



FAIRBANKS DIVERSITY COUNCIL  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
NOVEMBER 18, 2025, 5:30 – 7:00 P.M.  
HELD VIA [ZOOM WEBINAR](#) AND AT  
FAIRBANKS CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
800 CUSHMAN STREET, FAIRBANKS, ALASKA



The **Fairbanks Diversity Council** (FDC) met on the above date to conduct a Regular Meeting via Zoom Webinar and at the City Council Chambers, 800 Cushman Street, Fairbanks, Alaska. **Chair Karen Blackburn** (Seat I) was physically present, and the following members were in attendance:

**Members Present (In Person):**

Erica Dillard, Seat A  
June Rogers, Seat C  
Terry Norman, Seat E  
Jake Merritt, HR Director  
Herb Butler, Seat J  
Mindy O’Neill, Mayor  
Lonny Marney, City Council Member

**Members Absent:**

*Vacant*, Seat B  
Dorothy Shockley, Seat F (excused)  
*Vacant*, Seat G  
*Vacant*, Seat H  
Deirdre Hamilton, Seat K

**Also Present:**

D. Danyielle Snider, City Clerk

**Members Present (Zoom):**

Juanita Webb, Seat D

**CALL TO ORDER** (Reading of Mission Statement and Land Acknowledgement)

**Chair Blackburn** called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. **E. Dillard** read the land acknowledgement, and **J. Rogers** read the mission statement.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**Chair Blackburn** led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**Mayor O’Neill** requested that New Business item (a) be addressed prior to Unfinished Business.

**J. Webb**, seconded by **E. Dillard**, moved to approve the agenda. There being no objection, the agenda was approved.

**APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES**

a) Regular Meeting Minutes of October 14, 2025

**J. Webb**, seconded by **J. Rogers**, moved to approve the meeting minutes. There being no objection, the meeting minutes were approved.

## CITIZENS' COMMENTS (Limited to 3 Minutes)

**J. Rogers** asked the audience member to introduce herself, and she introduced herself as Kelley Lassey, EEO & Employee Relations Specialist at the Fairbanks North Star Borough (FNSB).

## REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

- a) Introduction of Members and Mayor O'Neall

Each member provided a brief introduction of themselves in the following order: E. Dillard, K. Blackburn, J. Rogers, T. Norman, L. Marney, H. Butler, J. Merritt, M. O'Neall, J. Webb.

## NEW BUSINESS

- a) Review of Mission, DAP, and Strategic Discussion

*This item was moved up at the request of Mayor O'Neall during the approval of the agenda.*

**Mayor O'Neall** stated it was time to have a frank conversation about the mission and goals of the FDC. She stated that part of her background in communications is facilitating meetings and strategic discussions. She commented that the FDC's mission statement seems passive, and typically, mission statements contain some sort of action. She opened the floor for discussion.

**H. Butler** stated that the mission statement and the Diversity Action Plan (DAP) go hand-in-hand and that they need continual refinement. He commented that the DAP is very old, and he read through all four points.

**J. Webb** stated the FDC has done things to make a difference, but the group has recently been struggling. She listed several events the FDC participates in each year, including the Race Against Racism, the Midnight Sun Intertribal Powwow, the Human Library, and International Friendship Day. She indicated that there are still many people who are not aware the FDC exists. She stated that the group needs to put in some effort and have some "punch" in the DAP.

**L. Marney** stated he has observed low energy in the group and believes that people are afraid to talk. He added that preparation for events is very last-minute and that the group needs excitement.

**J. Rogers** agreed with others and stated that she is still a part of the FDC because she believes in the work that needs to be done. She remarked that there has been poor leadership and support from the Mayor's Office for some time and that it is difficult to move forward when the leader is not on board. She stated she is unsure where the new starting point is but that a few people can accomplish a lot. She stated she does not consider the past as a failure because the FDC is still here.

**E. Dillard** stated it is hard to feel excitement when there is a lack of leadership. She stated it was embarrassing to have a lackluster, bare table at the International Friendship Day event and that

there should have been things to hand out. She stated that she wants to get people excited about diversity.

**H. Butler** stated that it is difficult for a member to play an active role unless there is infrastructure in place where responsibilities are identified and assigned. He commended those who volunteer to serve and emphasized the importance of good leadership. He indicated that none of the items in the DAP seem current, and he agreed with the Mayor about the FDC's mission statement needing to be reviewed and updated. He shared much about his background and personal experiences.

