

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee Meeting Minutes - March 9, 2026

Present: David, Anne, Breese, Lauren, Aiden, Flo, Danica, Syed (Remote), Jamie (arrived at 5:55 PM)

Absent: Ariane

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:34 PM.

2. Public Comment

No members of the public were present.

3. Approval of Minutes

Motion by Aiden, seconded by Anne to approve the February 9, 2026 Meeting Minutes.

Vote: Unanimous.

4. Current Events

Anne suggested that DEI Committee member(s) could volunteer to participate in the analysis of the data from the Rec Bond survey and review how it aligns with our best practice recommendations. Danica provided a summary of the rec bond process, including ward meetings & digital survey, plus role of Council as final determination.

Anne clarified that the survey should be kept from being a performative exercise, especially as it relates to the voices of the marginalized. David says that his understanding of Council's intent was to make sure everyone in Biddeford was given a voice in this matter. It would be wonderful if the DEI committee could provide constructive oversight to make sure that this is being effectuated. David also notes that, even if the Rec bond is a bit far along in the process, Committee feedback could still be deeply useful for future similar outreach.

Flo suggested we put an item related to this on the agenda for April to give the Committee time to review the survey.

5. New Member Orientation

5.a Committee Mission & Vision

Flo provided history of the committee, which was only established in 2022, including its mission statement and vision. She noted that the DEI Committee's mission is a living thing, and is somewhat subject to the consideration and direction of the Committee members, as well as delegating authorities.

Flo went over the Committee's brochure and suggested a goal of getting the brochure recirculating again for June as we enter our "event season".

5.b Committee Expectations

Flo shared a reminder about attendance policies in our ordinance. A member can be removed from the Committee after three unexcused absences. If we don't have quorum, we can still meet but we cannot vote.

Danica shared a reminder about the remote participation policy. Under the policy, which aligns with Maine law, illness, physical condition and distance are the three approved reasons for participating in a meeting remotely.

5.c Past Projects

Flo provided a brief overview of the five years of accomplishments, noting that key resources are available on the website.

Flo summarized the Best Practices document, which is available online. A few minor changes are proposed, relating to lines in the document which reference software that is no longer used by the City. It is considered that these minor updates are not substantive, and therefore do not require a Committee vote to amend. Danica will take out the reference to Our Biddeford in the Best Practices guide and update it on our website.

6. Discussion Items

6.a Eid al-Fitr Proclamation

Flo shared an overview of the proclamation process and the decision to trim down the workload for 2026 by pre-selecting which events to mark with proclamations.

Motion by Breese, seconded by Aiden to move this proclamation forward. Vote: unanimous.

6.b Diversity Calendar & Proclamation Schedule

Flo noted that Committee members are cordially encouraged - though not at all required - to attend Council meetings where proclamations shall be read. This especially if they are the drafted of the proclamation, or are themselves particularly recognized thereby.

Flo discusses past participation in City events, limited by our lack of provided budget. She notes that we are always able to discuss ways to attend or participate in other events - city or otherwise! - to promote and accomplish our work.

There is discussion of the desirability of “swag”, by which the Committee can identify itself at public events. Members will scout their friend groups for the availability of a Cricut.

There is discussion of whether we could sell merch to fundraise. Danica said she would ask the Finance Department for more information about this.

At the last meeting, it had been suggested that we collaborate with Age Friendly Biddeford on an Older Americans Month proclamation. Danica shared that she reached out to their President and they are happy to be a part of this. Danica will share a draft proclamation with them to refine.

Breese agreed to draft the AAPI proclamation. If reviewed at the April meeting, this can be brought forward to the Mayor to include on the May 5 agenda.

Danica will invite Committee members to a Sharepoint folder to try to facilitate collaboration.

6.c Pride Update

Danica will check with Code Enforcement to see if we need to fill out a permit for the Pride flag raising and report back to Flo and Delilah. We are expecting about two dozen people.

Flo and Jamie attended the Pride planning meeting. There is interest from Heart of Biddeford in a ceremonial flag raising taking place during the Confetti event on Saturday, June 6. The Committee would prefer to move forward with the flag being raised at the beginning of the month and sees it as a priority to involve students in the ceremony as we have in past years.

Jamie moved to have the flag raising in the afternoon on Monday, June 1. Flo agreed that this is a good idea but that we should confirm the availability of the students before we finalize the date. Anne will reach out to contacts at Biddeford High School and Thornton Academy about student participation.

Jamie will attend the next planning meeting on March 30.

6.d Juneteenth Update

The venue that we used for last year's Juneteenth event is no longer available because it is now a wedding venue and charging \$5-6K for the day. Flo, Heart of Biddeford and the Maine Black Chamber of Commerce submitted an application for the Club House at Rotary Park and the green in front of the building. Organizers are now looking for volunteers and fiscal sponsors. The event is Friday, June 19 from 3 PM – 5 PM. Volunteer shifts would be 2-4 PM and 4-6 PM and Heart of Biddeford will supplement volunteers.

Anne noted that the Ice Arena may be available as a backup indoor option.

6.e Public Restroom Project

The City's General Assistance Coordinator reached out to the Committee to find out more about this project. Flo asked to take this topic up in April given the time.

7. Other Business

8. Second Public Comment

No members of the public were present.

9. Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 7 PM.