



MEMORANDUM

FC 14 (01-02-07)

TO: Board of Directors
FROM: DIAHC Committee

SUBJECT: Diversity & Inclusion Ad Hoc Committee
(DIAHC)
May 26, 2023 Special Meeting Summary.
DATE: August 08, 2023

This memorandum summarizes agenda items from the meeting of the Diversity & Inclusion Ad Hoc Committee (DIAHC) held on Friday, May 26, 2023.

Attendees:

Valley Water Board members in attendance were: Director Rebecca Eisenberg (District 7), Vice Chairperson Nai Hsueh (District 5), and Committee Chairperson Tony Estremera (District 6).

Staff members in attendance were: Ingrid Bella, Mera Burton, Rick Callender, Theresa Chinte, Rachael Gibson, Walter Gonzalez, Tammy Greunke, Andrew Gschwind, Christopher Hakes, Mary Harvey, Brian Hopper, Michele King, Candice Kwok-Smith, Jay Lee, Marta Lugo, Patrice McElroy, Nicole Merritt, Tony Ndah, Linda Nguyen, Richard Nguyen, Carlos Orellana, Don Rocha, Blanca Sanchez-Cruz, Lidya Tesfaye, Cheryl Togami, Tina Yoke and Beckie Zisser.

Guests in attendance were: Emilio Cruz and Jacqueline Reynoso – Cordoba Corporation.

Public in attendance were: Rosa Bravo, BG, James, Johnathan Lockwood, Kerman Maddox, and xxx-xxx-5815.

1. Election of 2023 Diversity and Inclusion Ad Hoc Committee Officers.

The Committee considered this Item without a staff presentation.

Public Comments:
None.

It was moved by Vice Chairperson Hsueh and seconded by Chairperson Estremera, and carried by majority vote that Director Estremera would remain Chairperson and Director Hsueh remain Vice Chairperson, with one No vote by Director Eisenberg.

2. Approval of Diversity and Inclusion Ad Hoc Committee Meeting Minutes of October 27, 2022.

The Committee considered this Item without a staff presentation.

Public Comments:
None.

It was moved by Vice Chair Hsueh and seconded by Chairperson Estremera, and carried by majority vote with one Abstain vote from Director Eisenberg.

REGULAR AGENDA:

3. Receive Valley Water's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Strategic Master Plan Efforts Update; and Make a Committee Recommendation to Share the Report with the Board.

Marta Lugo and Emilio Cruz reported on the following:

Summary from Meeting Agenda Memo:

In September 2021, the Office of Racial Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (REDI) engaged the Cordoba Group to undertake the development of the Santa Clara Valley Water District's (Valley Water) Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) Strategic Master Plan. The DEI Strategic Master Plan examines Valley Water's culture and agency-wide business operations to identify opportunities to improve processes and outcomes of operations, including engagement and equitable service delivery to historically underrepresented communities in Santa Clara County.

The groundwork for much of this work was laid out through the Board-adopted Resolution on Addressing Systemic Racism and Promoting Equity (Attachment 3) and the subsequent Board-adopted Governance Ends Policy on Environmental Justice. While Valley Water has been making strides to advance DEI for many years, since the inception of REDI additional progress has been made but there are still many opportunities for Valley Water to proactively lead and advance DEI efforts. As part of this process, the Cordoba team engaged in a lengthy and extensive review of Valley Water policies, protocols and practices, including conducting many interviews with various business areas, staff, management and board members to inform the development of a comprehensive master plan. The Recommendations Report proposes a series of recommendations based on findings and best practices to strengthen existing Valley Water diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives and to better engage all communities to ensure Valley Water can deliver services in ways that are equitable, fair, and balanced.

This item provides the D&I Ad Hoc Committee an update on the efforts to complete the DEI Strategic Master Plan phase of Valley Water's comprehensive DEI process. The final draft of the DEI Strategic Master Plan Recommendations Report includes proposed recommendations and the next steps in the overall process.

Marta Lugo, Blanca Sanchez-Cruz, Linda Nguyen, Emilio Cruz, Jacqueline Reynoso, and Rick Callender were available to answer questions.

Public Comments:
None.

The Committee received the information and noted the following:

- The Committee requested staff to follow up on including remedial measures for reporting of sexual harassment, available non-gender restrooms, addition of non-binary language on the Valley Water website, improving support of local Indigenous people, and equal pay for women.
- The Committee confirmed their monitoring role, interest in the environmental justice impact on future projects, discussed the challenges of unbundling large contracts to utilize smaller businesses, and support for sustainable vendors.
- The Committee noted the significance of the support of the Employee Resource Groups, and the continued development of hiring diverse staff within the community.

