

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Selectman Tim Kaelin
Asst Town Administrator Becca Meekins
Mary Leach
Virginia Simms George
Lauren Bailey-Jones
Diedra Wrighting
Shika Holland



MEMBERS ABSENT:

Hamilton Soriano
Mariam Ibrahim

OPEN AND WELCOME FROM MEETING HOST, Assistant Town Administrator Becca Meekins:

Selectman Kaelin welcomed the committee for their third meeting of the Northborough Diversity & Inclusion Committee Meeting on February 4th just past 7 PM. Becca Meekins followed with provisions of the open meeting law.

Ms. Meekins: Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020, orders suspending certain provisions of the open meeting law General Laws Chapter 38 Section 18 in the Governor's March 15, 2020 order, imposing strict limitation on the number of people that may gather in one place this meeting will be conducted via remote participation. No in person attendance by members of the public will be permitted. This meeting will be streamed live but will not have an option for public participation. To view or listen only, please visit the Town of Northborough's web page which will bring you to the Town of Northborough's You Tube link.

OPEN DISCUSSION:

Selectman Kaelin moved the committee vote to accept the minutes of January 7, 2020, meeting.

Ms. Simms George moved the Committee vote to approve the January 7, 2020 meeting minutes.

Ms. Holland seconded motion.

Selectman Kaelin initiated roll call for attendees present.

Ms. Simms George: Present	Ms. Holland: Present
Ms. Meekins: Present	Ms. Leach: Present
Ms. Bailey-Jones: Present	Chief Lyver (meeting guest): Present
Ms. Writing: Present	Selectman Kaelin: Present

Selectman Kaelin introduces Chief Lyver to the meeting and thanks him for his time.

Chief Lyver with respect to recruiting, Chief indicates he is unsure what other avenues we can go down. There are some commercial avenues. The hiring process begins in October. It's an industry-wide problem for police. The recruitment pool has shrunk to almost nothing. 10-15 years ago, we had two openings and over 300 applicants. This last recruitment, we had 33 applicants to fill three positions. Two of the positions have been filled. Out of the 33, only 16 passed the physical requirements. Need to reach out to the younger people.

Chief added he feels there is a need to educate the youth on behaviors they need to avoid. We want people (candidates) who have a reputation for sound character. Posting requirements more widely as a profession seems to be an issue. Many departments are also now reviewing tattoo policies. Our policy is no visible tattoo. We give them one year to have the tattoo removed. Larger departments are waiving this entirely. Today, up to 43% of young adults up to age 23 have some sort of criminal arrest record. This is an impediment. Career fairs, education at the middle school, is the extent of what Chief can think of doing. Applicants need to understand the physical requirements. Phys Ed in schools is not the same as it used to be.

The physical fitness standards are the most challenging. There is a male standard and a female standard. This is a state standard beyond my control.

Ms. Bailey-Jones refers back to a quote from an article that was discussed at the committee's January meeting regarding advice for small local government to create equitable and inclusive environments. It said *instead of asking how do I attract diverse talent or increase diversity, instead ask what does it mean to be inclusive of other races, cultures, and perspectives*. Chief, I'm asking you that question. For the Northborough PD, how are you being inclusive of other races, cultures and perspectives or how could you in the future?

Chief Lyver responds the department has diversity training. They are held a couple times a year. They have stringent policies on how people will be treated. Asked for clarity on Lauren's question.

Ms. Bailey-Jones responds that this is about within the community as well as within the department.

Chief Lyver we have a young department (age) so they have grown up with greater perspective of inclusion. The younger officers are more receptive to the topic. Chief feels that the training they have had has been enlightening and feels the department has a clear understanding of expectations.

Ms. Bailey-Jones thanks Chief Lyver for his time adding she enjoyed learning more about the innerworkings of the police department.

Ms. Holland asks questions of Chief Lyver. First question is about the tattoo policy. It would be helpful to understand some of the policies that may be up for debate or discussion. That may help our committee with making some recommendations.

Chief Lyver it has taken some time for the town to update the web site platform. Indicated he now has more control over content. Chief intends to put the complete policy manual on the web site excluding All Hazards Emergency Response Plans. He intends to include pursuit policies, arrest policies, bias indicator policies. He hopes to update the web site within the next six months. He is now including in his monthly report to the Board of Selectman a breakdown of traffic stops and citations by race and intends to get this on the web site as well.

Ms. Holland asks Chief question related to the PAT exam. For those who do not pass, is there an opportunity for you to bring those people back?

Chief Lyver responds that applicants who do not pass the PAT are free to re-apply for future positions.

Ms. Simms George thanks Chief Lyver for joining the meeting and asks if there is a certain distance you can recruit from or is it open?

