

**MINUTES OF THE DIVERSITY EQUITY INCLUSION AND ACCESSIBILITY COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE  
PLEASURE DRIVEWAY AND PARK DISTRICT OF PEORIA, ILLINOIS, HELD TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2025  
AT 10:00 AM AT THE PEORIA PARK DISTRICT BONNIE NOBLE CENTER FOR ADMINISTRATION AT 1125  
W. LAKE AVENUE, PEORIA, IL**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Trustee and Chair Alexander Sierra, Trustee Mark Slover, Executive Director Cahill, Sherry Carter-Allen, Devon Hawks (in at 10:29am), Pastor Marvin Hightower, and Jodi Scott

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Brooke Sommerville

**TRUSTEES PRESENT:** Trustees Joyce Harant, Alexander Sierra, Mark Slover, and Vice President Reagan Leslie Hill

**STAFF PRESENT:** Executive Director Emily Cahill, Brianna Cobb, Nick Conrad, Scott Loftus, Becky Fredrickson, Chanel Hargrave-Murry, Karrie Ross, Shalesse Pie, Katie Van Cleve, Spencer Wilson, Attorneys Kevin Day and Justin Gunn, and Alicia Woodworth

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Antonio Lipscomb, President Next Level Academies

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Trustee Sierra presided and called the meeting to order at 10:03 am.

**2. ROLL CALL**

Roll call was taken.

**3. MOTION TO PERMIT COMMITTEE MEMBER TO ATTEND MEETING ELECTRONICALLY**

No request to attend meeting electronically was received.

Before proceeding to Item 4, Trustee Slover introduced Antonio Lipscomb, President of Next Level Academies, who provided an overview of the organization's accelerated construction trades training programs, including pre-apprenticeship, apprenticeship, and reentry workforce initiatives. Discussion followed regarding opportunities for collaboration, workforce pipelines, and alignment with Park District capital projects. Staff committed to follow up with Mr. Lipscomb to explore potential partnerships.

**4. MINUTES**

**4.A. Approval of October 28, 2025 DEIA Committee Meeting Minutes**

Prior to consideration of the October 28, 2025 DEIA Committee Meeting Minutes, Trustee Slover requested the opportunity to propose amendments to the draft minutes. Trustee Slover explained that, upon review, he believed additional clarification and context were needed to more fully capture the substance and intent of the Committee's prior discussion, particularly as it related to policy direction, contractor participation challenges, and collaboration efforts connected to the DEIA pillars.

Trustee Slover noted that the proposed amendments were intended to better reflect the Committee's deliberations and the underlying issues discussed, including perceived barriers contractors face in meeting participation goals that exceed those of other local

governmental entities, as well as the importance of collaboration with economic development and workforce partners. Trustee Slover acknowledged that his proposed revisions had not been circulated in advance of the meeting.

Accordingly, Trustee Slover MOVED TO DEFER approval of the October 28, 2025 DEIA Committee meeting minutes to the next DEIA Committee meeting. Motion seconded by Trustee Sierra and carried on the following roll call vote: Trustee Sierra, Trustee Slover, Executive Director Cahill, Sherry Carter-Allen, Pastor Hightower, and Jodi Scott. (Results: 6 Ayes; 0 Abstain; 0 Nays).

## 5. PROCESS/POLICY UPDATES

### 5.A. For Review: Pillars Revisions

Executive Director Cahill and staff presented the revised draft of the DEIA Pillars document, explaining that the revisions were intended to incorporate feedback from prior Committee discussions and to reflect changes in the broader DEIA landscape. Staff emphasized the goal of maintaining the document as a strategic framework that guides policy, planning, and implementation across the District.

Brianna Cobb reviewed the redlined revisions and noted that the updates sought to clarify intent, improve alignment with District operations, and ensure consistency with current practices. Committee members were invited to provide feedback and suggest modifications.

Committee discussion focused primarily on Pillar Two and the distinctions between items related to workforce development. Members expressed concern that certain language could be interpreted as positioning the Park District as a workforce training provider, rather than as a supporter and collaborator with existing community partners. Members reiterated that the District's role should remain focused on policy leadership, coordination, and facilitation, while leveraging partnerships with unions, educational institutions, nonprofit organizations, and other governmental entities to advance workforce development goals.

