

February 9, 2026 DEI Committee Meeting Minutes

In attendance: Lauren (online), David, Anne, Breese, Jamie, Aiden, Ariane, Danica

Not in attendance: Syed, Flo (excused)

1. Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 5:35 PM .

2. Public Comment

No members of the public were in attendance.

3. Approval of Minutes

Motion by Breese to approve the January 12 meeting minutes, seconded by Aiden. Motion is unanimously approved.

4. Discussion Items

4.a. Departures and Welcomes

Anne announced Bistra's resignation and welcomed three new members. Committee members re-introduced themselves to the new members.

4.b. Current Events

This item will be added as a standing item on upcoming agendas to give the Committee time to discuss how current news and events in the community intersect with our work.

Anne shared that she has reached out to library about Black History Month and reiterated how appreciative we are of their partnership and their amplification of diversity in their programming.

Anne suggested that the Committee seeks to collaborate with the Biddeford Cultural and Heritage Center for RiverJam this year. Danica will share contact information for their President.

Aiden has been working with a therapist to compile a list of statewide providers who will offer free or low-cost therapy to people impacted by current events. He will share it with committee when it is complete.

4.c. Black History Month Proclamation

Anne's draft Proclamation is shared with the group. Aiden makes a motion to approve the proclamation. Breese seconds. Vote is unanimous.

Danica shared that this proclamation is set to be read at the February 17 City Council meeting and invited members to attend if they are able. Anne shared that the BHS Black Student Union may be interested in having members attend, and she will let the Mayor know in advance if there are any guests that should be welcomed.

4.d. Juneteenth Update

Flo, Delilah Poupore of Heart of Biddeford, and Josh Brister of the Maine Black Chamber of Commerce have been meeting to plan this year's Juneteenth celebration. A location is not yet confirmed, but the event is scheduled from 3-5 PM on Friday, June 19, 2026.

Josh Brister will be submitting a Fiscal Year 2027 budget request for City support of the 2027 Juneteenth event. This request is due on March 5. Danica notes that Council would be budgeting this request for the 2027 Juneteenth celebration, not the 2026. Anne will pass this information to Flo. David asks how much Council contributed last year. Danica clarified that it was not funded with Council funds last year.

Breese notes that the last Juneteenth celebration was the inaugural event. Despite this, over 200 people attended, and it was very well received by the Biddeford community at large. He suggested that a rain location is planned if the event will be outdoors.

Danica will share the Juneteenth flyer with the Committee.

4.e. Pride Month Discussion

Danica explained the flag display policy to the Committee. A flag request was submitted to fly the Pride Flag at City Hall in June; however, the request must be sent no more than 90 days in advance. The requester has been asked to resubmit the request in March.

Committee members were asked to save the date for a Monday, June 1 flag raising at City Hall. The high school's Pride group will be invited to attend as they have in past years.

The request to fly a Pride flag should be submitted on March 3rd.

Danica provides an overview of the City's flag policy.

Anne provides context for the City's flag policy, such as to prevent obscenity and retributivism.

A raising of the Pride flag will Monday, June 1st.

Anne notes that there are local student groups who enjoy having ownership of this event. Jaime asks after the name of the student group; Anne says they are multivarious and constantly evolving.

Jamie asks who plans Biddeford Pride. Danica says that, historically, it's HoB.

David will ask when planning meetings for this will occur, so that committee members can be involved in their individual capacity.

5. Other Business

David asked about people with disabilities who were unable to move their cars during snow bans, and whether there might be a City resource for such people to call in. After some discussion of practical issues, Danica says she will ask if the City has any resources in place already that could be examined or grown.

There is a general discussion of the nature of City proclamation; how they are decided upon; how they are written; and their symbolic import.

Danica notes that photographs in Council meetings are not necessarily required at this time, but that they can certainly be requested if community members wish them.

Breese offered to prepare a writeup about Khmer New Year for the Biddeford Beat. Ariane offered to prepare a writeup on International Women's Day. Danica will send out examples of past writeups to the Committee, as well as a copy of the Diversity Calendar.

Danica will reach out to her contact at Age Friendly Biddeford to see if there is interest on collaborating on a proclamation for Older Americans Month.

6. Second Public comment

No members of the public were in attendance.

Meeting adjourned at 6:40 PM.