

Diversity Committee Meeting September 23, 2020

Present:

AJ, Britania, Melissa, Iana, Ann, Jon, Emma, Wally, Mary, Lisa P, Diane, Thom, Ayisha

Notes:

- We need to reschedule our regular meeting next week since the budget meeting is now on Monday night. The group tentatively decided on Wednesday at 6pm but will revisit at the end of the meeting.
- Wally has an update with Chewie. He has engaged CEDAR to see if they can participate in a restorative justice process with Chewie. This process was discussed by the committee, and the committee agreed to engage, as a group, if appropriate.
- Jon has posted the board motion we will be discussing in the chat box:
 - o As amended, establish an Equity and Inclusion Advisement Team to advise the Board of Directors and management, and request the Diversity Committee to propose specifics to the Board that defines the team scope, procedures, and criteria for appointment.
- Ann: How can we recruit the advisement team?
- Jon: What is the scope and the criteria for the team? This would include the composition of the team. We need to toss out the ideas we have for the advisement team so that we can put together a proposal for the board. We would then review the proposal at our next regular before sending the proposal to the board.
- Wally has questions:
 - o The board has a standard monthly meeting, but that is not how it works with the staff. There are meetings throughout the day. He is curious how they would plug in with the staff.
- Thom: It's not so much meetings as it is interactions. He thinks that you could include these individuals on the email threads so that they can be informed regularly, and they can comment when it appears like it's appropriate.
- Wally has concerns about that due to the volume of emails. There are not a lot of threads. Maybe they could go to staff meetings?
- Thom thinks staff meetings might be the most appropriate venue.
- Jon added that every two months or so the team could sit down with management for a more in-depth discussion.
- Moving to how the group would affect the board, Jon asked if the group would sit in all board meetings. The group thinks they should, including most if not all closed meeting. Emma observed that closed sessions are where you get more authentic interactions. Melissa added that performance reviews, hiring, and other sensitive topics could benefit from a diverse lens.
- Jon thinks this is not a group that is doing work so much as being a voice in the room. He observed that had this team been in place, they might have suggested that the budget meeting not be scheduled during the regular diversity committee meeting. He thinks there are no legal issues if the team keeps the same confidentiality of the board.
- AJ asked why the board would not want them there. He asked Wally if there were legal issues, and he indicated that we should talk to an attorney.
- Thom agrees with AJ – there is no good reason not to let the group at the closed meetings.

- Lisa echoed Jon's earlier comment that perhaps when the board is meeting with an attorney this group would not be present due to attorney client privilege that might not extend to this group. This would be for bigger legal issues that are out of the ordinary.
- Diane agrees that there are issues that you want the least amount of people in the room, for instance, when speaking with an attorney. You might only want people who are legally and financially responsible. She thinks real estate transactions are not an area where you would want this group to participate.
- Ayisha wonders if any legal clause could be added that would negate this issue.
- Jon thinks they would fall under the same confidentiality rules as the board; however, they would not have the legal risk of breaking confidentially, just the actions the board would take in response.
- Lisa is bound by confidentiality and cannot discuss specifics about past issues that the board might not want the group in the room.
- Jon thinks it will not work if the group is only in the room at the board's invitation. He thinks you can write a contract that would help encourage confidentiality so that they could be in all sessions.
- Brooks added that you consult with a lawyer when you need a legal perspective, and that a diversity perspective could be just as important. An all-white board might not necessarily know that the decisions they are making are being harmful to marginalized communities that they are not a part of (blind spots).
- Lana agrees that, outside of having board seats reserved for DEI professionals, it is important to have this group involved in all decisions.
- Thom – we need seven of ten board members to vote to be accountable.
- Emma agrees that this is needed, but she can think of four board members that will not want this team at closed sessions.
- Jon thinks that we should recommend that the advisement team be present at all board meeting, open and closed, that we should have a contract with the following: they are bound by confidentiality and that they can be held financially responsible if they break that confidentiality.
- Britania, agrees with Jon. She wonders if there will be push back that these people are not elected? She is wondering if a working group meeting is needed on this specifically. Or maybe a meeting with the board members and the diversity committee?
- Jon would like to gather everything we agree on, write it up as a proposal, send out to the committee for discussion at the next meeting, and then submit to the board.
- Ann assumes they will be at closed sessions because that is where these interactions take place. This team will know when to leave if they are not needed. She agrees with the contractual language.
- Lisa agrees that language around contractual obligation is important and might help allay concerns from the board. She wonders if Jon could investigate if such a contractual arrangement could be legally binding.
- Jon will ask Jack to ask the attorney that question once we present the proposal to the board.
- Melissa agrees with Jon's plan. I think Lisa has made some good points about board concerns, and I think Jon's wording addresses a good portion of it.
- AJ is concerned on member input. Lisa explained that a committee decided to limit this when the board meetings went online. There was discussion about how this went down.