It was moved by Vice Chair Hsueh and seconded by Director Eisenberg and unanimously approved that the DEI Strategic Master Plan Recommendations Report be shared with the Board.

4. Receive and Discuss the Draft Plan for Documenting and Disseminating Valley Water's Board Historical Actions to Enable the Advancement of Environmental Justice.

The Committee continued this Item to the August meeting.

5. Review and Recommend to the Board of Directors Proposed Guidelines for the Naming/Renaming of Valley Water-Owned Land, Facilities and Amenities.

Blanca Sanchez-Cruz reported on the following:

Summary from Meeting Agenda Memo:

On February 28, 2023, the Board approved staff's recommendation (Board Agenda Item 4.2) to assign jurisdiction to the D&I Ad Hoc Committee for naming/renaming requests of Valley Water-owned land, facilities and amenities with the following addenda:

1. Identify names that may be appropriate for renaming;
2. Include preference for naming/renaming after First Peoples in the criteria; and
3. Develop updated naming/renaming criteria guidelines for Board consideration.

Consequently, the proposed guidelines for the Naming/Renaming of Valley Water-Owned Land, Facilities, and Amenities incorporate both the feedback and the above direction received from the Board during that meeting. The proposed guidelines are as follows:

Proposed Guidelines for Naming/Renaming of Valley Water-Owned Land, Facilities, and Amenities

Approval or denial decisions of naming/renaming requests for Valley Water-owned land, facilities and amenities shall be made in alignment with one or more of the following criteria, which aim to encourage:

A. Recognition of distinct geographic, environmental or developmental features, points of reference or adjoining communities in naming Valley Water-owned land, facilities and amenities;

B. Honoring Bay Area Native Peoples or restoration of known pre-colonial names;

C. Names of historical significance that reflect forward-thinking values of fairness, dignity, and respect toward all individuals;

D. Naming which reflects ethnic and cultural diversity and values of Valley Water;

E. Recognition of individuals, living or deceased, whose credentials, character, conduct, reputation and/or legacy align with Valley Water's values and who have;

*a. made substantial direct service or resources contribution to the benefit of Valley Water; or
b. made extraordinary contributions to the State, Nation, or Humanity.*

Notes:

· Deceased nominees may not be nominated within five (5) years of their passing.

· No name will be approved or sustained that will call into question Valley Water's values and reputation or cause harm to community members.

F. Naming as early in the capital planning and development process as possible.

G. Naming that is informed, to the extent possible, by public input and engagement and reflects the priorities and values of communities within Santa Clara County.

Furthermore, Valley Water shall generally retain long-standing names of Valley Water-owned land, facilities and amenities unless when an asset is named in honor of an individual or a name of historical significance, where clear documentation reveals values, behaviors or legacy that contradict Valley Water's values and that, no matter the contextualization, keeping the name on the asset would negatively impact community members. If this scenario occurs, the asset should be renamed according to the existing naming/renaming process described in this document and applicable Valley Water policies and procedures.

On the approval of the D&I Ad Hoc Committee, the updated Naming/Renaming of Valley Water-Owned Land, Facilities, and Amenities guidelines will be presented for consideration by the full Board.

Blanca Sanchez-Cruz was available to answer questions.

Public Comments:

None.

The Committee received the information and noted the following:

- The Committee requested staff to follow up on including a more detailed explanation of the naming guidelines.
- The Committee noted the importance of the inclusion of underrepresented groups like women or LGBTQIA+ for naming guidelines.

Vice Chair Hsueh requested the motion be amended to not include a waiting time period for the guidelines for the naming/renaming of Valley Water-owned land, facilities, and amenities.

It was moved by Vice Chair Hsueh and seconded by Director Eisenberg and unanimously approved that the final guidelines for the naming/renaming of Valley Water-owned land, facilities, and amenities go to the Board for approval as amended.

6. Receive the Valley Water 2023 Employee Survey.

Patrice McElroy reported on the following:

Summary from Meeting Agenda Memo:

Valley Water is committed to gaining insight into the views of our employees in various areas of our organization's culture and the individual experiences of our employees. Over time, this tool can demonstrate overall changes and assist us with identifying drivers that will provide opportunities for improvement to employee retention, internal communication, and is a touchpoint to overall employee engagement.