Chief Lyver responds that it is open. Once hired, they have six months to move within a 15-mile radius of Northborough. There is a new state statute the town could adopt to set their own distance.

Ms. Simms George would it be helpful to expand that for recruiting?

Chief Lyver it may be helpful. We don't want to go too far because if we have an emergency, we don't want to have to wait too long for them to get here. Original state law was 15 miles. Chief added he is not opposed to increasing that to 20 or 25 miles. Chief also added they require a Bachelor's degree as an entry level officer. Officers are given three years to obtain a degree in a criminal justice field and receive a 20% salary increase for having that degree. We want the town to benefit from the college education. Makes for broader, more diverse, and highly qualified officers. A GED or high school diploma is required by the state. Our town's requirement is a Bachelor's degree.

Ms. Simms George acknowledges how hard Chief Lyver has been working on diversity within the department adding the committee is here for him and will continue to work with the department to help with training and recruitment.

Chief Lyver adds the most under-represented in his department is women, and that is his first priority. Northborough had the first female police officer hired as a patrol officer in 1973 (Linda Richardson). She was the first in the country to become a female patrol officer!

Diedra Writhing extends her gratitude to Chief Lyver and asks Chief how do we move beyond training to action? Is there anything else such as community engagement? If you know the community and know the people you are dealing with, the likelihood of something happening just because of race is lowered because you know that person and they are no longer just a face with a color.

Chief Lyver responds that too much training can desensitize people to the change we are trying to make. Some of the things we can do come down to money. They did some community engagement such as National Night Out at Ellsworth Macafee Park when they'd cook burgers & hot dogs (funded in part by the police association when community grants were available). Chief added he does not need money to

have an officer approach someone to say hi. Covid has put a strain on what they normally do. Chief added they have a parking lot program where officers go to a neighborhood, park their cruiser, and bike around the neighborhood. We are a small department of 22. More people in the community know them than they know in the community. There are things the department can and will do again once the pandemic is behind us. Most of the department will be getting their 2nd vaccine later this month.

Ms. Simms George Are there ideas we can share in terms of community outreach. Chief, do you have any ideas?

Chief Lyver responds that when Chief Hutchins was here, he had that people connection he started which was a group of parents, clergy, and others from the community. They addressed quality of life issues and offered support to families. As time went by, that became more complicated due to privacy laws. It takes a village to raise a child was active in the school community when he was a Juvenile Detective. But educational laws have changed things.

Ms. Leach thanks the Chief for coming and asks if there is anything he sees his peers in other communities doing that we can help our community achieve here?

Chief Lyver responded good relationships have been established over the years. We get a lot of community support. Just giving us feedback when you hear something is helpful. He can't fix something he doesn't know about. Police officers generally work with very little supervision on an 8-hour shift. Their car is their office. Often, the officer will self-report. Unless he hears about it, he won't be able to do anything about it.

Ms. Leach added that it sounds like the recruiting issue is a long-term issue. Mary asked Chief Lyver about reinstating the ride-alongs that were in place in an effort to help young people learn more about being a police officer and what it entails.

Chief Lyver we teach the DARE program (10-week program) which covers decision making. The focus is not so much on drug abuse/resistance education but is more about life skills and making sound decisions. He added, the DARE program was an opportunity for an officer in uniform to interact with 6th graders. They recently expanded that to the 7th grade to bridge elementary to middle school. Maintaining that program has been difficult because it is time consuming for the officers, and they only want to do it for so long. At one point they had 6 officers, now he is down to 4. Two left for the private sector.

Selectman Kaelin thanks Chief Lyver for joining the meeting. His biggest takeaway from conversations with Chief Lyver has been the priorities to keep the citizens and the department safe. Diversity and inclusion is a component of that. Thank you, Chief.

Chief Lyver I will end with a comment often made by a former director of the training council ... people talk about us as law enforcement officers. In Northborough, we are police officers. 90% of our day is not enforcing laws but rather is spent dealing with quality-of-life issues. I expect a guardian mentality from my officers. His department is here to help people make it through the day (navigate problems with their children, the schools, neighbors). The goal is not law enforcement, it is quality of life. Chief adds that yes there are times when they have to draw a line in the sand and charge somebody because they have no other alternative, but it's guardian first, law second. He thanks the committee for having him.

Selectman Kaelin Virginia summed it up best. What can we do as a committee to help the Police Department achieve their goals. As Chief said, a diverse force has been a priority of his since he took the job. We can have a follow-up discussion on what we can to advocate for the department.

Ms. Meekins adds recruitment is probably the most critical piece within the department so they can move forward within diversity and inclusion. Youth Police Academy is another idea and something Becca worked on in another community. It offers positive interactions with the Police Department.

