

8th of April 2021

Re: Status update from Shrewsbury Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Task Force

To the Shrewsbury Board of Selectmen,

We are pleased to present you with the first status report of the Shrewsbury Diversity Equity and Inclusion Task Force.

Our first meeting was held Monday, the 19th of October. Selectwoman Beth Casavant called the meeting to order and stated she would act as Chair for the first few meetings until the Task Force was able to vote on Chairs and other officiants of the group. Jon Wortman was our facilitator. He guided us in discussion on how to tackle the work for the challenging and important work that lay before us. We were presented with the charge of the BOS which directed us to examine and evaluate existing policies and procedures currently in place within the Town of Shrewsbury related to diversity, equity, and inclusion, among other related bulleted points.

After a few meetings, and much deliberation, the group came up with the idea to break down the large group into eight subgroups to have a focused direction of our goals ahead. The groups were:

Disability, Education-Training, Employment, Narrative Equity-Collection, Policy, Public Safety, Racial Equity, Schools-Education.

On the 30th of November 2020, after continuous deliberation and a common theme from the group of the need to develop a strong and clear direction, the majority of the Task Force voted to prioritize racial justice and anti-racism while still looking through the lens of all other DEI categories and marginalized groups.

On the 14th of December 2020, we elected the following positions: Co-Chair Ruth Febo, Co-Chair Adeola Mbaneme, Clerk Louise Garone, Clerk Maura Egan.

With the new focus and a clear directive, we also restructured our subcommittee groups. Beginning in January, each subcommittee group met on their own to further the work specific to their topics. They also elected official positions, respectively. The attached reports are organized by each committee and the work they have been doing.

This information is shared below:

Subcommittees:

Employment Subcommittee *Chair Allen Jarrell, Vice Chair Richard Petrucci, Clerk Navjeet Singh*

Story Telling Subcommittee *Paula Collins, Roop Jyot Kaur, Noor Ali*

Healthcare Subcommittee *Chair Leonora Ryan, Clerk Zoya Mehta*

Education Subcommittee *Chair Maura Egan, Vice-Chair Adeola Mbaneme, Clerk Lynsey Heffernan, Clerk Deborah DelDotto*

Housing Subcommittee *Chair Jennie Fishman Clerk Ruth Febo*

Public Safety Subcommittee *Chair Donna Jarrell, Co-Chair Elizabeth Hylton, Clerk Juan Acosta*

- Each Subcommittee was charged to identify gaps in their respective topics where racial inequities and other inequalities exist.
- We agreed to start the charge of data collection with finding gaps in different aspects of town branches that lead to racial and other inequities.
- Each subcommittee was charged with coming up with data to support any problem statements identified.
- Each subcommittee was required to collect qualitative and quantitative data to support their findings.
- Data was collected in various ways, including but not limited to; town meetings, interviewing of town officials and employees, using various reputable direct sources, statistics and current practices.
- We voted on a Story Telling subcommittee group to further assist with data collection. The group focuses on collecting DEI stories from Shrewsbury residents to attempt to break issues of race/diversity inequity into life size pieces by hearing individual stories
 - **Story Telling Subcommittee:** *Paula Collins, Roop Jyot Kaur, Noor Ali*

Next Steps: Going forward each subcommittee will continue to interview experts in their respective areas towards further collection of data and work towards recommendations for our final report.

Sincerely,
Adeola Mbaneme & Ruth Febo
Co-Chairs of the Shrewsbury Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force

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Employment Subcommittee Report

Members: Allen Jarrell, Gene Buddenhagen, Milind Kanitkar, Navjeet Singh, Richard Petrucci

Employment Subcommittee Problem statements

The town hiring does not reflect the diversity of the community.

Training efforts related to DEI are not consistent across all departments.

The town recruitment efforts do not result in a diverse pool of applicants.

The town lacks coordinated employment practices that encourages diverse and inclusive hiring and training practices that ensures residents are treated equitably.

Process taken

The Employment Subcommittee reviewed Munis data, policies from the Human Resources (HR) department of the Town of Shrewsbury, SELCO and the School Department. The Subcommittee also interviewed the following HR coordinators: Kristina Anderson (Town), and Tracy Schultz (SELCO), Barbara Malone (Shrewsbury Public Schools).

Basic analysis of Munis data compared to surrounding town demographics.

DATA NEEDS TO BE DOUBLE CHECKED. Does not match data supplied during interviews.

Town data from:

<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/shrewsburytownworcestercountymassachusetts/PST040219>

	Total Employees Listed	White	Asian	Black	Indian	Blank/No	Hispanic	Male	Female
Munis data as of 1/12/2021									
Total	1763	1505	79	17	5	146	11		
		83.37%	4.48%	0.96%	0.28%	8.28%	0.62%		
Town	306	276	16	3	1	9	1	128	178
Police	76	76	0	0	0	0		64	12
Fire	43	43	0	0	0	0		42	1
SELCO	73	69	1	1	0	0	2	56	17
Schools	1265	1041	62	13	4	137	8	207	1053

	Total Population	White	Asian	Black		Other/No	Hispanic		
Shrewsbury	38526	69.90	19.10	3.00		3.70	4.80		
Northborough	15109	82.70	9.20	3.20		2.40	2.70		
Westborough	19144	65.00	25.00	1.90		2.00	6.20		
Worcester	185428	55.20	7.40	13.30		4.70	21.90		
Marlborough	39597	69.20	5.50	3.80		4.30	15.10		
West Boylston	8077	79.4	1.80	6.30		2.10	12.30		

Note: Percentages may not always add to 100% due to reporting accuracy and the way Hispanic data is calculated.

Numbers from Kristina Anderson (as of 02/02/2021):

- Total number active in Munis - 1772 (Town, School SELCO) - part time, full time
 - 873 Full Time Employees - Town school & SELCO
 - 899 - Part time or temporary employees
- Town Only: 416 total. 216 Full Time Permanent. 200 part time.
- Civil Service: 95 Employees
- Employees are members of a union: 135 Union EE's
- Town departments or positions that are non-union: Parts of DPW (admin, supervisors, foreman), Town Manager's Office, Assessor, Building Inspector, Council on Aging, Health Department, Library, Planning and Economic Development, parts of police and fire (admin and chiefs), town clerk, treasurer collector, veterans' services, town accountant

Numbers from Tracy Shultz for SELCO:

- 63 total employees, 26 are union (no civil service)

Numbers from Barb Malone:

- Total employees 1259
- 900 union
- Of non-union, substitutes are largest percentage.

