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CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM

ACTION REQUESTED:

Receive an update on the City’s diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives

DEPARTMENT: City Manager’s Office

SUBMITTED BY: Geneace Williams, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Manager

BOARD/COMMISSION REVIEW:

N/A

BACKGROUND:

The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) efforts are guided by the City’s mission statement, “To provide services that ensure a high quality of life, sound fiscal management, and a dynamic business environment, while creating an inclusive community that values diversity,” as well as the City’s core values of People, Trust, Respect, and Pride.

In December 2022, staff presented a DEI update to the City Council and discussed the following five areas of the 2023 workplan:

1. growing internal workforce recruitment, retention and engagement to better reflect our community,
2. investing in expanding DEI education,
3. increasing DEI awareness,
4. engaging externally by partnering with individuals and community organizations for greater involvement in inclusion and belonging, and
5. beginning the process of evaluating City services.

DISCUSSION:

Internal Organization Efforts:

As an organization, we support an environment where all employees feel like they belong and are respected and valued, no matter their age, gender, gender identity, ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, religion, disability, income or background. Engaged employees perform better, remain in organizations longer, and experience less burnout. Moreover, inclusive organizational climates enable well-being, learning, and greater organizational performance. Every person within the organization has a role in advancing an environment of equity and inclusion for the workforce.

Employee Retention

Across the country, local governments continue to work toward the goal of having inclusive workforces that broadly reflect the communities they serve. In January 2023, Chief Arres and I completed the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus/University of Illinois pilot focused on strategies for embedding equity into local governments. Two key takeaways were (a) a focused effort on improving the workplace for all employees will yield a positive impact on the entire workforce, and (b) there is direct correlation between purposeful community engagement and building trust with those residents who do not regularly engage.

Since completion, Chief Arres and I have been leading an internal employee retention initiative in IT tied directly to the goal of updating our retention strategies.

Over the past six years (from 2017 through 2022), we experienced turnover in IT of greater than 10% during most years. In 2021, turnover in IT reached 26%. Being a highly competitive field, and a department that provides critical support to City operations, it made sense to select IT as the pilot. Efforts have included interviewing all of the teams in IT and stakeholders in Human Resources and CMO, evaluating the feedback and developing initial recommendations.

We are currently working with the leadership team in IT on implementation strategies and timing.

Engagement

The Emerging Leaders completed the assigned Employee Engagement Project in May and have made recommendations that will be implemented later this year.

Among the recommendations was a Passport Program for new employees to get to know **all** departments across the City. The passport is designed to expose new hires to the range of work performed by City staff, its interrelatedness, the importance of their work, and giving employees a sense of purpose. Having purpose in one's work improves engagement and, therefore, retention.

To reach all employees, the Emerging Leaders also recommended a Department Spotlight Program. Each month, one of the 12 departments will be featured in the employee newsletter with details on everything from the department mission to fun activities that make the department unique. These recommendations align with improving our engagement strategies for all employees.

Training and Recruitment

Staff is also in the process of developing an RFP for a consultant to create customized education and training. The first iteration of training will focus on fostering inclusion and belonging.

Inclusion is a key factor in shaping the workplace for all. Designed to help employees discover that people experience the same workplace in very different ways, employees will gain critical insight into

ways to contribute and participate in an inclusive environment.

A second training will be for staff who manage others. In today's changing work climate, inclusion-focused values and traits are imperative for leaders as they navigate a diverse workplace and workforce. This course will engage participants with an inclusive leadership model designed to help managers grow their ability to work effectively with and across a diverse workforce.

We will continue to evaluate the use of existing City resources (Employee Assistance Program, online platforms, etc.) for training opportunities.

While we have begun a review of our recruitment processes, we slowed our efforts in the absence of a Human Resources Director. We plan to resume these efforts later this summer.

External Efforts:

We strive to support our mission and live our core values by becoming a more inclusive and welcoming community where youth are elevated, and all are welcome and enjoy equitable opportunities to thrive. The benefits of working with community groups and organizations include learning from, leveraging, and amplifying each other's work, which has the greatest potential for broader impact.

Increase DEI Awareness - Embrace Naperville Series

Since the 2022 launch of *Embrace Naperville: Empowering Our Mission Through a Year of Learning*, we have hosted two community events, helped to lead a community-wide initiative, alongside Kids Matter, and launched an ongoing social media campaign highlighting federally recognized Heritage and History months throughout 2023. The Power of Inclusion was hosted to an audience of over 125 participants in November 2022 and focused on what an inclusive community looks like.

The City partnered with KidsMatter and the Collaborative Youth Team in February and March 2023 on a citywide Kindness Campaign drawing more than 2,500 kindness stories from across Naperville and concluding with a downtown Banner Campaign. Employees were encouraged to participate, as kindness campaigns have been linked to wellness, including a more harmonious environment, reduced stress levels, lower absenteeism, and better health.

The Power of Connection: AAPI Voices & Community, was held just last month in partnership with Naperville Public Library, Chinese American Women in Action, and other AAPI community members. Nearly one hundred people came together to participate in an interactive panel discussion with six local members of the AAPI community who shared about their lived experiences in Naperville. The panel concluded with an open discussion that included the audience. Many have inquired about holding similar events to include and highlight other groups within Naperville.

Planning is underway for the fourth initiative. We have assembled a number of community organizations, including school districts 203 and 204, to help organize a Youth Forum, which we plan to host in the fall of 2023. The vision for the event is hearing from youth, collectively, across the diverse organizations that focus their efforts on young people to intentionally create greater opportunities for meaningful and inclusive involvement in their community. We held our first meeting and are moving forward with event development. The Youth **IN**clusion Ambassadors, created to bring innovative ideas and offer valuable insight into the issues that young people face, will actively participate in planning the Youth Forum. As plans take greater shape, we will provide an update.

Other external efforts include posting Boards & Commissions data on our website at <https://data.naperville.il.us/pages/diversity-equity-inclusion>, which shows the current reported diversity of our Boards and Commissions by ethnicity/race, age, and gender/gender identity. Later this year we will also be adding zip code data to show the geographic representation. The first ever iteration of a Naperville Diversity Story Map, which highlights the growth of diversity in Naperville using data from the 2010 and 2020 census, is in its final development phase and will be available on our website by the end of the month.

The community survey will be released in July and will help us evaluate service delivery to our residents and understand if residents of all backgrounds feel valued and respected in Naperville.

The entirety of these efforts helps us tackle our goal of enhancing community engagement, increasing DEI awareness and understanding, and celebrating the value of inclusion in Naperville. Moreover, we value your continued help in connecting people and organizations with City staff as opportunities arise.

The attached table highlights DEI progress so far in 2023. The next update will occur in December and will highlight continued progress and the work planned for 2024.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The 2023 operating budget includes \$40,000 for DEI training and programming. We expended funds on the Kindness Campaign banners, for the AAPI event and will use some of the remaining funds for consulting services for the development of training.