



City of Worcester

Diversity & Inclusion Advisory Committee Minutes of Virtual Webex Meeting Monday, January 11 2021 5:30 PM

Present:

District 1 Samuel Santiago

District 1 Savvas Kosmidis

District 2 Bernard Reese

District 4 Nicole DiCello

District 5 Leigh Woodruff, Vice Chair

Chief Diversity Officer: Stephanie Williams

Staff Liaison: Pam Callahan, Human Resources

Call to Order: 5:40

I. Public Comment: Alan Garza:

Alan Garza said he was new to the city and wanted to listen in and hear what is going on in the city and be engaged.

II. Approval of 11/23/20 Minutes- unanimously approved by roll call

III. Follow up:

- Summary of Legal Literature Regarding Civil Service

Leigh found articles and summarized: Brodin, M., Discriminatory Job Knowledge Tests, Police Promotions..., 59 Boston Coll. Law Rev. 2319 (2018).

This 2018 article is by a Boston College law professor named Mark Brodin. Based on social science studies and expert testimony in past litigation, Prof. Brodin states: (1) civil service exam use stifles hiring and advancement of qualified minority candidates; and (2) civil service exam results have little ability to predict success in public safety positions, particularly in supervisory capacities. Brodin suggests strategies for civil rights litigators to file lawsuits challenging continued use of civil service exams.

Riccucci, N., Use of Written Exams in Police & Fire Depts: Implications for Social Diversity, Rev. of Public Personnel Admin., Dec. 2015. This 2015 article is by Rutgers Univ. professors in the school of public affairs and administration. The authors reviews data from states and cities nationwide, which shows that civil service exams "have historically been an obstacle for persons of color." The article notes that Massachusetts is one of just four states using a centralized civil service exam (i.e., in most states, cities, towns, etc. use local exams). The article asks: Why do municipalities still use civil service exams to evaluate job candidates although the exams (1) may not predict job performance; and (2) depress diversity in hiring and advancement? The authors found that many HR managers stated the exams are used "because they have always been used." The civil service exam system has become "a pattern and practice" that is "ingrained in the cultural fabric of public sector human resources" and "mired in tradition and custom." Based on this analysis, the author urges cities to "reexamine their hiring and promotion procedures for police and firefighters."

- UMass Law School; no update: The Dean was not able to help after all
- Update on Public Speakers: Board members will try to arrange speakers from other municipalities

Due to an unforeseen issue with the Webex platform, the meeting was adjourned at 6:16.