The Munis data shows the lack of diversity in the town employment base. Looking at the White population category alone it can be seen that the town does not even match the percentages in the surrounding towns. Gender is heavily weighted toward the female population, but it should be noted that Police, Fire and SELCO are predominantly Male. It also should be noted that only the Schools had any blank responses (5) in gender category.

Interviews

The committee focused on three main categories from our problem statements when questioning the various HR representatives: Recruitment, Hiring and Training.

Town

Kristina Anderson started about 2 ½ years ago as the first HR coordinator for the Town. She noted that one of the first things addressed in her tenure was a Classification and Compensation study for non-union positions because town was having difficulty hiring and retention for certain positions. Town has noted that following the implementation of the results of that study has led to an improved talent pool and retention. She also noted that Collective Bargaining and Civil Service has various internal rules that must be followed along with State and Federal laws. Union positions must be posted internally first for a specified number of days. Police and Fire fall under Civil Service requirements. The town also follows the Town Manager Act that states that the Town Manager must appoint upon merit and fitness alone.

Recruitment

She stated “With every search, our number one goal when recruiting for any position is to attract the greatest number of qualified applicants. “To obtain the pool of candidates the town posts on a variety of websites including the Town of Shrewsbury website (every position), Indeed, LinkedIn and Handshake (connects to Universities across the country - community colleges through Ivy League schools, reaches 90+ different schools). Also post on Massachusetts Municipal Association and more specific websites, for example: New England Water Works Association for a Water/Sewer Superintendent or Massachusetts Assessors Association for an Assessor.

Town has amended the Personnel Bylaws to change the ability to amend the Classification and Compensation schedule from Town Meeting to the Personnel Board which allows the town the ability to act more quickly to make changes when recruiting applicants and also amended the Bylaws to have gender neutral pronouns. Applications have also been updated to have a non-binary option.

The town does not do any DEI related targeted recruiting, instead the goal for every search is to obtain the largest pool of the most qualified applicants. Kristina mentioned that on LinkedIn she is a member of various groups that get to see the postings.

The town has records of the number of applicants who applied (we have to keep this for record retention law, but would have to count), and in some circumstances have documentation of who was interviewed (this data is not easily accessible). The diversity of applicants is not collected.

Hiring

Hiring is done by the Human Resources Coordinator who collects applicants and evaluates them on set criteria. The Department Head and middle level managers (if applicable) also evaluate. Candidates are selected for an interview based on how they score on the criteria (this criterion comes from the job description). Interviews are conducted by those who evaluated the applicants. Once interviews are completed, a consensus is made based on the performance of the candidates in the interviews and what we learned from them. References are then checked,

then an offer is made. Town Manager is the appointing authority for nearly all municipal authorities. Board of Selectmen have appointing authority over Treasurer/Collector, Clerk & Accountant. Superintendent appoints for public schools. SELCO General Manager has appointment authority for SELCO positions.

Several examples of promotion from within were given (Silver tsunami – retirements in next 5 years).

Any type of discrimination is not tolerated by the Town and would be investigated through the steps laid out in the Harassment Policy. Kristina mentioned considering renaming the policy to Harassment & Discrimination, as the procedure to follow would be equivalent. The town follows the Massachusetts commission of discrimination.

Training

No specific DEI training is offered. The town offers leadership training that covers training on how to treat superiors, subordinates, peers, customers, and guests. Some EEs' have customer service training. Most Departments on average have about a \$1000 budget for training and conferences annually.

SELCO

Tracy Schultz has recently been hired as the first HR coordinator for SELCO (started January 11, 2021). She stated that she is still formulating and consolidating the hiring practices for SELCO. Tracy was very receptive to our questions and noted they gave her some thought points for possible changes going forward.

SELCO uses Indeed and NEPPA to reach a broader audience than just the Town website for recruitment. Currently there is no way to track diversity on that site, but Tracy offered to research. Hiring is done by the GM and department head and HR facilitates the process. The different groups/departments that hire at SELCO are IT, Cable, Electric and Communications.

Currently the number of candidates interviewed for positions, diversity data, other metrics are not kept but Tracy will look into this also.

Tracy will be working on clarifying other hiring and training goals and policies.

Schools

From full report from Barbara Malone, Executive Director of Human Resources

Recruiting and Hiring

While there is room for improvement, we have taken efforts to recruit diverse applicants. These efforts include placing the following statements in our postings, "The Shrewsbury Public Schools is in search of an (insert title) educator who is invested in the achievement, equity, and access of all learners in and beyond the classroom" and "Qualified candidates with diverse racial, ethnic, cultural, religious, class, and/or gender background and experiences are strongly encouraged to apply". We are also strategizing an approach to increasing diversity in our workforce through both a local "home grown" approach and an external approach. The local approach should improve diversity in our employee base that reflects the diversity of the Town of Shrewsbury

and the external approach should improve diversity of all kinds. Both approaches are based on the premise that a more diverse workforce has educational benefits for all students.

Our primary database for recruiting is www.schoolspring.com and this includes diversity applicants. Schoolspring.com will also post our positions to a variety of other job boards, although none appear to be specifically focused on diversity candidates. This database allows us to track the diversity of our applicant pools and our applicant pools are majority white. This result suggests that efforts that improve the diversity of our applicant base will increase the diversity of finalist candidates. To that end we are assessing diversity websites for possible investment in advertisement to improve the diversity of our pool. We did have slightly more diverse candidate pools this past summer, which could be a response to more inclusive language in postings.

Hiring is done in a decentralized manner as each position could have any one of our District Leadership Team members leading the search, along with other educators, parents, and students (especially at the high school level) providing input to the recommendation. District Leadership Team members include principals, assistant principals, directors, and other roles which share in the key decision-making process of selecting a finalist candidate. A key resource for hiring “managers” is the guide to personnel hiring. This document provides consistency of approach when the recruiting teams themselves are decentralized. All finalist candidates for professional educator roles must meet with Dr. Joseph Sawyer, Superintendent of Schools, and Barb Malone, Executive Director of Human Resources before a final offer is made. At a minimum we consider demonstration teaching lessons, letters of reference, background check information, licensure, and an inclusive, growth mindset in our selections. Applicants selected for interview are tracked in a manual process, but EEO information is not tracked during the process. We are able to track EEO information for all applicants who have supplied this information while applying (including those not selected for interview) after a posting has closed.