In 2018, Valley Water participated in the Great Places to Work Survey and in 2022, an equity assessment was conducted, both of which were presented to the D&I Committee.

In January 2023, Valley Water engaged Newhouse Project Consulting (NPC) to create an Employee Engagement Survey that evaluates the work environment elements through an equity lens. The survey focused on the areas of Employee Experience, Work Conditions, and Organizational Culture & Leadership. The survey achieved a 65% response rate based on the number of employees at the time of the survey. The goal is to use this survey and the results as a baseline to measure our strengths and opportunities for organizational improvement. At this time, Valley Water has received topline results from NPC that will be shared with the D&I Committee. NPC is continuing their independent analysis of the results and will provide a more detailed final report that will be presented at a future D&I Committee meeting. The final employee survey report will also be shared with all Valley Water staff. Human Resources and the Office of Racial Equity Diversity and Inclusion (REDI) will work in tandem with Valley Water's leadership to develop actionable and measurable ways to improve levels of employee satisfaction in areas identified from the survey results.

Patrice McElroy and Rick Callender were available to answer questions.

Public Comments:

None.

The Committee received the information, took no formal action, and noted the following:

- The Committee requested staff to follow up with additional information regarding the survey results on Slides 14 and 16 of the PowerPoint presentation.
- The Committee noted the inclusion of COVID-19 data will be provided in the final survey report.

- The Committee noted the importance of the consultant providing explanations of the statistics to confirm which results are of significance.

7. Receive and Accept the Diversity and Inclusion Ad Hoc Committee 2022 Accomplishments Report.

The Committee considered this Item without a staff presentation.

Summary from Meeting Agenda Memo:

Under direction of the Clerk of the Board, Work Plans are used by Board Committees to increase Committee efficiency, provide increased public notice of intended Committee discussions, and enable improved follow-up by staff. Work Plans are dynamic documents managed by Committee Chairs annually, and are subject to change as needed throughout the year.

As Committee work is accomplished, the Accomplishments Report is updated to summarize discussion topics, outcomes and results achieved. The 2022 Accomplishments Report is presented for the Committee's review and acceptance.

Public Comments:
None.

It was moved by Vice Chair Hsueh and seconded by Director Eisenberg and unanimously approved to accept the Diversity and Inclusion Ad Hoc Committee 2022 Accomplishments Report.

8. Review Diversity and Inclusion Ad Hoc Committee 2023 Work Plan and Accept 2023 Meeting Schedule.

The Committee considered this Item without a staff presentation.

Summary from Meeting Agenda Memo:

Work Plans are created and implemented by all Board Committees to increase efficiency, provide advanced public notice of intended Committee discussions, and enable improved follow-up by staff. Work Plans are dynamic documents managed by Committee Chairs and are subject to change. Committee Work Plans also assist staff with the preparation of agenda items and the Committee's Annual Accomplishments Report.

The Diversity & Inclusion Ad Hoc Committee (Committee) Work Plan contains suggested topics for discussion based on information from the following sources:

Items referred to the Committee by the Board;
Items requested by the Committee to be brought back by staff;
Items scheduled for presentation to the full Board of Directors; and
Items identified by staff.

The 2023 Committee Work Plan is presented for the Committee's review and provides an opportunity for the Committee to request additional items for discussion during future meetings.

Committee meetings are currently proposed to occur quarterly the fourth Thursday of the month or at the call of the Committee Chair. Staff is requesting confirmation of the remaining 2023 regular meeting date of October 26, 2023.

Public Comments:
None.

The Committee received the information, took no formal action, and noted the following:

- The Committee noted the next meeting will be in August 2023 and confirmed Item 4.2 would be addressed at the August meeting.
- The Committee confirmed Item 4.4 would report back to the Committee upon the completion of the consultant's final report. The final employee survey report was provided to the full Board including DIAHC Committee members on June 8, 2023.
- The Committee requested staff to include the Tribal Land Acknowledgement and the status of the Equal Pay Act audit results as future agenda items.

9. Adjourn.

Chairperson Estremera adjourned the meeting at 11:44 a.m.

The next scheduled regular meeting is August 15, 2023.

Board member comments and suggestions can be forwarded to Nicole Merritt, Assistant Deputy Clerk II at (408) 630-3262 or by email to nmerritt@valleywater.org.

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