- We agree that we should recommend that the advisement team be present at all board meetings, open and closed, that we should have a contract with the following: they are bound by confidentiality and that they can be held financially responsible if they break that confidentiality.
- Jon asked about attending committee meetings.
- Ann is curious about the BUMs. This group is mostly white and male, and they make a lot of decisions about individuals.
- Brooks questioned how this group would have the time, especially if they are not paid, to have this group be present in all functions of the fair. How would this group work with the consultant? How does the training program impact the work of this group?
- Lisa indicated that any budget implications will need to be decided quickly.
- Jon suggested that it might be best to focus on the next six months and address the event itself later in coordination with the consultant.
- Lisa agrees that it might be better, too, rather than developing a detailed program that might not align with the consultant's recommendation.
- Ann thinks that we should add language that the committee is not static.
- Melissa thinks we could narrow the scope for now, and then broaden it. The scope might be too big to do everything at once. It might be best to focus on board "oversight" (for lack of a better word). Perhaps we could emphasize that see the scope of this group expanding to other parts of the fair.
- Iana suggested that we could add verbiage that the group could focus on the board and executive director, but it could advise in other parts of fair management as appropriate.
- Brooks is hearing that we agree that this group would be in all open and closed board meetings and management staff meetings.
- Emma thinks that we should pay an hourly livable wage.
- Jon:
 - o 12 board meetings/year that last two hours
 - o Prep time for board meetings (another hour each month)
 - o Closed sessions are numerous, especially heading into the next year. Easily another 20 hours.
 - o For three people, this would be at least 180 hours (no including staff meetings).
 - o \$50-\$100/hour would make this perhaps too expensive for the Fair. Perhaps paying a lump sum would be better.
- Diane suggested honorariums.
- Melissa thinks this is tough. Perhaps this is an opportunity to engage volunteers. A larger group could be formed to share the work. This could be a wrist banded position.
- Ann thinks this could save the fair money in the long run because this could prevent the fair from making bad decisions.
- Iana thinks the financial aspect is important. Paying the money to have the work done is important. It shows that the organization is committed to the work.
- Lisa agrees, the thing is that we don't know if we will have an event next year. The event is the funding source, and there is enough to get us through 2021 with startup funds for 2022. It does not include increasing the personnel budget, though.
- AJ thinks there are ways to find funding. He thinks that it's so important to do this now.

- Ann agrees with AJ. She has spoken to the board before and been ignored about tribal issues.
- Ayisha agrees with AJ, too. If we are not putting as much financial importance on this issue, then all else is performative. It is completely in our control to make it happen.
- Lisa expressed that she supports this, but she cannot pass a board motion by herself. She is trying to relay information about what other board members might say. She is trying to provide perspective, even though she might not agree with everything other stakeholders might raise.
- Brooks stated the importance of setting the goal posts in a place that is true to the work that needs to be done.
- Ayisha expressed the concern that many have – how invested in change is the board and fair? She wants to make sure that we have a nonnegotiable position with racism.
- There was a discussion about the budget and priorities as it relates to DEI.
- Jon thinks we should come up with a figure for budget recommendations for next year. He thinks we should approach the advisement team as a next 6-month time frame.
- Jon thinks \$1,500 for six months is appropriate. It would be \$500 per person for a three-person group.
- Ayisha indicated that no one would be ready to do this outside of the goodness of the heart for that amount of money.
- AJ suggested we compare this to how much we pay other consultants.
- Ayisha provided some context on how much this work actually costs. This is not nearly enough funds to begin to do this work effectively.
- Jon indicated that this group would not do as much work as the consultant but more provide a DEI lens during meetings to help illuminate issues that might arise.
- Melissa indicated that perhaps everything doesn't need to be paid professionals. Perhaps some would indeed offer help because of their love of the fair. She thinks that this particular area might be a place where you don't need a paid professional. Perhaps it would be better to determine what types of qualifications this group might have before determining how much they are paid.
- Ayisha wanted this to be a permanent position (paid) at the Fair initially. We decided to go the direction we did with the hopes that we could grow it later. For the advisement team, she was expecting it to be professionals.
- Jon sees the advisement team as transitional to a full time staff person, a diverse board, and diversity in crew coordinators and other leadership roles.
- Lana advocates for professionals and paying them. She thinks a professional perspective is better than just a voice in the room. There would be more buy-in because people would respect them as having a professional perspective. It would help with the closed board session issue, too.
- Ayisha emphasized the tools a professional would have versus a person who do not have those tools.
- Make sure "all of whom are preferably experienced working in and on race dynamics, equity issues, and relations in regard to culture" is included in the language.
- Brooks suggested offering the actual cost with the proposal, and Lana suggested a sliding scale.
- We are putting in \$15,000 in the proposal to discuss next week.
- We will keep the meeting for Wednesday at 6.