In the last few years, we have deliberately sought diverse candidates into our day-to-day substitute teacher roles, as these are often beginning roles from which we find paraprofessionals and long-term substitute teachers. At the state level DESE is looking at the teacher testing (MTEL) process to see if there are other pathways to licensure for professional roles, rather than passing these tests, which have been identified as a possible systemic barrier to success for diverse candidates. We are required to place licensed individuals wherever possible in professional teaching roles. If we choose to hire a non-licensed teacher for a role, we must prove why no licensed candidate was acceptable and why the unlicensed candidate is not acceptable, based specifically on skills needed for the job, and then DESE must approve a “waiver” for this individual to teach a classroom. Paraprofessionals and substitutes (under 12-week assignment) do not need to be licensed. We do not have specific targets for diversity hiring.

There is an inclusive list of religious holidays provided to districts by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Christmas is part of December break. There are three weeks of break that are typically the same throughout the state for public schools (with some exceptions). These occur in February, April, and December, along with the summer break. As a public school district, the Shrewsbury Public Schools does not “celebrate” any holidays. The school district’s approach to its calendar was guided most recently by a Calendar Committee,

who looked at whether any religious holidays should result in “no school” days. The Committee recommended, as a similar committee did several years prior, that due to the ever-increasing diversity of the student population, it was not practicable to hold “no school” days on so many different religious holidays. School Committee policy and state law require schools to provide excused absences to students and a reasonable opportunity to make up missed academic work if a student misses a day of school for a religious observance (such as Eid al-Fitr, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Diwali, Good Friday, Orthodox Good Friday, etc.).

The policies of the school committee are available at <https://schools.shrewsburyma.gov/sc/policies>. These policies answer specific questions the task force has posed regarding disciplinary and corrective action policies, dress codes, and the like. Business casual dress includes some employees choosing to wear their cultural dress. We have not needed to make an exception to the policy on the basis of religion because our policies would not restrict individuals from wearing what their religion required or expected.

We also understand that it is not enough to recruit diverse candidates; we will also need to help make Shrewsbury Public Schools a preferred destination for diverse educational professionals, which includes continuing to work to create an environment of diversity, equity, and inclusion in all of our schools.

Suggestions discussed with the group or received from the group included the following:

- Work with National Associations and Affinity Groups to identify diverse candidates, including disability associations
- Work on ways to encourage parents and students who might not volunteer to become part of a hiring team to do so (let them know that they are welcome)
- Work with diverse public universities to identify students for pre-practicum or practicum selection at our schools. Send notifications of openings directly to Worcester State, UMass Amherst, other identified schools. Attend career fairs or select recruitment times at these universities.
- Create a workforce plan to better predict turnover based on retirement numbers
- Continue to work on development of day-to-day substitute teacher pools and identify pathways from substitute and paraprofessional roles to licensed teaching positions, including receiving equivalency in Massachusetts for education including teacher education in other countries

Training

We provide an annual training (“compliance training”), which covers basic information regarding educational laws, policies, and bias. We are working annually to make this more robust. Amy Clouter, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment has responsibility overall for professional development and our two areas (Human Resources and Curriculum) do intersect in various ways. There have been a number of grassroots efforts to improve small group/individual understanding of DEI concerns. We have also had mandatory PD this year with Dr. Darnisa Amante-Jackson for all roles. Some individuals have attended lengthy external professional development opportunities, others have joined book groups, others have attended workshops. Barb Malone attended two different professional development opportunities

regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion in educational settings through the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. There are a variety of opportunities, both collectively and individually to improve one's understanding of DEI topics.

Educator Evaluation is largely dictated by the state and heavily regulated. We negotiate some changes locally with the Shrewsbury Education Association. The state information is available online at <https://www.doe.mass.edu/eval/>. This would represent a more large-scale institutional approach to evaluation of professional educators.

Suggestions were shared and discussed with Ms. Amy Clouter in a different task force meeting.

General

The total number of active School Department Employees was 1259 on March 1, 2021. Of these, 900 are members of an association/union and 359 are not. There are four unions: Shrewsbury Education Association, Unit A Teachers, and other professional roles, such as nurse, psychologists, and counselors; SEA, Unit B Assistant Principals; SEA, Unit D Paraprofessionals, and the local division of the SEIU for cafeteria workers. Our non-unionized roles include substitutes, members of the central office leadership team and principals (Dr. Sawyer and his direct reports), IT roles, administrative assistants and secretaries, and our extended day roles, which are currently on hiatus.

There are job descriptions or job postings for most roles, and they are periodically updated.

Policies are determined by the School Committee and are communicated to employees at a minimum through the annual compliance training. Hiring processes that have been bargained are contained within the individual association/union agreements. Subject matter experts would vary for various policies depending on what policy is being considered. The School Committee has a Policy Subcommittee each year and we utilize legal review for policy changes, updates, or for new policies.

We do track the employment data for race and ethnicity and do not use the abbreviations that were listed in the question document. We do not have any civil service positions.

Suggestions discussed with the group or received from the group included the following:

- Both students and teachers should receive training on unconscious bias (for students this would be a curriculum suggestion for Ms. Clouter)
- We should consider collaborating with the town and SELCO on standardized basic DEI training, including unconscious bias training.
- We should consider collaborating with the town and SELCO generally on DEI initiatives, suggestions, etc.

Review of policies

Town of Shrewsbury

Town Personnel Bylaw document did not have any DEI related information.

Town of Shrewsbury and SELCO Employee policies mention Americans with Disabilities Act (“ADA”) and state and local disability laws, as applicable. Did not see that in any other policies, this may be stated by default in higher level policies.

Shrewsbury High School

The Shrewsbury High School Faculty/Staff Handbook 2020-2021 had the following references:

Under “Non-Discrimination Statement”, Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, is a federal statute which states, “No person in the United States shall on the basis of sex be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any educational program receiving federal assistance.” This requirement not to discriminate in educational programs and activities **also extends to employment.**

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, is the federal statute which states, “No otherwise qualified individual, shall, solely on the basis of handicap, be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.” This requirement not to discriminate in educational programs and activities **also extends to employment.** Each school has a designated Section 504 Coordinator. Initial inquires relating to this regulation should be directed to the building-based coordinator who can be contacted through the principal's office. Further information may be requested by contacting Ms. Meg Belsito, the district’s Section 504 Coordinator. She may be reached at (508) 841-8665.