Following discussion, Committee members reached consensus to combine elements previously listed separately to more clearly reflect a collaborative and supportive role, emphasizing referrals, partnerships, and alignment with community-based workforce development efforts rather than direct service provision. Staff acknowledged the feedback and confirmed that the revisions would be adjusted accordingly.

Additional comments were offered regarding clarity, conciseness, and ensuring that the Pillars remain broad enough to guide future action while avoiding overly prescriptive language. Committee members expressed appreciation for staff's efforts to incorporate extensive feedback and noted that the revisions reflected meaningful progress toward final adoption.

Executive Director Cahill MOVED TO REFER the Revised Version of the Pillar Document to the 11.19.25 Strategy Ad Hoc Committee Meeting to Recommend Approval and to Forward to the 12.10.25 Regular Board Meeting for Board Approval. Motion seconded

by Pastor Hightower and carried on the following roll call vote: Trustee Sierra - Aye, Trustee Slover - Aye, Executive Director Cahill - Aye, Sherry Carter-Allen - Aye, Devon Hawks - Aye, Pastor Hightower - Aye, and Jodi Scott - Aye. (Results: 7 Ayes; 0 Abstain; 0 Nays).

**5.B. DEIA Language Update**

Executive Director Cahill provided an update regarding the District's use of DEIA language, noting that the matter was reviewed in response to recent Presidential Executive Orders and related national discussions. She reported that District staff and Board leadership had consulted with representatives from both the City of Peoria and Peoria County to understand how those entities were responding to the evolving legal and policy environment.

Executive Director Cahill stated that both the City and County reported they were maintaining existing DEIA-related language in their policies, staffing structures, and public-facing documents. Based on those discussions, staff recommended that the Peoria Park District likewise take no action at this time to modify its DEIA language.

Legal counsel further advised that litigation related to the Executive Orders remains ongoing at both state and federal levels, and that maintaining consistency with existing Board-adopted goals and policies was appropriate at this time. Counsel confirmed that the District's current DEIA framework remains aligned with previously approved strategic objectives.

Committee members asked clarifying questions regarding the scope of the review and the Mayor's related efforts, and staff confirmed that the recommendation was limited to language usage and did not affect ongoing committee operations or strategic commitments.

Following discussion, the Committee expressed consensus with staff's recommendation to continue monitoring developments and to retain current DEIA language unless future guidance or legal changes warrant reconsideration.

**5.C. Mayor's Committee Update**

Executive Director Cahill provided an update on staff participation in meetings coordinated through the Mayor's Office related to minority contracting, procurement expansion, and intergovernmental collaboration. She reported that District staff have attended three meetings to date and have been involved in planning and information-sharing efforts with other local governmental entities and partner organizations.

Executive Director Cahill reported that the following initiatives were discussed:

-Government Contract and Procurement Expansion Expo: Staff plans to participate in the March 2026 Expo, consistent with prior years, to support outreach and engagement with contractors and suppliers.

-Peoria Buying Plan: Staff has been asked to contribute to the development of a consolidated publication identifying planned construction and procurement projects across local municipalities. Staff is currently reviewing District projects to determine which elements may be appropriately included. Chicago's consolidated buying plan was referenced as an example of the type of document being considered.

-Coordinated Policy Review: Executive Director Cahill reported that discussion regarding coordinated policy efforts among participating entities has been temporarily paused, with plans to revisit the topic following the March 2026 Expo. Preliminary work to gather and compare policies is continuing among partner organizations.

Committee members asked clarifying questions regarding the scope and intent of the Mayor's Committee efforts and how they align with the District's existing procurement policies. Staff confirmed that participation remains focused on collaboration, information sharing, and alignment where appropriate, and that no immediate policy changes are being recommended at this time.

## **6. NEW BUSINESS**

### **6.A. Pillar One: Equitable Access to Parks, Facilities, and Programming**

-Summer of Fun End of Season Report

Scott Loftus presented the Summer of Fun End-of-Season Report, providing an overview of participation, facility usage, and outreach efforts for the 2025 season. He explained that the Summer of Fun Pass, funded through IACIA, provides students and up to two parents or guardians with free access to designated Peoria Park District facilities during the summer months.

