial Equity and Inclusion” in which the first seminar was focused on understanding the social construct of racism in America and biases. This training was specifically offered to City Department Heads and their assistants. The City intends to provide employees with a three-part Anti-Racism Training series offered by the Diversity and resiliency Institute of El Paso which will allow employees to learn about historical events, ideologies, analyze concepts of racial identify, bias, privilege and prejudice and reflect on ways to integrate anti-racism work into their daily lives. Additional trainings will be offered as they become available.

Past Diversity Trainings

- Cultural Awareness and Diversity- 6/17/2019
- Cultural Awareness and Diversity- 8/4/2020
- The Unconscious Bias Training- 9/17/2020
- The Series on Racial Equity and Inclusion- Exploration and Awareness- 9/29/2020 and ongoing

Upcoming Diversity Trainings

- Anti-Racism Training- October thru November 2020

Human Resources Audit

As recently reported to the City Council, the City prepared a request for proposals (RFP) for a Human Resources audit that was posted on July 6, 2020 and closed on July 20, 2020. The City received proposals from two firms in response to the RFP. Unfortunately, the costs that were quoted by the responding firms were prohibitive, ranging up to \$160,000.

At the direction of the City Council, my office is considering methods to reduce the scope of the RFP in a way that would produce more cost-effective proposals for an initial audit. We are hopeful that an audit that provides a broad assessment of City human resources functions as well as a roadmap for further inquiry through subsequent audits can be achieved at a more feasible price point. It is our intention to post an amended RFP in the coming weeks. I will keep the Council apprised of important developments related to these efforts.