Ms. Simms George adds we need to increase the radius to 20 or 25 miles for recruiting. Her husband, Fred, volunteered to work with the Department to help with recruiting and did sit in on some of the interviews.

Ms. Wrighting is there a pre-fitness training program available to them to help applicants better understand the requirements?

Selectman Kaelin stated when the Department adds the policy manual to the web site, including what the components are of the test, that could be helpful (running, sit-ups, push-ups, etc.). If people are aware and they still fail, that's a different story. There is no reason why we cannot include the expectations on the town web site.

Ms. Bailey-Jones asks a question of Becca. At the last meeting, reference was made to using Google docs to organize our thoughts and the recommendations that we will bring to the Board of Selectmen once our year's task is done. Did you research to see if it violates open meeting law?

Ms. Meekins responds yes she did research it, and it does not violate open meeting law. Becca added she is happy to set up a Google doc and can share the link with the group. We can then start adding ideas.

Selectman Kaelin moving on to surveys. Mary & Shika shared a survey they put together that they'd like to share with Northborough Moms. Tim added he looked at universities and municipalities and put together a 2nd survey with 10 questions. He really liked the two questions from Mary's and Shika's survey. His thought is can we have up to 8-10 questions so when people take it, we are gathering as much information as possible. The link for the survey he put together was sent to everyone. Tim added the committee does not need to come to a decision tonight, but he would like to get the survey out within the next couple of weeks.

Ms. Meekins will add the questions to Google docs.

Ms. Leach asks if Tim is referring to just Northborough Moms or something broader.

Selectman Kaelin something broader – something for the community. Tim added he is a member of Northborough Dads. There are other Northborough Facebook pages, such as the Selectmen page, committee members can also share it on. Tim shares he has a Masters in Analytics so can dig into the data that comes in and put together something, so we can review the results at the next meeting.

Ms. Leach asks Lauren and Diedra if they know about the survey that went out to Algonquin students/parents with respect to diversity.

Ms. Bailey-Jones responds she is not aware. She is on the K-8 committee. They had their last meeting for the Coalition for Diversity in early January.

Ms. Wrighting adds there have been a group of sub-committees that have been charged. There was a report but no mention of a survey yet. But that was, as Lauren said, back in January.

Ms. Bailey-Jones adds she took notes about a survey drafted to use at the HS and MS. She recalls it may have been created by a student. Other than that, she has not heard anything. Asks if the committee would be interested in obtaining the results to understand more about younger people in the community?

Selectman Kaelin feels that would be great.

Ms. Leach adds even to get a response rate would be helpful.

Selectman Kaelin when you get a chance to review the Survey Monkey survey, the questions he included are broad, focused more on community-wide questions.

Ms. Bailey-Jones adds we want to be sure to be capturing everyone's thoughts and perceptions on whether we are culturally aware and inclusive as not everyone in town is a parent.

Ms. Simms-George there is a wealth of information available at the Senior Center. They bring a different perspective but a very important one for the community.

Selectman Kaelin mentions he is a liaison with the Senior Center and will be attending the meeting next week. He will address this topic.

Ms. Wrighting feels Facebook is a great place to post the survey for coverage and asks if there are other modes we can tap into?

Selectman Kaelin responds that people can feel free to share the survey link within Facebook.

Ms. Simms-George asks about putting information on the sign in the center of town about the survey.

Selectman Kaelin yes we could probably reach out to the Lions to see about getting something up there.

Ms. Meekins mentions self-selection bias with respect to distributing a survey to only select groups. Expresses concern.

Ms. Simms-George asks what **IS** the purpose of the survey

Ms. Holland responds her feeling is to get a pulse on diversity and inclusion so we can tailor our recommendations to that

Ms. Bailey-Jones that was her thought too. Adds she understands the concern with self-selection bias. Feels if we use this as just one method of collecting data, we can use other methods as well to collect qualitative data. Lauren added she has done a lot of surveys during her public health tenure. As long as we are not honing all of our recommendations on just this survey, she is ok with doing this. Lauren liked the open ended questions at the end in the Andover.

Ms. Simms-George feels we need to think a little more about this. Tim, you put together an excellent presentation to the Board of Selectmen, and you stated what the purpose would be. That is what was accepted. You were given permission to form this committee. Are we being premature to do a survey?

Selectman Kaelin responds that the survey will be part of the presentation to the Board. It will give us some data points to what the sentiment is in the community which is really what we are trying to get at. How do the people in the community feel about diversity, equity and inclusion? As long as the survey is completed by many different groups, that will take some of the bias out of the data. There are methods we can use to remove some of the bias in the data (such as latency variables, etc.).

Ms. Bailey-Jones so if we include some of the demographic information and then compare essentially that information with the demographics from our recent town census, would that tell us how much bias there could be in the survey?

