TOWN OF SHREWSBURY

Board of Selectmen Workshop
REMOTE MEETING:
Google Meet: (US) +1 252-376-1157 PIN: 519 612 227#
Richard D. Carney Municipal Office Building
100 Maple Avenue
Shrewsbury, Massachusetts 01545-5398

Monday, June 6, 2022 7:00 PM

Minutes

1. **Call to Order**
   Mr. DePalo read the remote meeting script and called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM, "As a preliminary matter, this is Maurice DePalo, Chair. Please permit me to confirm that all members and persons anticipated on the agenda are present and can hear me.

   Present: Mr. Maurice DePalo, Chair, Ms. Beth Casavant, Vice-Chair, Ms. Theresa Flynn, Clerk, Mr. John Samia, Selectmen, Ms. Michelle Conlin, Selectmen
   Also Present: Mr. Kevin Mizikar, Town Manager, Ms. Taylor Galusha, Principal Department Assistant (Board of Selectman and Town Manager)

   Good evening. This Open Meeting of the Board of Selectmen is being conducted remotely consistent with Senate Bill 2475 signed into law by Governor Baker on June 16, 2021 suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18, this meeting of the Board of Selectmen will be conducted via remote participation to the greatest extent possible. The Order allows public bodies to meet entirely remotely so long as reasonable public access is afforded so that the public can follow along with the deliberations of the meeting. For this meeting, the Board of Selectmen is convening by Google Meet as posted on the Town's Website identifying how the public may join. Please be sure to press *6 to mute your device. The meeting will not feature public comment."

2. **Meeting with VISIONS Inc to discuss matters of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.**
   Mr. John Colón and Ms. Wendy Helmkamp were also present from VISIONS to facilitate the training session. The Board members and consultants introduced themselves and discussed their goals for this training.

   Mr. Colón and Ms. Helmkamp summarized the guidelines for effective cross-cultural dialogue. These guidelines were "Try On," "It's Okay to Disagree," "It's Not Okay to Blame, Shame, or Attack Yourself or Others," "Practice Self-Focus," "Practice Both/And Thinking," "Notice Both Process and Content," "Be Aware of Intent and Impact," and "Confidentiality." Each guideline was explained to the Board. The "Try On" guideline asks individuals to "consider another's thoughts, feelings or actions in order to understand why they think, feel or behave differently from you." The "It's Okay to Disagree" guideline asks individuals to, "recognize that disagreement is essential to driving innovation and producing better outcomes. Disagree without being disagreeable." The "It's Not Okay to Blame, Shame, or Attack Yourself or Others' guideline asks individuals to, "avoid actions towards self or others that harm, create unhealthy competition or shut down engagement." The "Practice Self-Focus" guideline asks individuals to, "reflect on why you react or feel a certain way in response to someone else's actions. Notice your own thoughts, feelings and needs in order to interact more effectively with others. Communicate using "I" statements." The "Practice Both/And Thinking" Guideline asks individuals to, "manage multiple perspectives, ideas and solutions by using "and" rather than "but." Increase collaboration over competition to improve problem

solving and innovation." The "Notice Both Process and Content" guideline asks individuals to, "process is how we engage with others, content is the work we do. Remain mindful of team or interpersonal dynamics in the course of doing your work and pursuing your goals." The "Be Aware of Intent and Impact" guideline asks individuals to, "assume positive intent. Be willing to acknowledge and discuss mistakes in interpersonal interactions to build effective relationships." The "Confidentiality" guideline asks individuals to, "Everyone is the author of their own story. Ask permission to share someone else's story or invite that person into the conversation." The Board members then discussed which guideline they currently practice day to day and which guideline is more challenging for them.

Mr. Colón and Ms. Helmkamp then summarized the four levels of oppression and change. She noted the general definition of oppression being historical, over time, ongoing, systemic targeting of certain groups as "less than" and it is supported institutionally in policies, laws, representation in top-level decision-makers, and there is personal costs to everyone. The four levels are institutional, personal, interpersonal, and cultural. Some examples given for institutional were policies, practices, rules, procedures, and systems. Some examples given for personal were values, beliefs, feelings, attitudes, and opinions. Some examples given for interpersonal were treatment, relationships, behaviors, and communications. Some examples that were given for cultural were worldview, stories, climate, shared values, unwritten rules, and norms. The Board members then were asked to think about where they see these different levels being addressed by the work of the Task Force Report. Board members noted that policies and representation were mentioned throughout the report. They also used the guideline of intent and impact to think of this question as well.

Mr. Colón and Ms. Helmkamp discussed the definition of diversity which is, "a descriptive term used to refer to a broad range of differences, often used to describe the identities or characteristics of different cultural groups represented in the community and/or workplace." The Board members then were asked what diversity looks like for Shrewsbury. Which cultural identities are included in this work? The Board members listed Race, Disability, Sexual Orientation, Socioeconomic, Religion, Political, Age, Gender Identity, and Cultural. They also noted these are all intersectional as well.

Mr. Colón and Ms. Helmkamp discussed the definition of inclusion which, "Represents the end result of recognizing, understanding, appreciating, and leveraging differences at the personal, interpersonal, institutional and cultural levels. It invites an on-going and organization-wide willingness to learn how to create and sustain an inclusive environment" and the differences between integration and inclusion. The Board members were then asked what their vision is as it related to inclusion. The Board members noted that their vision is inclusion to be welcoming, inclusion requiring action, and no more boundaries between groups – everyone is just the community.

Mr. Colón and Ms. Helmkamp discussed the definition of equity and the difference between equity and equality. Mr. Colón noted that equality is sameness, giving everyone the same thing, which only works if everyone starts from the same place. He then noted that equity is fairness, giving access to the same opportunities, we must first ensure equity before we can enjoy equality. He noted the definition of equity being, "described as the elimination of privilege, oppression, disparities and disadvantage by historically-included and excluded group memberships; a state of being in which one's societal or cultural group memberships do not act as the most powerful predictor of how one fares in terms of successful outcomes and life chances."

Mr. Colón and Ms. Helmkamp concluded the meeting and summarized what they covered in their training and their goals before their next training session which is to practice a guideline and re-read the task force report.

3. **Adjourn**
   On a motion by Ms. Casavant, seconded by Ms. Flynn, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn at 9:04 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Taylor M. Galusha