

Diversity Council Meeting

Tuesday, September 22, 2026 at 6:30pm
Meeting Room 1-2, City Hall, 111 N. Main Street & on Zoom

Present: Interim Chair Marcus Patton, Council Members Sandy Kamens, Jeff Israel, Tony Lopes, and Carolyn Palmquist

Absent: Council Members Danny Palmquist and David Rackliffe

Guests: Linda Corning, 36 Caswell Ave., Bristol

I. Call to Order

The Interim Chair called the meeting to order at 6:31pm.

II. Council Attendance

The Council took attendance. There was a quorum.

III. Public Participation

Linda Corning stated she is familiar with the Diversity Council's events and has enjoyed them. She shared information with the Council about training she has taken regarding non-violent communication and steps to take to facilitate non-violent action. Ms. Corning asked the Council if this topic and accompanying information was of interest to them to partner for a program for the community. Discussion followed.

The Council agreed that further research and additional discussion on the topic was needed, including logistics on how to bring it to the community. The existing platform of the Community Conversation was suggested, along with use of the Council's social media channel(s). When asked by the Interim Chair, Ms. Corning advised that she could prepare and present on the topic based on the Council's predetermined starting point for the discussion. Suggested focus points ranged from bullying, road rage, and intolerance among others.

The Interim Chair thanked Ms. Corning for bringing this item to the Council for consideration. No vote was taken at the meeting, and the discussion will continue as an Agenda item at future Diversity Council meetings.

IV. Approval of Minutes

a. Meeting Minutes from the August 18, 2026 Special Meeting

b. Meeting Minutes from the August 25, 2026 Regular Meeting

The Interim Chair called for a motion to approve the Minutes from the August 18, 2026 Special Meeting and Minutes from the August 25, 2026 Regular Meeting. The motion to approve both sets of Minutes was made by Council Member Kamens and was seconded by Council Member Lopes. There were no amendments noted. All were in favor and the Minutes were accepted into the record.

V. Current Business

a. Council Members Review Resource and Event News and Notes

Council Member Carolyn Palmquist reported that the Bristol Pride D & D event in August was a success, and the organization will be represented at the annual Mum Festival, the weekend of September 25th through the 27th. She also reported attending an Alt Vendors Market in Newington, CT.

The Bristol Pride Fantasy Ball's new location is The New England Carousel Museum and will be held there on October 23rd. The goal of the event is to fund raise to support a year's worth of events free to the community, making them as accessible as possible to everyone who wants to participate. This goal is based on the need demonstrated by residents.

The Interim Chair visited with the owner of RIB Cafe across from Muzzy Field and discussed some general business building ideas with him. The Interim Chair noted he reached out after being made aware of the owner's situation through emails received from residents.

b. Cash Mob/Vote Mob Event Review

The Council reported a large positive response to the Vote Mob for, and their presence at the September 19th Farmers Market. The Council opened the Market that day, created videos highlighting various vendors during the event, and Dawn Nielsen from the Farmers Market Board noted a large uptick in the voting which is still open through September 30th. The Interim Chair thanked Council Member Carolyn Palmquist for her work on the flyer she designed which made voting quick, easy and accessible, both in person and through social media channels. Discussion followed.

VI. New Business

a. Final Cash Mob '26 Options

Considerations for the Final Cash Mob of 2026 were discussed with the goal to have one more in the final quarter of the year. Continuing with business spotlights similar to the videos done at the Farmers Market was suggested. Allowing for open Cash Mob nominations from residents was also mentioned. A Flash Mob was suggested at which residents would visit several locations for a full day of Cash Mobs such as breakfast, lunch, shopping and dinner spots. Discussion followed.

Council Member Carolyn Palmquist excused herself from the meeting at 7:47pm. A quorum was no longer present.

b. Unity in the Community Ideas and Execution

The Interim Chair shared that the community has consistently shown interest in when the next Unity in the Community event will be and when. The Bristol Public Library remains the likely venue as it is offered at no charge to the Council. Possible topics include continuing the Words Matter discussion that started earlier this year.

A suggestion was also made to celebrate the diverse winter holiday traditions held in Bristol. The significance of traditions, foods and how people honor those who have passed were topics mentioned to frame the conversation and bring people together at the end of year. The idea to collect donations of toys was also discussed. Additional discussion followed with a request for the members to bring their ideas to the Interim Chair at the next meeting.

IX. Adjournment

Having confirmed no further items for discussion, the Interim Chair called for a motion to adjourn. The motion was made by Council Member Kamens and was seconded by Council Member Lopes. All were in favor and the meeting adjourned at 8:08pm.

Respectfully submitted,

*Sharon Arsego
Recording Secretary*