

**MINUTES OF THE DIVERSITY EQUITY INCLUSION AND ACCESSIBILITY COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE PLEASURE DRIVEWAY AND PARK DISTRICT OF PEORIA, ILLINOIS, HELD TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2026 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 Reagan Leslie Hill, Vice President Montez, Executive Director Cahill, Pastor Marvin Hightower (v), Brooke Sommerville, and Jodi Scott (v)  
Note: (v) = Attended Virtually

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Sherry Carter Allen and Devon Hawks

**TRUSTEES PRESENT:** Trustees Joyce Harant, Reagan Leslie Hill, and Vice President Steve Montez

**STAFF PRESENT:** Executive Director Emily Cahill, Brianna Cobb, Scott Loftus, Becky Fredrickson, Matt Freeman, Chanel Hargrave-Murry, Shalesse Pie, Jennifer Swanson, Spencer Wilson, Attorneys Kevin Day and Justin Gunn, and Alicia Woodworth

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Trustee Hill presided and called the meeting to order at 10:01 am.

**2. ROLL CALL**

Roll call was taken.

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

Vice President Montez MOVED TO ALLOW members Pastor Marvin Hightower and Jodi Scott attend and participate in the meeting electronically due to work purposes. Motion seconded by Brooke Sommerville and carried by unanimous Aye voice vote of all members present.

**4. MINUTES**

**4.A. Approval of January 20, 2026 DEIA Committee Meeting Minutes**

Executive Director Cahill MOVED TO APPROVE the January 20, 2026 DEIA Committee meeting minutes. Motion seconded by Vice President Montez and carried on the following roll call vote: Trustee Hill – Aye, Vice President Montez – Abstain, Executive Director Cahill – Aye, Pastor Hightower – Aye, Brooke Sommerville – Aye, and Jodi Scott – Aye. Results: 5 Ayes; 1 Abstain.

**5. PROCESS/POLICY UPDATES**

No formal process or policy updates were presented under this item.

**6. NEW BUSINESS**

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

*Staff Presentation*

Brianna Cobb provided a presentation introducing the committee's DEIA framework and guiding philosophy for the year. The presentation emphasized creating a positive and collaborative environment while recognizing that equity and inclusion issues impact individuals and communities differently. She highlighted the importance of addressing

systemic barriers while ensuring the Park District's services remain inclusive and accessible to the entire community.

The presentation included reflections on the broader purpose of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility work, noting that the goal is to recognize the dignity and value of every individual while ensuring that programs, facilities, and services are welcoming to all residents.

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

Shalesse Pie presented the January 2026 Workforce Stats Report and provided an overview of workforce diversity data across the Park District. She reported that as of January 2026, minority representation across the Park District workforce was 26.15%. While this figure represents positive progress, staff noted that the District's goal remains 29.4%, which reflects demographic data based on census information for the local population.

Shalesse Pie explained that workforce data fluctuates throughout the year due to the seasonal nature of Park District employment. The District's total number of employees increases significantly during summer operations, particularly in areas such as camps, aquatic facilities, and park maintenance. As a result, diversity percentages may change month-to-month depending on hiring patterns and seasonal staffing needs.

Also highlighted were efforts undertaken over several years to strengthen recruitment outreach and increase diversity in applicant pools. These efforts include:

- Expanding marketing and job advertisements to better represent diverse populations
- Updating the Park District website and recruitment materials to reflect diversity among employees
- Hosting multiple job fairs each year
- Increasing participation in community hiring events
- Strengthening partnerships with local schools and organizations

Staff reported that the District hosted its first 2026 job fair on February 4, which attracted more than 120 job seekers. The event included representation from multiple Park District departments and provided opportunities for applicants to complete applications and interviews on site.

A second job fair is scheduled for March 14 at the RiverPlex, with the goal of reaching residents in different areas of the community. Staff explained that hosting multiple job fairs helps support the varying hiring timelines for different departments, including golf operations, summer camps, aquatics, and parks maintenance.