**T. Norman**, tagging onto H. Butler's comments, spoke briefly about the harm the lack of fish is doing to the Indigenous culture. She stated there are several items missing on the FDC calendar.

**Mayor O'Neall**, in response to all the input provided, indicated that the FDC mission statement should be reviewed regularly and suggested having bylaws or similar rules in place for the FDC. She commented on the group's struggle with reaching a quorum for meetings and stated that the FDC seems to have lost its pep. She remarked that community engagement is desired but is lacking, and funding is needed to help with energy. She spoke about the need for sustainability which would help the FDC thrive through changes in administration. She commented on the formal setting of the Council Chambers and suggested holding a work session where the group could start small and build from there. She stated that she would work with the Clerk on organizing a work session in the new year.

**T. Norman** spoke in favor of the FDC hosting a table at community events. She suggested putting out a survey for people to provide input on what they believe the FDC should be doing.

**Mayor O'Neall** shared some ideas she researched to help the FDC gain momentum. She reiterated that there would be a strategic session for members to talk and reset.

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

- a) Human Library Update – Event Coordinators: Marney, Webb  
Noel Wien Library, January \_\_, 2026

**J. Webb** stated that she would soon be leaving the state for two weeks but indicated that the Human Library event could be held in January. She asked members to share their availability in January with Clerk Snider. She added that she has some volunteers to serve as “books.”

- b) Resolution No. 2025-01, Recommendation to City Council on Reading of a Land Acknowledgement

**Chair Blackburn** stated that D. Shockley had requested that the FDC consider the resolution but that she was not present to discuss it.

**J. Webb** commented that D. Shockley's attendance has become an issue.

**J. Webb**, seconded by **H. Butler**, moved that the FDC approve the resolution and forward it to the City Council.

There being no discussion or objection, the resolution was approved.

c) Calendar of Events (informational only)

**J. Webb** reported that she had secured the \$200 for the FDC to register for the 2026 Race Against Racism event but stated that a date has not been set yet.

**Chair Blackburn** asked if anyone objected to the FDC's continued involvement with the Race Against Racism event. No members objected. **Chair Blackburn** stated she would like there to be more participation from members in the future. **J. Rogers** added positive notes about the event.

### **FDC MEMBERS' COMMENTS**

**J. Webb** thanked Mayor O'Neill for attending the meeting and fellow members for all they do.

**E. Dillard** shared that her involvement is limited due to the other boards she is involved with and due to her kids' schedules. She indicated that she would be able to help more with things like policy review. She spoke in favor of FDC swag and offered to help design things if need be.

**J. Rogers** expressed that her feelings about the future are summed up by the fact that there is a leader in the FDC's midst—something that has been lacking for some time. She stated she believes the FDC is on good, stable ground now.

**T. Norman** stated that she may not be able to help with the Race Against Racism unless it is on a Monday or a Tuesday because of her business downtown. She commented that she would send a list of events to Clerk Snider to be added to the FDC calendar. She expressed gratefulness to have such a community-based Mayor with fresh ideas and added that she is thrilled to be a part of the team. She spoke about the vast experience amongst all the FDC members and about improving the Fairbanks community.

**H. Butler** thanked Mayor O'Neill and fellow members for attending the meeting. He requested a report from the Mayor at the next meeting on the condition of the City. He commented that the FDC used to receive regular reports from and attendance by members of the Fairbanks Police Department (FPD) and added that it is good for everyone to understand the health of the city. **J. Rogers** agreed with H. Butler and added that the FPD still requests volunteers from the FDC to help with job interviews.

**L. Marney** stated that he looks forward to the future.

**J. Merritt** stated that he is excited by the excitement of fellow members.

Clerk Snider reminded everyone of the December potluck.

**Mayor O'Neall** commented that she would like to take the conversation to the Alaska Municipal League (AML) conference she will attend in December. She stated that the FDC is really important and that she is looking forward to working with everyone.

**Chair Blackburn** welcomed T. Norman and expressed excitement about moving forward. She agreed that the Chambers is a very formal setting for FDC meetings and appreciated the Mayor's suggestion to have a discussion about moving to a different meeting room.

**MEETING DATES**

- a) Next Regular Meeting Date, January 13, 2026 (December 9 will be a potluck gathering)

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Chair Blackburn** declared the meeting adjourned at 6:46 p.m.



Karen Blackburn, Chair



D. Danyielle Snider, MMC, City Clerk

Transcribed by: DS