

League of Women Voters of Pullman Observer Report

Name of Agency: City of Pullman's diversity equity, inclusion and Belonging Committee

Date: Jan. 18, 2024

Observer Reporting: Tricia Grantham **Length of Meeting:** 90 minutes

Board Members Present: Libby Walker, Chair, Roberta, Kramer, Efren Ramos, Julian Matthews, Juan Garcia

Board Members Absent: Alan Sutton and Terri Buffington

Others Present (e.g., staff, other agency representatives, media, public) : Mayor Francis Benjamin

Business Pertaining to League Positions or Topics of Interest:

I suggest that Our League consider adopting a statement that addresses diversity and inclusion issues in some form

Public Meetings of interest to League: *Were there any public meetings announced that you think League members may be interested in attending and/or becoming involved with that relate to League positions?*

Chairperson Libby Walker convened a meeting at 4:05. Announcements consisted of an acknowledgment of Black History Month in February. On February 10, there will be a celebratory event sponsored by the Terri Buffington foundation, a dinner and fundraiser. Tickets are available through Gladish Cultural and Community Arts Center. There will also be a film festival beginning February 22 and the WSU campus. More details to come.

Update: The film festival will include the following movies: the Ella, Baker story, February 22; Cesar Chavez biography – March 28; the Killers of the Flower Moon – April 11; Minari, a 2020 semi-autobiographical film about a Korean American family living in a predominantly rural white town in Arkansas. There will be publicity sent out to the community. The films will be offered in the Tod Auditorium on the WSU campus.

Process & Protocol: Observations about participants and procedures during the meeting. e.g., Did the members appear to have done their “homework”? Were members courteous to each other and the public? Was access to materials for agenda items available to you?

The members present were very engaged in the conversation. Mayor Benjamin's comments and responses to questions took up majority of the meeting agenda. He described his experiences over the past 20 years With the DEIB issues in various capacities. They included service on the Pullman human rights commission and targeting best practices related to DEIB while participating on the Association of Washington cities cabinet. Mayor Benjamin offered the term "intellectual humility." This encompasses the practice of honoring different perspectives, listening to each person, ensuring that no one dominates the conversation, and trying to understand why people believe the way they do. He also assured the committee that he understands the burden of Open Public Meeting rules, and how requiring six days in advance of a meeting to change the agenda, is not always expedient. Mayor Benjamin offered ways in which he can still be supportive to the committee, and sincerely believes in its mission "to work toward eliminating, social inequities, to provide everyone an opportunity to

participate in the civic, economic and cultural life of the city, and to deliver a greater sense of belonging, quality of life, and a sustainable local economy.

Other discussion included: the possibility of a committee budget, grant opportunities, metrics to measure the impact of projects, attention to street names, and their meanings, i. e., Kamiaken, Penawawa, etc., access to more diverse languages on the city's website, and the significance of signage to better foster comprehension and communication when English is not one's primary language.

Your additional comments/opinions: The committee members reported being eager to take on a project, developing a strategic plan with goals and objectives to formulate for future direction and budgetary purposes. Holding community listening sessions, ways to build community engagement, i. e. re-starting Hill parties, and other activities to promote connectivity. Each member was encouraged to review the city's website through the DEIB lens. The mayor offered that the committee could start directly reporting to the council and receive feedback on upcoming plans to further its objectives.