



**Metro**

600 NE Grand Ave.  
Portland, OR 97232-2736

# Meeting minutes

Meeting: CORE Meeting  
Date: Thursday, October 15, 2020  
Time: 5:30 pm – 7:30 pm  
Place: Zoom

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## Attendees

**Co-Chairs:** Tristan Penn, Martine Coblentz

**CORE Members:** Saara Hirsi, Dele Oyemaja, Maria Magallon, Quincy Brown, Patricia Kepler

**MERC Commissioners:** Dañel Malán, Karis JA Stoudamire-Phillips

**Metro Councilors:** Metro Councilor Craddick, Metro Councilor Lewis

**Metro staff:** Raahi Reddy, Sebrina Owens-Wilson, Melissa Palavecino, Tiffany Thompson, Nathan Sykes, Cassie Salinas, Amanda Lopez

**Absent:** Laura John, Nura Elmagbari, Daniela Ortiz, Mahmood Jawad

## Welcome and Overview of the day

Melissa shared an overview of using zoom.

## Public Comment

No public comment

## Committee Business and Updates

\*\*\*\* Tiffany had issues with zoom this day, wasn't present during this time.

## Council Update

See above

## DEI at Metro

**Presenters:** *Cassie Salinas, DEI & Amanda Lopez, HR*

Martine thanked Cassie and Amanda for the presentation and shared she was glad to hear what is happening internally at Metro. In terms of employee connection and creating a sense of community – there are two ERGs and you are hoping to build that out. What are the ways you

are working to support building out more ERGs and how are you supporting current ones? Is ERG time counted as work time?

- Yes, it is counted as work time. Melissa can also weigh in on this. You get up to two hours to participate. Get additional time for planning team members. Each group meeting twice month. Before wanted to add in travel time. Not accommodating for that at this point. 10% participating in POC ERG. A lot of forming the group and understanding direction want to take and more clarity they want to see as potential changes in organization.
- POC ERG and Pride ERG. And we are finalizing application process for additional ERGs. Have a way that we know to keep these up and running. Chair/Co Chair Model. Planning Team. DEI has a budget for bringing in speakers and food when met in person. Nyla provides oversight of the running ERGs. Future Disability ERG. Small group of Trans/Nonbinary Staff thinking about ERG. Past couple of months getting a Black staff ERG. By end of this year up to 5.
- Melissa shared that staff have 2 hours of time per meeting. Help from unions to get this. Enables folks to go to both meetings, like if you are a POC and LGBTQ+. And then additional 2 hours if you are the planning committee. Want to put this as a part of our employee performance evaluation process which is called PACE. DEI is in charge of ERGs we do a lot of connecting and communication with members. Set up meetings and events. ERG has been an everyday support, develop career, analysis of strategic efforts, space to be yourself.

Saara asked if the time is inside of our outside of standard work hours.

- Inside of regular work hours.

Raahi shared that DEI just launched the ERGs. Employees are formalizing the changes they want to see and incorporating those with internal team. Looking at how to build these and address Goal C.

Dañel shared that it has been great to see Metro doing events for Hispanic/Latinx Heritage and Native American History month. . I would like to see that you have this window where you are forward thinking and regrowing the staff. Think about this beyond curricula approach. How can culture activities be more across the board? How do you bring different cultures together to celebrate together? Pushing more that message of solidarity. Some groups creating more of a divide. Start figuring out how we mend and work together.

- We just came out of a team retreat. We are mindful of what is on the horizon. January is DEI month, which is a catch all and opportunity to bring all communities together. Thinking about how we take that moment and what will people need in that moment. We are thinking about it and putting more energy in the coming weeks

Quincy asked if there is any consideration of religious communities as they communities are left out of the conversation when it comes to DEI. As Metro looks into expanding those spaces, more opportunity for religious communities to have a space as well.

Maria asked how the DEI office was involved with all of the lay-offs that Metro has had to face. How are you ensuring that is an equitable process and handled in an equitable way?