Also, under “Civil Rights” –

All staff and students are subject to federal and state regulations protecting their civil rights. These include Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, and Massachusetts General Law Chapter 76, § 5.

SELCO

SELCO Employee policy had a section on GENETIC INFORMATION NON-DISCRIMINATION GUIDELINES. This was unique from any other policies.

Oak and Floral Street Schools

The Oak and Floral Street School Staff handbooks mostly deal with classroom policy and did not appear to have any DEI related information.

Hiring Related Policy Notes

Town General Bylaws of Nov 24, 2020

In 4-G FIRE DEPARTMENT:

Any member of the regular Fire Department *shall reside and continue to reside during his employment within fifteen miles of the limits of the Town of Shrewsbury.* Said distance shall be

measured from the closest border limits of the Town of Shrewsbury to the closest border limits of the city or town in which said member resides.

4-I POLICE DEPARTMENT

Any member of the regular Police Department *shall reside and continue to reside during his employment within fifteen miles of the limits of the Town of Shrewsbury*. Said distance shall be measured from the closest border limits of the Town of Shrewsbury to the closest border limits of the city or town in which said member resides.

CONTRACT BETWEEN THE SHREWSBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE AND THE SHREWSBURY EDUCATION ASSOCIATION (AUGUST 25, 2019 - AUGUST 24, 2022)

H. Promotions

(1) If the Superintendent of Schools determines that a vacancy in a promotional position caused by death, retirement, discharge, resignation or the creation of a new position should be filled, the Superintendent of Schools agrees to fill such position pursuant to the following procedure:

(a) The vacancy shall be *adequately publicized by means of a notice from the Superintendent of Schools* at least fifteen (15) days in advance of filling such vacancies, if possible.

...

(d) Candidates from within the system shall be given serious consideration, however, *candidates from both within and without the system shall be equally eligible* to fill the vacancies.

I. Vacancies, Assignments and Transfers

(1) If the Superintendent determines that a vacancy caused by death, retirement, discharge, resignation, or the creation of a new position should be filled, said positions shall be filled pursuant to the following procedure:

(a) The vacancy shall be *adequately publicized* for at least seven (7) school days by means of a posting from the Superintendent which shall be dated.

Summary and Recommendations

Overall

Town seems to have started to move in the right direction: First HR coordinator hired for town, SELCO has new HR coordinator, Schools did their own diversity study.

School largest employer by far. Turnover is low in that area and I can imagine in other areas like Police and Fire. Progress, at least from the diversity metrics point of view, going forward will be slow due to this limited hiring potential. Other ways of assessing progress in this area will have to be determined, especially in light of little current data on applicant's diversity and applicant's hesitancy to fill in diversity related data.

Policies

Policies should be more explicit in mentioning DEI related issues and training. Currently have many sections on harassment but not much specific on DEI.

Policies/training should go beyond compliance, leadership should take ownership.

The various departments should work together more and be more consistent across policies. Consider standard policy sections and training that each can share.

Holidays – consider a consistent policy on how to handle various religious holidays outside the Federal mandated ones.

Dress – be careful of wording that would prohibit/exclude those that follow various religious/cultural norms.

Recruiting and Hiring

Town should continue to reach out to a broader applicant pool. Various local schools, affinity Associations (society of Black Engineers,), etc.

The breadth of online sites used by the Town for recruitment should be shared with SELCO and where possible affinity groups should be standardized. For example, a common set of Linked in groups.

The general use of online tools in and of itself can be a barrier to applicant pools due to their access to internet availability. Is this 'just the way things are now'? Outside of current covid constraints, the town/SELCO should consider recruitment events/fairs to increase outreach. It is impossible to know what the diversity is of applicants looking at the positions on the web, it is only until an application is sent in that allows for that data to be gathered (an again, only if the applicant fills it out).

What are the barriers/concerns/root cause of people for not providing race/ethnicity data? Going forward it will be difficult to track improvement if this data cannot be tracked.

The School's initiative to overcome testing requirements and to get credit for foreign licensure from the substitute teacher pool that has a more diverse population should be supported.

Since the hiring is done by the current members of the departments, the training aspects (or lack of as noted below) cannot be overlooked, especially in the way of unconscious Bias. Those doing the hiring must go beyond looking at the training as just a compliance component.

Rough percentages of employment breakdown of 24% for the town (approximately 25% of which are Civil Service and have their own constraints), 3.6% SELCO and 72.4% for schools. Schools constrained by licensing requirements. Schools will have to lead the way.

Training

Training is inconstant and lacking in the area of DEI.

Those in customer service roles should consider cultural training.

