

**City of Schenectady  
Affirmative Action Advisory Board  
MINUTES  
City Hall, Room 110**

**August 18, 2016**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Hector Ramirez, Chair  
Dave Chetram, Vice Chair  
Ellie Pepper, Secretary  
Angela Tryon

MEMBERS ABESENT: Kanema Haynes  
Rev. Arnetta Dix  
Adriel Linyear  
Jennifer Eaddy-Garvin

ALSO PRESENT: Carl Falotico, City Corporation Council; guest speaker Tiffany White, Personnel and Benefits Administrator for City of Schenectady

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 6:03pm by Chair, Hector Ramirez.

Welcome and Board member introductions for benefit of Ms. White.

**Approval of Minutes:**

There being no quorum, approval of June and July minutes tabled until the September meeting.

**Presentation by Tiffany White, Personnel and Benefits Administrator for City of Schenectady:**

**Board member questions:**

Q: Who handles discrimination and other employee complaints?

A: Ms. White works closely with Carl Falotico, City Corporation Council and Anthony Ferrari, Commissioner of Finance and Administration to address complaints.

Q. Are you seeing a diverse pool of applicants for open positions?

A. Since 2011 the city has hired 145 applicants who identified as non-white. Mostly in blue collar and labor positions.

Q: What is the subset within those two categories?

A: Mostly in sanitation and the Dept. of Revitalization

Q: Does the city track applicants vs. those hired?

A: No but Ms. White states they would like to start to evaluate.

Q. Why isn't being done, what is the challenge?

A. Manpower

Q. What are the obstacles to hiring a more diverse workforce?

A. Civil service requirements are the biggest obstacles since those hired must come from those who score highest on the exams.

Q. What type of assistance/notification does the city provide to facilitate a larger pool of candidates taking the exams?

A. The city posts exam notices as early as possible in order to give people enough time to plan and prepare for the exam.

Q. What happens to provisional employees who don't pass the required exam?

A. The city must go to the exam list if it is a mandatory one. If it is not a position which mandates that the city use someone from the exam list, the provisional employee can be appointed for a second term. If the provisional employee again does not get a high enough score to be on the list the mayor can request a waiver to appoint the provisional employee for one more term.

The biggest challenge for fire and police departments- candidates not only must take the exam and pass as well as meet all requirements to enter the academies. Once the candidates complete the respective academy, they can apply to any open positions in the departments of any city. So Schenectady must attract eligible candidates to apply in competition with Troy and Albany for example.

Q. How far can/will the city move to attract a more diverse pool of applicants outside of fire and police? Is the city willing to make study tools/ resources available?

A. The exam posting breaks down what will be focused on in the exam but it is generally the same across the board. Civil service likes the posting to be vague so the same test can be used multiple times over multiple postings.

Comment: It is often an intimidating process to apply for and take a civil service exam. People become nervous about the writing portions, are generally fearful of testing, and overwhelmed by the process. Ms. White comments that there are many resources online for study guides. Mr. Ramirez suggests using Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding to offer classes prepping folks for exams and reviewing tests.

School district will be working with CSEA to offer classes to current employees to help them be better able to take exams for positions that are a promotion. *(I don't remember who said this. Was it Tiffany or was it Angela?)*

Mr. Falotico stated that the mayor is supportive of using CDBG funds to offer classes, prep courses etc... but a non-profit community partner must apply to do it. Mr. Ramirez suggest that the board host a

community forum for planning and discussion- the city would take the lead in organizing and presenting and board members would provide assistance.

**Rivers Casino Outreach:**

The event went well, the Casino's process is a model for how to do outreach to minorities and women. It was unfortunate that more MWBE businesses did not attend. However, The Daily Gazette of Schenectady didn't advertise, and in general has not covered work of the board.

Some takeaways from the event: Are all the MWBE certified businesses on the NYS list actually still active? Are MWBE's aware that the Casino wants to hire subcontracts and will bond contractors?

**Meeting with Mayor:**

The board initially met with the mayor in January to review and discuss the annual report. A follow-up meeting is set for 8/22 to review our recommendations and to determine what the mayor thinks the priorities should be so we can move forward based on his guidance. WE also plan to discuss board vacancies and our need for staff support

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Meeting was adjourned at 7:06p.m.

**The next meeting is scheduled for September 15 @ 6:00pm.**

Submitted by Ellie Pepper