- Raahi responded that we talked about this a couple of meetings ago when Marissa madrigal, COO attended. Working with Exec Leadership to make sure that each department has an equity lens to not only layoffs but to budget cuts. Launched a tool quickly when decisions were happening quickly – a tool of inquiry. Through the help of some staff do an analysis of the big lay off numbers to look at if there were disparate outcomes.
- We have now updated the tool in terms of departments doing process that included staff in the process, looking at values, Have another budget cycle coming up for fiscal 21/22. Getting budget guidance in November based on fiscal situation, anticipate another round of cuts based on that forecast and another version of the updated tool. Alongside all of this work – we launched a racial equity framework that will be woven into the way we do planning for projects and in our budget processes. Similar to other governments such as City of Portland. Hoping to have a version of that framework then inform how departments look at their budget proposals into the 20-21 cycle
- Partnering with exec leadership along the way and brining people along. We have to do it so many times because the economic forecast has been so volatile. Continue that process of collaboration, informing and then analysis on the backend.

Tristan asked about departments creating their own plan. How many departments are there? With that it sounds like you are going to talk about how it is manifesting itself with a specific department. Is there an imbalance in starting with some departments and others that are not fully involved yet? Organizational imbalance that leads miscommunications or in decision making processes. And with the departments, are there department heads and what has been the training and professional development for department heads that has been implemented? If department head is not into that is a challenge. But has there been resistance with specific groups? You don't have to name them. It is hard to get in the same area of understanding DEI. Can you speak to your process about that?

- Willingness from top and grass roots about leading with racial equity. Wide range of departments and types of individuals. I was going to say 12 but it is actually 14 departments. Varying degrees within their learning journey. We had an assessment in WPES where equity literacy and learning gaps – it was a survey and quiz around understanding terms – levels of oppression, interrupt in workplace – tested competency. There are different levels and positions - we have done some intentional work with leadership team understanding the knowledge and skill set you need to have to talk about this work and to understand main terms, terminology and the history behind the work.

- I work closely with Raahi and Council – had some councilors go through trainings. Bringing partners along – when we could gather ins pace with others would invite community partners and committee members to participate. Heading into a season where we will be requiring people to participate in essential and foundational learnings about DEI. Next conversation is how to hire a workforce that already has skills and competency to lead in this work.

Martine responded to the ERGs. Encourage you to consider adding more time than what currently is as you imagine them to evolving to more work around improving policy and changing the organization internally. I love that you already have it tiered. As you build out leadership, co-chairs, etc. Consider more time. The emotional health and wellbeing of employees – everyone given our year – compounded for everything that is happening with racial justice for our employees of color. What are some things you are doing to help employees of color in regards to mental health and well-being?

- Emotional labor of participating in planning of ERGS. Exploring opportunity of having a differential in pay based on the workload they are carrying. We have been wrking with HR on expanding and just changed our EAP – improvement from last program – free mental health support and other services. With that can see improvements for different audiences – like looking for therapists of color – have been add more of the sessions that we current have
- ERGs are meeting twice 1) Agenda meeting that has issues coming up around work 2) support just to be there with each other. Recognizing compounding issues. Hold space for mental and emotional health.
- Martine shared that ERGs do a lot of the DEI work at Multnomah County – leadership had up 12 hours and then regular members had up to 8 hours and they can really help advance the work of an organizations. From event organizing and helping change policy and bring things in front of Council.
- Raahi asked if every attendee gets paid for their time or only the planning committee.
- Martine said that every attendee gets six hours because there might be work beyond the ERG meeting. Leadership gets additional up to 12 hours.
- Raahi shared that the investments in ERGS giving the space adds to increase happiness production connectivity and retention rates. Opportunity to build community and find strength and resilience. Participate and be better at their work with solid foundation. Our ERGs involve managers, front line, hourly workers. Diversity of ideas and connect and build professional relationships. Investment in staff and their growth and Metro being more functional and apt at what we are supposed to .
- Quincy said, related to expanding the capacity for ERGs that don't have a larger advocacy space within Metro. Like LGBTQ+ community to have opportunities for that group to do work within their own community. fFocusing on empowering the groups to do work that Metro overall cannot do with giving them more time.

Dele asked about Metro considerations of cuts in the next year. Does Metro have any plan to absorb effected employees based on equity and CBA rules?