Other Areas to Consider

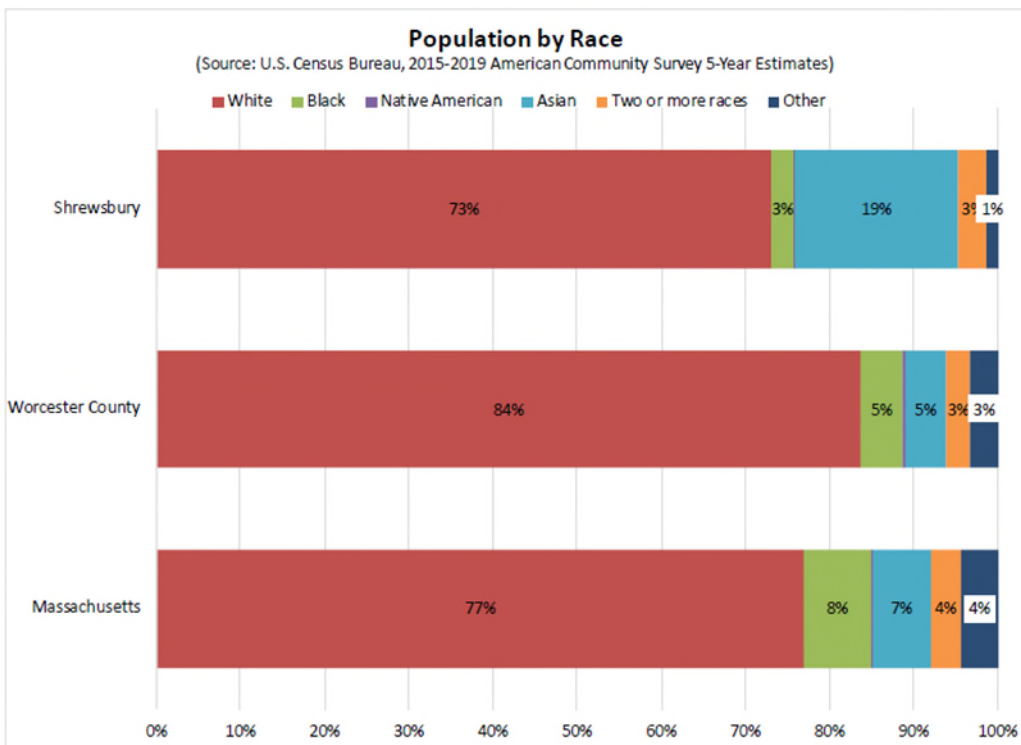
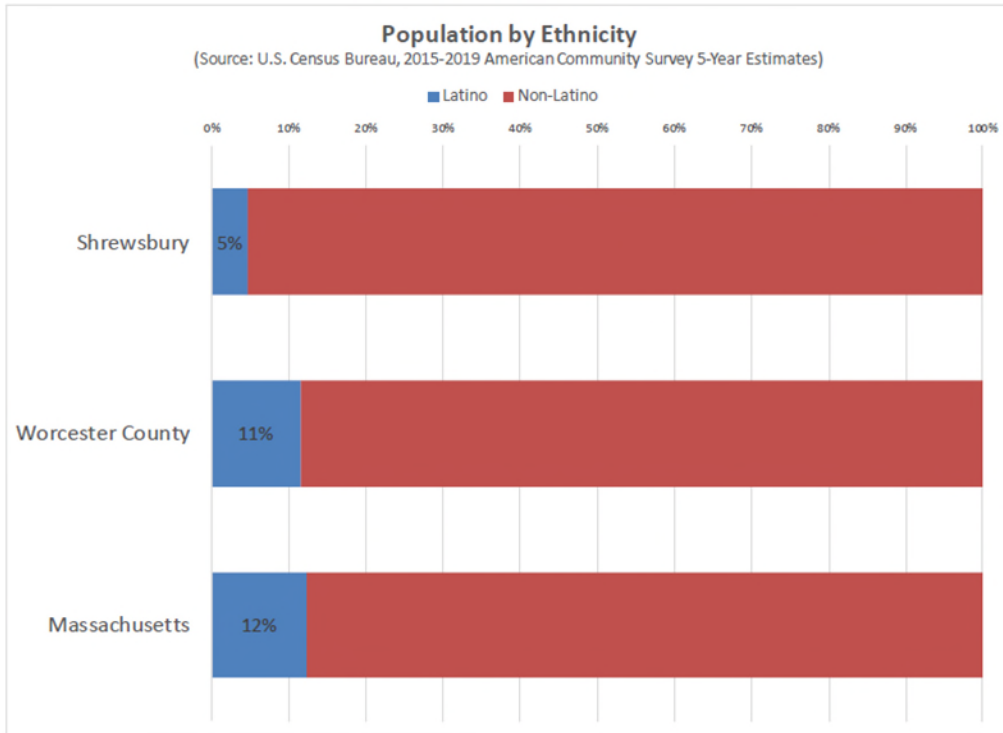
Ability/Disability groups and age.

Look at the retention numbers.

Branch out into Contracts?

Any automated filtering of applicants?

Appendix/Backup Material



Storyteller Subcommittee Report

Members: Noor Ali, Paula Collins, Roop Jyot Kaur

The Subcommittee hopes that by collecting DEI stories from our residents we can attempt to break issues of race/diversity/inequity, which are highly complex issues, into life size pieces by hearing individual stories that need to be heard whether they are big or small. We aim to collect the stories systematically and amplify the diverse voices of residents and honor their experiences.

The Storytelling Subcommittee has been focusing efforts to find the legally appropriate means & suitable processes to collect qualitative data/stories from town members that can enrich our understanding of issues related to DEI in our town. We hope to be able to collect personal stories to share with all of our town and accord them the respect and attention they deserve. Our hope is that the stories provide a more nuanced and intimate understanding of town members' experiences related to DEI issues.

- We are going to be carefully looking into issues of confidentiality and anonymity as we plan to collect stories. We want to be able to collect stories in a way that is respectful of people's privacy and their wish to be anonymous if they wish to remain anonymous. We are also thinking about how we can we share stories of anyone who would wish to be public in their participation to be able to do so appropriately as well. Protecting the choice of participants to be anonymous or not will be paramount. It has been suggested that given the limitations of open meeting law & the need to maintain the privacy of deeply personal stories, we can potentially hold workshops to hear stories from residents instead of meetings. Our Subcommittee will look closely into more details as to how these workshops can be conducted. Again, our goal is to collect the stories and do so respectfully and safely. --We will be publicizing a call for participants called "Shrewsbury Stories" through the SMC and the town's website. We will provide content to be put on the Town's website where the DEI's call to participation/'About the Project' can be featured. We are also trying to find out if a panel discussion with diverse groups via SMC is an option.
- We will be advertising via. the Community Advocate and The Lantern. In addition to broad outreach, we plan to make targeted outreach to diverse communities in town, so we effectively reach people from all backgrounds for story collection.
- We are working on an interview protocol/questions and a flyer to invite participation.
- A designated and secure email address has now been created for story collection. This shared email includes the storytelling committee members and Valerie. Valerie will also be able to upload any emails to the shared storytelling google drive. We will be creating a google form for questions.
- We will also be able to conduct one-on-one interviews & not document the names of the individual. We will be making a short write up about the need for anonymity for our research in this context.
- We will be assessing if publicly shared accounts on Facebook/Instagram are possible.
- We will use multi modal ways of collection -using video (anonymous), audio, oral or written methods for story collection. All are subject to public law. Stories can also be mailed the Board of Selectmen, Attention DEI Task Force, 100 Maple Ave, Shrewsbury, or put into the black drop box outside labeled "Town Bills & Correspondence" at the Town of ices.

- Our protocol will be to gather data with consent from participants over 18, and with parental consent from those under 18.
- It is useful to keep sight of the fact that qualitative data /stories may have lower participation, but it has immense value in that helps take a deep dive into residents' experiences pertaining to DEI issues.

Healthcare Subcommittee Report

Members: Janine Sands, Leonora Ryan, Zoya Mehta

Our charge was to look at diversity, ethnicity, and inclusion as the Healthcare/Disability committee. After an intensive review of census data, we realized that the topic was too large to have a meaningful impact. Therefore, we narrowed down our focus to the fact that the 2010 census reported that Shrewsbury has less than 3% uninsured residents. That adding to the affluence of Shrewsbury allowed us to drill down on areas of the population that are disabled and residents dealing with food insecurity. Food insecurity and dental health impact an individual's health. I will explain how we came to this conclusion and what we have discovered thus far.