Committee members also discussed recruitment challenges related to seasonal positions such as lifeguards and camp counselors. Staff reported that aquatics personnel have been conducting outreach efforts at local high schools, including tabling events

and partnerships with programs such as ROTC to encourage students to pursue lifeguard training and employment opportunities.

Staff noted that lifeguard certification classes are offered monthly leading up to the summer season to increase opportunities for applicants to complete training and qualify for employment.

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

*-Qualifying Construction Contracts Reports*

Staff presented updates related to procurement practices and contractor participation aligned with the District's DEIA goals.

Staff reported that a new project had recently been released for bid and would be presented to the Park Board in the near future. In addition to the standard reporting contained in the committee's construction contracting spreadsheet, staff described several additional initiatives currently underway to promote participation by diverse contractors.

Staff discussed collaboration with the City of Peoria regarding a regional procurement "Buying Plan." This initiative is designed to allow governmental agencies to share anticipated projects for the upcoming year so contractors can plan their schedules and resources in advance. The Buying Plan concept is modeled after a similar program used in Chicago, where municipalities publish expected projects to help contractors identify potential opportunities and allocate resources accordingly. The Buying Plan will be introduced publicly during the upcoming Procurement Expo, which aims to connect contractors with government agencies seeking services. Staff indicated that the target audience for the plan is primarily local contractors and businesses interested in government contracting opportunities.

Staff also reported that work is underway to prepare a year-end DEIA contracting report, which will include both quantitative and qualitative information summarizing contractor participation and diversity efforts over the past year. The report will incorporate data from required reports such as the HB 453 reporting requirements and the District's internal contractor diversity tracking.

Staff further updated the committee regarding discussions with Antonio Lipscomb, who leads training initiatives focused on preparing individuals—particularly from underrepresented communities—for careers in construction trades. Mr. Lipscomb operates training programs and collaborates with minority contractors and industry professionals to help individuals develop skills and pursue employment in construction fields.

Staff explained that discussions with Mr. Lipscomb have focused on identifying possible ways the Park District could collaborate with the program, such as providing opportunities for students to gain hands-on experience through smaller projects or

training assignments. However, staff noted that any such collaboration would need to comply with existing union agreements and labor policies.

Committee members discussed the potential challenges associated with placing trainees on projects where union labor agreements apply. Staff clarified that while the Park District must follow its bargaining agreements, there may be opportunities for smaller projects that could provide practical training experiences without conflicting with union requirements.

Staff further explained that Mr. Lipscomb's program focuses on preparing participants for work in the construction industry through pre-apprenticeship training and connections with independent contractors who may provide mentorship and employment opportunities. These contractors are typically independent businesses rather than union contractors.

Committee members asked questions regarding how smaller projects are awarded under District policies. Staff noted that projects under approximately \$7,500 may follow different procurement procedures depending on scope and requirements.

Staff indicated that conversations with Mr. Lipscomb remain ongoing and that the District is continuing to evaluate whether there are appropriate ways to support training initiatives while remaining compliant with procurement rules and labor agreements. Staff concluded the update by noting that the committee's contractor participation spreadsheet had recently been updated to remove completed projects from the prior year and focus on current projects moving forward. As new projects are initiated and completed, the data will continue to be updated.

**7. PENDING BUSINESS**

None at this time.

**8. OTHER BUSINESS**

Committee members briefly discussed meeting scheduling. Members confirmed that 10:00 a.m. remains an acceptable meeting time for the committee. Pastor Hightower indicated that due to work schedule changes he anticipates attending future meetings primarily through virtual participation.

**9. ACTION ITEMS REVIEW**

1. Staff will distribute information related to the regional Buying Plan and Procurement Expo to committee members and staff networks.
2. Staff will continue development of the year-end DEIA contracting report for presentation at a future meeting.

**10. NEXT MEETING**

March 17, 2026 at 10:00 AM

**11. ADJOURNMENT**

At 10:42 AM, Vice President Montez MOVED TO ADJOURN the meeting. Motion seconded by Executive Director Cahill and passed by unanimous Aye voice vote of all members present.

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Submitted by Alicia Woodworth  
Executive Assistant and Board Secretary