- Almost all workforce is unionized. Agreements on layoff procedure, bumping and recall rights included at venues which were the first wave. There is a whole working mechanism behind the scenes of what happens to jobs and where they can go.
- A real interest at Metro because of policy improvement in HR, really allowing employees on a lay off list – new positions to really make sure that they would be considered internal candidates for positions. Organizations representing our employees. Negotiated agreements for different factors play in. One of begets factors – significant portion of our diverse workforce has can into Metro employment in last 5 years
- Union rules based on seniority (for good reasons and fairness) has an impact on who gets laid off and bump positions. Excellent relationships with unions who support the spirit of DEI work. It is an evolving conversation. When good people have will and a commitment to equity we can figure it out. This is a reality - it is an ongoing challenge.

Saara asked what work is being done around accessibility. An interview for ESL folks is challenging with speaking directly and indirectly.

- We don't screen for in recruitment. If have accessibility needs or questions – loop in training for managers. Can't ask outright but if they ask for it we will help with it. Can also apply directly in the office. Equity training area for hiring managers, ways they apply and support needed in positions they are applying for. Do they have to be in specific areas for example in parks?

Patricia asked about ableist job requirements like lifting 50 pounds or drivers license when driving Is not required?

- Some are for represented positions and the union has a required language. Can make reasonable accommodations. Do look for drivers' license for certain positions
- Scrubbed generic language in general job applications.
- DL questions there has been some discussion in HR around what exactly ...this issue has come up before. Don't remember where we are on that item. Under discussion being more specific tied to the actual description.
- Amanda shared that in Parks they need CDLs and use large transportation vehicles. Entry level role – can there be interoffice mail? Remote work also going to help with the DL issue. Need certification for off road and remote areas look for the skill set with driving.

Dañel asked what efforts there are to have information available in other languages – speakers of other languages applying. Hope to encounter a park ranger who speaks other languages. Is that something you would want to make sure happens? Look at job fairs and community partners to help with bilingual candidates. If you are bilingual do have a differential for folks who use that in their position. Community partnerships program where email blast and commitments to job fairs. Expo Center doing Vietnamese and Spanish – assumed didn't have to speak in English and really hard to disappoint folks when they find out they do have to speak English.

Tristan asked about the onboarding process and encouraged to think about a new process. From organization and onboarding aspect, what is the follow up? Your impression of the job, just got hired, one week out and one year out trying to understand what are the follow up? Encourage you all to not close the book and assume that process is over.

- Amanda shared that she is a woman of color in a predominately white department. I struggle and deal with that as well. How do we measure what was successful? Did we ring in the right person? Do they feel successful and supported and connected at Metro? 90 day? 12 month? What is it? Mapped out attraction and then the next tier is how we follow up.
- Even more challenging in this moment. We don't have a specific system for folks starting now. Personal commitment to reach out. Think back about your experience in getting here and what would you have wanted more of. Connection with others like you – ERG etc.
- Tristan said that there was some conversation about the process. Requirement sometimes that come with applications. Has there been a fine tooth comb through the application process? For me personally, elimination of degree requirements. Second piece, when posting a job posting having the salary visible and up front – not a range of things. Last one, benefits, fully up there and present to the folks who are looking at that.
- Amanda responded that for Bachelors/degrees we do look at those for a scientist because they do need that. Technical pieces and education around that, like at the zoo. The ones we can, seasons park workers, tickets, we do ask for any combination of experience. We do add that to all job descriptions if we are capable of doing that. If don't ask for it in cover letter – is there any lived experience that you want to share with us that would help you in this role? It is not a scoreable question but it helps manager. Always post salaries and shows represented positions are also linked in job posting for the step increases. Benefits are public information on external site and also link to it on job posting site. Give information where you won't get full benefits in temporary or part time roles.

Patricia said that it is not just people with disabilities that don't drive: low income folks or those that want to use public transit – some of whom would be drawn to parks and nature. Some of the parks are not on bus lines. Have you considered an employee shuttle?

- Don't have bus lines out to Oxbow Park. This has come up multiple times. We can get people close, especially with like Blue Lake. We also have Metro vehicles that staff can borrow. Not utilizing in COVID. Candidates restricted to public transport ask about this as well.

Tristan closed the meeting.