Food insecurity is a federal measure of a household's ability to provide enough food for every person in the household to have an active healthy life. Massachusetts has experienced the largest relative increase of food insecure individuals in the nation due to COVID-19, and the highest increase of food insecurity for children is at 102%.

- There is a 4% poverty population in Shrewsbury. At a meeting Louise Garone spoke to us about intersectionality of our Subcommittee with housing committees. She directed us to some vital information such as U.S. census data, school re-districting for the new Beal school, and survey results. She discussed with us the example of 34% of the students at Coolidge school receive free lunch. She posed the question "if that is happening, what kind of healthcare are they receiving?"
- There is a population in town of 37,416. Some statistics show that in Shrewsbury 2% of children under the age of 18 and 7% of seniors 65 and over are considered impoverished.
- There are approximately 8300 residents age 65 and older in Shrewsbury. Some are having to choose between food and medicine. Currently there are 190 "Meals on Wheels" being delivered daily. In addition, there are also 30-40 "Grab & Go" meals. Elder Services prepares these meals in Worcester and then they are sent to the Senior Center here for distribution.
- The Senior Center has recently opened a small food pantry to help alleviate demand at St. Ann's Church. Frozen food and other groceries are available there.
- The Worcester County Food Bank distributes an average of 138,000 pounds of food every week to its network of local pantries and meal programs enough for approximately 115,000 meals.
- The median household income in Shrewsbury is \$105,000

Despite this town being considered affluent, there is still a need for assistance with food insecurity. What can the town provide to meet this demand?

Cavities are the most chronic childhood illness in the United States. The most common oral pathologies are cavities and gum disease which are preventable.

- Children ages 5-19 from low-income households are over twice as likely to have cavities compared to children from higher income households.

- Dental sealants are an effective preventative measure easily applied to protect against cavities for four years.
- Worcester Free Clinic Coalition has some free dental services.
- The water in Shrewsbury has been fluoridated since 1959.
- If dental sealants were applied in schools nationally it could prevent 3 million cavities and save up to \$3 million in dental costs.

The effectiveness of these sealants is evident, however can the town of Shrewsbury afford to provide these sealants to school aged children?

In Shrewsbury there are approximately 5,000 people with one or more disabilities which is 13% of the total population.

- There are approximately 1,650 residents who have one disability.
- There are approximately 1,600 residents who have two or more disabilities.
- 525 people have a hearing disability.
- 800 people have a vision disability.
- 1400 people have a cognitive disability.
- 2200 people have an ambulatory disability.

We are glad that we are having this meeting as we may need to interact with the school committee. We understand formal initiative requests are not currently being completed in Shrewsbury. The dental issue in schools is not new to Massachusetts. We may need to open other days in the food bank.

Education Subcommittee Report

Members: Adeola Mbaneme, Deb Deldotto, Helene Winn, Lynsey Heffernan, Maura Egan, Priya Rathnam, Rajesh Velagapudi

Problem Statement

Ensure that all children and families feel include in all places and spaces in public schools and other Shrewsbury departments

We met with Amy Clouter, Asst. Superintendent of Teaching and Learning and were part of the meeting with Barb Malone, Human Resources Director for Shrewsbury Public Schools. They both shared the vision of DEI for students, families, new hires, and staff.

Subcommittee Recommendations ~ Four Categories

Staff	Family
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase diversity in all staff across SPS 2. Provide ongoing DEI training for all staff - offer differentiated training opportunities 3. Continuous review and reflection of curriculum to ensure diverse voices are present 4. Mandatory antiracism training for new hires 5. Add a line in the contract to disavow racism and bias 6. Include a section in the employee handbook that disavows racism and bias 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implement strategies to engage and make all families welcome 2. Work to make the PTO body more a reflection of the student body 3. Provide language translations for all reports going home to families 4. Include interpreters at all family events. (possibly parent volunteers) 5. All meetings which involve SPS include translations and close captions 6. Include more multicultural events in the schools and PTO meetings 7. Review fee structure for all school and town activities to ensure all families can be included 8. Offer a sliding scale fee for students on Free and Reduced Lunch program for school and town activities 9. Solicit donations to be used for families who cannot meet the fees for school and town activities
Students	Town Leaders
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Equal access to all curriculum by general education students, special education students and English language learners 2. Regularly engage with students regarding the climate in their schools, classrooms, and school activities 3. Continue to collect data on who is 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. All town departments partner with SPS for DEI Trainings- trainings do not have to be done together, rather, town departments can access the resources currently available within SPS 7. Leaders across town share best practices for DEI

<p>receiving special education services, participating in sports, on the honor roll, taking AP courses, participating in clubs</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">4. Collect and share data about who is disciplined and what the disciplinary actions are5. School climate, possibly conduct a whole student population anonymous survey - within the survey ask students what school activities they participate in	
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Ideas to Incorporate Storytelling Group

1. Students in school settings
2. Students in club and sports settings
3. Families

Other Ideas from the Town Task Force

1. Ask Faculty to share stories, too. What they observe/what they experience
2. How are students getting anti-bias training? Implicit Bias training?
3. Add DEI to harassment and bullying policies

Housing Subcommittee Report

Members: Ruth Febo, Jennie Fishman, Louise Garone.

Update from Housing Subcommittee of the Shrewsbury Diversity Equity and Inclusion Taskforce

This update will focus on three types of information. The first two are things that we knew before getting started and specific things we now know about diversity, equity, and inclusion in the Shrewsbury community. The second two are things that we do not know, and things that we think we need to know about diversity, equity, and inclusion in the Shrewsbury community.