Selectman Kaelin unsure. We can certainly compare our results with the town census information.

Ms. Simms-George asks if Tim knows how many people responded to the census?

Selectman Kaelin does not know. Hopefully everybody!

Ms. Simms-George there are 15,000+ people in town.

Selectman Kaelin it was right around there 14,911 or something like that.

Ms. Leach has a question from someone watching our meeting this evening. The viewer is asking if the survey can be shared beyond social media.

Selectman Kaelin yes absolutely

Ms. Bailey-Jones asks if it can be sent out via a town-wide email perhaps from the Clerk's office

Ms. Meekins we can add the link to the page on the town web site and to Town News. Residents do have to subscribe to receive updates from the web site.

Ms. Leach how about through Community Advocate? Liz Nolan is posing the question.

Ms. Simms George yes that's fine!

Ms. Bailey-Jones we should ensure the first question is *are you a Northborough resident?*

Selectman Kaelin if everyone could leave their feedback in Google docs, then I can put together the survey in Survey Monkey. We can then send the link to the committee and start posting.

Ms. Leach mentioned Uncomfortable Conversations with a Black Man series. Could be worth the committee watching to educate ourselves even more.

Ms. Wrighting adds might be helpful to share resources on Google doc.

Selectman Kaelin we have talked about medium- to long-term goals or projects/actions. One of the easiest is training but not only of the town staff. We can bring in speakers at the library to help educate residents. Community Affairs may have ideas. Using the Google doc to share resources is a great idea.

Ms. Simms George mentions Dr. Kalise Wornum (an educator and expert on bias and cultural proficiency). Dr. Wornum spoke at the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC) meeting and received very high ratings. She will be speaking on February 23 for MASC. Virginia will see if she can share information about the event. Virginia is the Chair of MASC's Division X (minority conference of MASC). They plan to have a number of speakers.

Ms. Bailey-Jones misspoke earlier adding she see Dr. Wornum and took notes and screen shots of her presentation. It was definitely worthwhile. If it is available, sending that link to non-MASC members would be nice.

Selectman Kaelin if anyone has any medium- to long-term ideas, please share those ideas on the Google doc so we can begin to organize them. Tim would like to put teams together of one to two people to tackle each area, so we can begin putting together the recommendations for the Board of Selectmen.

Tim mentioned having the Y come in to speak with the committee. The Y does such great work locally and in surrounding communities. Is there some way for our committee to help out with the Y's mission?

Ms. Holland thinks it would be great to have them at our next meeting.

Ms. Bailey-Jones agrees. This is part of the data collection effort so we can make informed recommendations. Understanding opportunities for engagement and partnerships is important.

Selectman Kaelin will reach out to the person at the Y to see if they are available to join our next meeting.

Ms. Bailey-Jones suggests in addition to the survey, webinars with community participation would be helpful.

Ms. Simms George we do that for the School Committee. We allow an audience portion where members of the community can share information. We give like 15 minutes for people to talk then we return to our meeting.

Ms. Bailey-Jones we could do that. It could be a whole separate meeting devoted to engaging the community. What are everyone else's thoughts?

Selectman Kaelin agrees that is a very important part of this process whether it is virtual or in person.

Ms Simms George agrees

Ms. Wrighting should we be talking with the community about what we are doing?

Selectman Kaelin responded yes and adds he speaks with anyone in the community whenever he can on this. It's feedback and learning about what's going on in the community on a day-to-day basis that we may not experience.

Ms. Bailey-Jones attended a meeting earlier this week with the Visibility Subcommittee of Northborough Democrats. They invited her because they knew she was part of this committee. She was able to share with them the work we are doing. They are planning a speaker series. They are wondering how they can have a bigger event that speaks to diversity, equity and inclusion. They are at the planning stage right now, but they would like to have various committees involved as they get their ideas off the

ground. They are very open to having anyone from this committee attend to learn more and share suggestions.

Selectman Kaelin thanked Lauren for attending the meeting and representing the Committee. Asked if anyone has anything further.

Ms. Meekins: added she will follow-up with link to Google doc.

ADJOURNMENT:

Ms Simms George moved the Committee vote to adjourn.

Ms. Bailey-Jones seconded the motion.

Roll call taken as follows:

Ms. Meekins: Aye	Ms. Holland: Aye
Ms. Simms George: Aye	Ms. Bailey-Jones: Aye
Ms. Leach: Aye	Selectman Kaelin: Aye
Ms. Wrighting: Aye	

Meeting is adjourned at 8:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

by Mary Leach

Clerk, Northborough Diversity & Inclusion Committee

Documents referenced during the meeting:

Town of Northborough D&I Committee January 7, 2020, Meeting Minutes