Mr. Loftus reported that overall attendance increased significantly compared to the prior year, noting that improved tracking methods contributed to more accurate data collection. In particular, the RiverPlex and Owens Center experienced notable increases, while usage at the Golf Learning Center declined due to construction-related limitations during the season. Zoo and Peoria PlayHouse participation showed continued growth, particularly among younger age groups.

Mr. Loftus further explained that several new strategies were implemented in 2025 to encourage pass utilization, including enhanced coordination with Peoria Public Schools to provide ongoing reminders to families throughout the summer, expanded distribution of passes at community events, and collaboration with partner agencies to increase awareness. In addition, the physical design of the pass was improved to enhance durability and usability.

Committee members discussed participation trends by age and school, noting that high school student usage remained lower than younger age groups. Members suggested exploring targeted programming opportunities for older youth, including potential evening or themed events. Staff noted that extended zoo hours planned for Fridays during the summer of 2026 could provide opportunities to further engage older students.

Mr. Loftus also reported that Proctor Recreation Center Pool is scheduled to be added as a Summer of Fun Pass location beginning in 2026, expanding access to additional aquatic amenities.

Committee members thanked staff for the detailed data analysis and emphasized the importance of continued evaluation and targeted outreach to ensure equitable access and maximize program participation across all demographics.

**6.B. Pillar Two: Focus on the PPD Workforce**

Shalesse Pie presented the October 2025 Workforce Stats Report.

**6.C. Pillar Three: Actively Promote and Encourage the Diversity, Equity, Inclusiveness and Accessibility of PPD-Funded Contractors and Suppliers**

-Qualifying Construction Contracts Reports  
-Survey Status Update

Staff presented the Qualifying Construction Contracts Reports and reviewed workforce utilization and contractor participation data associated with current and recently completed projects. Staff noted that the reports provide ongoing tracking of minority and women participation and allow for trend analysis over time. Updates were provided on active projects, including the Golf Learning Center renovation and other completed construction efforts.

Committee members discussed the importance of historical tracking to evaluate contractor performance across multiple projects and to assess whether good-faith efforts are improving participation outcomes over time. Members emphasized that continued transparency and consistent reporting are critical to advancing the District's DEIA contracting goals.

Committee discussion included questions regarding how participation data are documented, how contractors demonstrate good-faith efforts, and how the District's approach compares to practices used by other local governmental entities. Staff explained that participation expectations are aspirational and that contractors are required to document efforts to meet stated goals. Members discussed the balance between aspirational targets, legal procurement requirements, and accountability.

Committee members further discussed whether additional documentation or process enhancements—such as formal waiver or justification mechanisms used by other municipalities—should be evaluated. Staff and legal counsel advised that existing procedures already require contractor documentation and that any potential changes would require further review to ensure consistency with District policy and procurement law. Staff committed to reviewing current documentation practices and reporting back with additional information.

Staff presented a draft post-project contractor survey intended to supplement quantitative participation data with qualitative feedback. The survey is designed to be

distributed upon completion of construction projects and to gather information regarding contractor experiences, workforce availability, barriers to participation, and opportunities for improvement.

Committee members discussed the value of collecting contractor feedback to inform future outreach, workforce development partnerships, and capacity-building efforts. Members expressed interest in using survey results to better understand workforce needs and to support collaboration with training providers and community partners. Staff indicated that survey results would be summarized and shared with the Committee once responses are collected.

No formal action was taken on this item.

**6.D. Pillar Four: Support Community Workforce Development**

No formal report was presented. Committee members discussed the importance of collaboration with community partners, unions, educational institutions, and workforce development organizations to support career pathways, contractor capacity-building, and long-term workforce sustainability.

**7. PENDING BUSINESS**

None at this time.

**8. OTHER BUSINESS**

Trustee Sierra thanked staff and committee members for their continued work and thoughtful discussion in advancing DEIA goals.

**9. ACTION ITEMS REVIEW**

No specific action items were noted at this time.

**10. NEXT MEETING**

2026 - TBD

**11. ADJOURNMENT**

At 11:32 am Sherry Carter-Allen MOVED TO ADJOURN the meeting. Motion seconded by Jodi Scott and passed by unanimous Aye voice vote of all members present.

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Submitted by Alicia Woodworth  
Executive Assistant and Board Secretary