Things We Knew in Advance or Learned Relatively Quickly

- We are an intentionally diverse cohort of Shrewsbury residents and appointed representatives of the Town’s Board of Selectmen, the School Committee, the Board of Health, the Council on Aging, the Commission on Disabilities.
- We were asked to do the following:
 - examine and evaluate existing policies and procedures currently in place within the Town of Shrewsbury related to diversity, equity, and inclusion
 - complete this work by offering many opportunities for extensive community engagement employing a variety of means including but not limited to interviews, public listening sessions, surveys, programs, and social media
 - identify potential areas for improvement based on relevant local, state, and national research determining best practices
 - provide quarterly written updates highlighting work done and progress made
 - submit a written report detailing the findings and recommendations of the taskforce to the Board of Selectmen within 12 months of the creation of the Taskforce
- We chose an organizational structure like standard public health models which subdivide to Public Safety, Education, Employment Healthcare, and Housing for purposes of aggregate data but added a team devoted to narrative data collection to retain human connectivity and avoid an offensively technocratic approach to serious issues in our individual lives and the shared life of our town community.
- The uniqueness of a specific person incorporates many group identifications. Consequently any “group identity” is going to intersect several other group identities at as many different points as there are ways to select and combine group identities in the population of people at hand. This makes individual identity and group identity both complex phenomena.
- Bigotry, caste, and racism are all names for the type of socioeconomic and political system that favors one group by dehumanizing a different group. All are immoral and the last two specifically illegal in the United States.

Specifics About the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion of Shrewsbury Housing that we Now Know

- Apart from the immorality and illegality of non-inclusive practices, like discrimination in housing opportunity, it is well known that diversity and inclusion boost organizational performance. This comes about directly by ensuring compliance with local and state regulations, and indirectly by creating increased trust in the organization, reduced personal dissatisfaction and improved conflict resolution within the organization or community.

- The citizens vision for Shrewsbury was that it “become a home for all ages, incomes and backgrounds by supporting a mix of housing types that created a range of affordability and choice in housing options.” 2016 Master Plan.
- While the town has made progress toward it, achieving the state mandated (Chapter 40B) goal that 10% of all available housing be affordable is still a way in the future. (2016 Master Plan)
- Despite physical, economic, and quality of life maintenance factors all limit the future growth of town public services and facilities (2016 Master Plan) the Housing Production Plan (February 2019 update) is scheduled to add 74 new units in each FY 2021 through 2023. The current approved Housing Production Plan for Shrewsbury will expire on 07 March 2024.
- According to records obtained from the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (<https://www.mass.gov/orgs/massachusetts-commission-against-discrimination>) the data shown in Appendix 1, spanning 2007-2020, Five claims alleging discriminatory housing practice were filed for Shrewsbury MA between 2007 and 2020; all cases are now closed. Two claims cited the basis for discrimination was ethnicity, one cited religion, one cited race and one cited public assistance. The five housing-discrimination claims in Shrewsbury represent 0.10% of the 4954 housing discrimination claims filed, in total during the fourteen-year period examined. According to the most recent demographic data available the population of Shrewsbury (37,416) represents 0.5462% of the total population of Massachusetts (6,850,553). As shown in Appendix 1 this would lead one to expect two (rounded to the nearest whole number for within year reporting of expectation) housing discrimination claims per year or 25 housing discrimination claims between 2007 and 2020 (rounded after year over year accumulation) if the type of bigotry that leads to housing discrimination is randomly distributed and directly proportional to population.
- Reasoning by Occam’s Razor (in the absence of direct information favor the explanation requiring a minimal number of additional postulates) the number of housing discrimination cases in Shrewsbury between 2007 and 2020 is 80% less than expected assuming uniform and randomly distributed bigotry across the Commonwealth. This observation, if correct, would indicate that housing practice in Shrewsbury may be substantially less discriminatory than elsewhere. Other explanations, such as under reporting, could obviously explain a rate for observed housing discrimination in Shrewsbury which has been lower than expected but that would beg the question, “Why should Shrewsbury housing discrimination be under-reported in comparison to that in other towns and cities?”

Things We Do Not Know

- Is construction of affordable housing in Shrewsbury on track to meet yearly targets established in 2019 in light of the fact that 440 Boston Turnpike (formerly the westerly component of the Pointe at Hills Farm 40B housing development and a parcel which may have accounted for 156 affordable units in the overall HPP) was sold to GFI Partners (who intend to propose a warehouse-type use for the lot) this winter?
- What is the racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic demographic for current occupants of the 887 affordable housing units in Shrewsbury?

Things We Think We Need to Know

- Are all realtors and rental property offices in Shrewsbury properly trained with respect to the illegality of discriminatory housing practice and currently displaying the mandatory signage?
- Which municipal or municipally affiliated (such as the Shrewsbury Housing Authority and/or Affordable Housing/CPA Trust Fund) Boards are currently working on Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing and what are they doing?

- Is there narrative of experience between 2007 and 2020 to falsify the conclusion (that Shrewsbury is less discriminatory with respect to housing practice than expected) which is implicit in housing discrimination claims data filed with the MCAD during this period?
- Historical Zoning practices in Shrewsbury followed historical redlining zoning practices such that low-income housing and apartment developments are located along rte. 20 and rte. 9 areas. Thus, leaving the center of town predominantly single-family homes with higher housing costs. Here is a link that discusses these practices across the nation:
<https://www.upforgrowth.org/news/legacy-redlining-lives-today-through-exclusionary-zoning>
- It was identified that in both the Shrewsbury Housing Authority satisfaction survey and the Shrewsbury Family and Youth Services survey of Behavioral Health Needs of Older Adults some demographic data was collected but none on race and ethnicity. Collecting data on these demographics seem to be lacking in other areas of Shrewsbury town services.

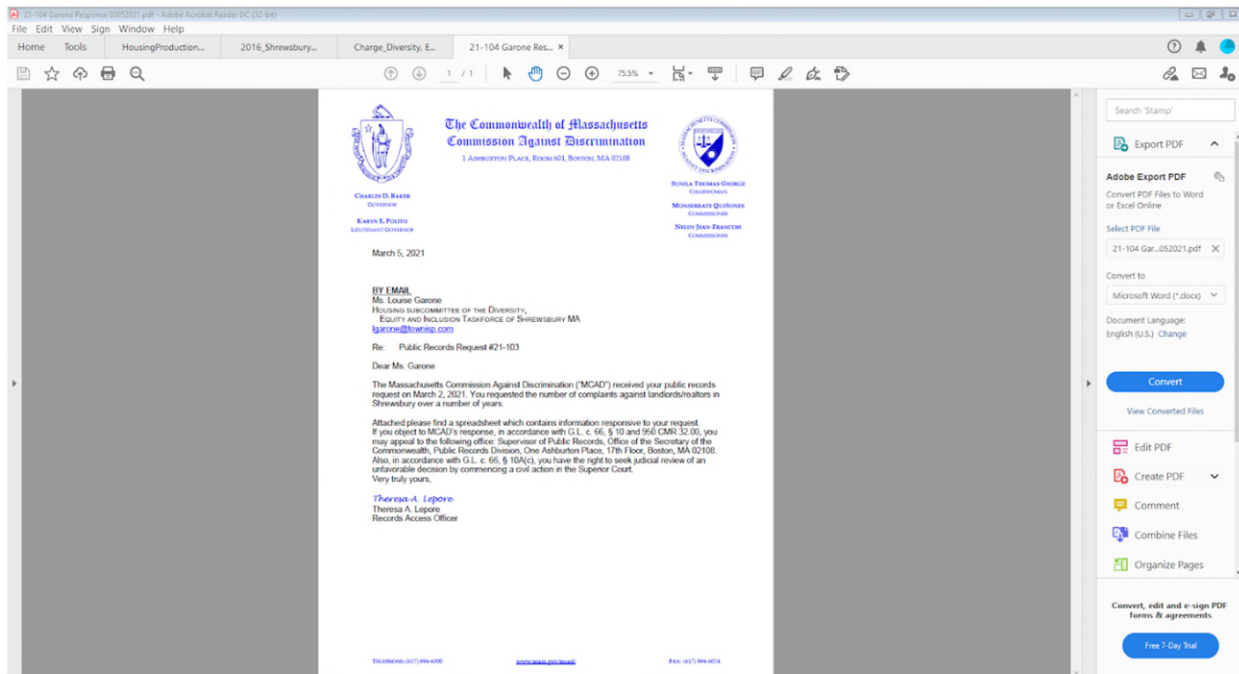
Appendix 1

Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination Data from Annual Reports

Year	Total Complaints Filed with MCAD	Total MCAD Housing Complaints	MCAD Housing Complaints Shrewsbury	Shrewsbury Observed Rate	Expectation Uniform, Random	Expected Rate*	Rate Difference from Expected
2007	2,779	329	0	0.000000	2	0.005462	-100%
2008	3,363	412	1	0.002427	2	0.005462	-56%
2009	2,906	367	0	0.000000	2	0.005462	-100%
2010	2,951	416	0	0.000000	2	0.005462	-100%
2011	3,082	387	0	0.000000	2	0.005462	-100%
2012	3,042	380	0	0.000000	2	0.005462	-100%
2013	3,127	367	0	0.000000	2	0.005462	-100%
2014	3,224	354	1	0.002825	2	0.005462	-48%
2015	3,186	308	0	0.000000	2	0.005462	-100%
2016	3,195	293	0	0.000000	2	0.005462	-100%
2017	3,308	278	0	0.000000	2	0.005462	-100%
2018	3,323	279	0	0.000000	2	0.005462	-100%

2019	3,657	422	2	0.004739	2	0.00546 2	-13%
2020	3,413	357	1	0.002801	2	0.00546 2	-49%
Cumulative	44,556	4,949	5	0.001010	25	0.00546 2	-82%

- Shrewsbury population (37,416)/ Massachusetts population (6,850,553) = 0.005462 data from https://www.massachusetts-demographics.com/cities_by_population. Expected number of discrimination cases per year calculated as (0.005462 * Total MCAS Housing Complaints) rounded to the nearest whole number because a fractional complaint is not possible.



Public Safety Subcommittee Report

Members: Donna Jarrell, Elizabeth Hylton, Juan Acosta, Beth Casavant, Kelly Joseph

The goal of this subcommittee is put forth recommendations that will focus on transparency and DE&I-effective policies and practices within the Shrewsbury Police Department (SPD) to assure a positive relationship particularly with Shrewsbury residents of color (BIPOC). We would like this to be evident in the diversity of SPD staff, the SPD mission and strategy, organizational culture and communications, data collection and analysis on police activities and most importantly an on-going partnership demonstrated through the establishment of a community advocacy group that has access and stakeholder input on SPD plans and DE&I trends as well as community complaints.

During the PS Subcommittee's meetings representatives from A Better Shrewsbury, an on-line community-based group, provided their perspectives on Public Safety concerns in Shrewsbury and provided a summary of their meetings with the SPD. The PS also reviewed several reports including but not limited to 1) SPD 1-year Strategic Plan; 2) 2013 Northeastern University Report on Racial and Ethnic Profiling in Massachusetts, 3) new Massachusetts Police Reform Law and 4) Evidence-Assessment of the Recommendations of the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing published in 2015.

From these references, several key DE&I-related topics were identified that should be addressed in the PS Subcommittee's final recommendations. These include:

- Hiring and Employment DE&I Practices in the SPD: specifically, what is needed to move away from the Civil Service requirement for hiring in SPD and what is the timeline for making that happen?
- SPD Data Collection on Police Activity (traffic stops, complaints, etc.): what data is consistently collected and tracked with accurate DE&I data? Can services call responses be broken down by type and percentages? Can our Subcommittee get SPD compliant data for 2016-2020 or some comparable period of time?
- SPD Public Engagement in Departmental Oversight: support for independent community representative group to advise SPD on policies, practices and actual performance (including public complaints) as it relates to DE&I. Provide public perspective on technologically considerations and budget priorities. Also encourage proactive BIPOC-related youth supportive activities (assist in eliminating "myths" like Driving While Black)
- SPD Officer Wellness Program: ensure employee assistance program options for officer and family stress management and wellness that helps minimize implicit bias and post-traumatic stress reactions that can negatively impact Shrewsbury's BIPOC residents.
- SPD Current DE&I Culture: How would the current SPD DE&I culture be defined and what should Shrewsbury's BIPOC residents expect from SPD when it comes to how that culture is demonstrated/validated? A good question to assess that culture is to ask what is the SPD's current position on the Black Lives Matter Movement or What racial profiling/implicit bias training(s) are part of training and development what impact have you seen as a result? What other ways are certifications and accreditations assessed for DE&I effectiveness.

In addition, the PS Subcommittee is interested in partnering with the Storytelling Subcommittee to document qualitative interactions with SPD if those who would like to share can do so in a safe way that is free of any retaliation or negative impact.

The first of two meetings with SPD Chief Anderson was held March 22, 2021. The goal of these meetings is to share the Chief Anderson and a key stakeholder in implementing change and to discuss the above topics to get his perspective on the SPD's position and priority for each. Lastly, it is worth noting that changes in federal and state laws regarding police reform are on-going and may have an impact on the timing and type of final recommendations. Whatever the PS Subcommittee recommends will require on-going check-ins on expected outcomes and evidence that those outcomes were achieved.