



FAIRBANKS DIVERSITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 10, 2026, 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. **Mayor O’Neill** served as the Chair, and the following members were in attendance:

Members Present (In Person):

Erica Dillard, Seat A
June Rogers, Seat C
Mary Jo Skaggs, Seat H
Karen Blackburn, Seat I
Herb Butler, Seat J
Deirdre Hamilton, Seat K
Lonny Marney, Councilmember
Jake Merritt, HR Director

Members Absent:

Vacant, Seat B
Juanita Webb, Seat D
Terry Norman, Seat E
Dorothy Shockley, Seat F (excused)
Vacant, Seat G

Also Present:

D. Danyielle Snider, City Clerk

Members Present (Zoom): None

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor O’Neill called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Members recited the Pledge of Allegiance together.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

H. Butler, seconded by **J. Rogers**, moved to approve the agenda. There being no objection, the agenda was approved.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

a) Regular Meeting Minutes of January 13, 2026

E. Dillard, seconded by **K. Blackburn**, moved to approve the minutes. There being no discussion or objection, the minutes were approved.

CITIZENS’ COMMENTS – None

REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

Mayor O’Neill apologized for not getting the report from the work session out to members with the agenda packet. She stated that she looks forward to making some tweaks to the FDC.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- a) Calendar of Events (informational only)

H. Butler shared about the many activities happening throughout the week: the Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC), the annual Doyon meeting, and the all-Native basketball tournament.

NEW BUSINESS

- a) Recap of February 21 Strategic Planning Work Session

H. Butler commented that the report was put together well and was well-written.

Mayor O'Neall asked members how they felt about next steps.

J. Rogers recommended inviting the City Attorney for an Open Meetings Act (OMA) presentation soon. She suggested reaching out to former Mayor Eberhart to learn more about his thoughts when he created the FDC. She also suggested inviting folks from other diversity programs and organizations to speak to the FDC. **H. Butler** spoke in support of the idea to invite others to speak to the FDC. He suggested sending former Mayor Eberhart a copy of the work session synopsis.

- b) Designation of FDC Chair

Mayor O'Neall stated that K. Blackburn has been serving as chair but that she is happy to take it back. There was no objection from K. Blackburn or any other member for the Mayor to return as the FDC Chair. **J. Rogers** asked K. Blackburn if she would be willing to continue as Vice Chair. K. Blackburn replied that she would.

- c) Review of FDC Meeting Schedule, Format, and Location

Mayor O'Neall noted that one of the items identified at the February strategic session is that the FDC has a difficult time making a quorum. She suggested cutting back the formal meetings to take care of business to a quarterly basis, then hold more informal sessions in the in-between months for things like a talking circle or to invite a guest speaker. She asked for group input.

H. Butler disagreed with changing the meeting frequency to quarterly, stating that the group needs to get more firm with attendance at monthly meetings.

Mayor asked H. Butler what the FDC does monthly that could not be accomplished quarterly. **H. Butler** suggested that the agenda needs refining and, instead of boilerplate items, perhaps there could be a specific monthly activity highlighted for the FDC to work on. **Mayor O'Neall** suggested that in addition, perhaps the FDC could consider changing the meeting location to be less formal.

J. Rogers stated that, in her vast experience with boards, cutting back on meeting frequency is the first step to going off the edge. She stated FDC members need to get to know and work with each other better.

M. J. Skaggs echoed the comments of H. Butler and J. Rogers regarding moving to quarterly meetings. She indicated that it would cause the group to lose momentum.

Mayor O'Neall asked if there was a motion to establish a monthly meeting schedule with an informal format and change the meeting location to the Mike Meeks Conference Room.

H. Butler, seconded by **E. Dillard**, moved to establish a monthly meeting schedule with an informal format and change the meeting location to the Mike Meeks Conference Room.

E. Dillard asked whether meetings would still be public. **Mayor O'Neall** replied that they would. She wondered whether the group could still meet monthly but only require a quorum quarterly.

H. Butler suggested that the meetings in between could give members an opportunity to think about things. **J. Rogers** stated she felt strongly that members need to honor their commitment and attend meetings. She stated that if the group gives up on having a quorum, the whole thing falls apart. She indicated that members have never been held accountable to attend meetings. **H. Butler** had similar comments, and Clerk Snider shared the FDC attendance policy on the large screen.

Mayor O'Neall, in considering the issue through a lens of privilege, questioned who might be able to participate as an FDC member if there was a lower standard of participation—someone like a single parent or someone who travels often for work. She suggested that the FDC could strengthen the outcomes and priorities of the group between formal meetings with events that connect members. She pointed out that the FDC does not do a lot of business and stated she is not sure it should; rather, it could be doing more education and training. She stated that while she thinks great points have been made, she would like to see the FDC do more than sit and talk about things it should be doing.

J. Rogers agreed but again suggested getting in contact with former Mayor Eberhart. **H. Butler** stated that the two administrations after Eberhart let the FDC flop, and he would like to explore ways to make the FDC sustainable through different administrations. **Mayor O'Neall** added that becoming more well-known in the community will help the FDC become more sustainable.

Members continued to discuss options for participating in local events and ways to plan ahead, stay organized, and be accountable.

Mayor O'Neall called for a roll call vote on the motion to establish a monthly meeting schedule with an informal format and change the meeting location to the Mike Meeks Conference Room, and all members voted in favor.

FDC MEMBERS' COMMENTS

E. Dillard questioned whether the meeting frequency item could be put to a revote in the future. She commented that it seems like the FDC checks the boxes at the meeting, then members go home. She stated that no one really likes change, but with an involved Mayor, change could be beneficial. She indicated that she would like there to be substance in FDC meetings and that less formality could bring about something different. She suggested that more activities with less formal meetings could be a good thing and it is something she would like to revisit.

K. Blackburn stated she had no comments.

M. J. Skaggs stated that events are opportunities for gathering and relationship-building. She shared that she is President of the Filipino-American Society (FAS) of Fairbanks, which was recently awarded the Alaska Community Foundation Social Justice Grant. She stated they are launching a new initiative via a program titled, "Lifting Filipino Voices in Alaska and Strengthening Community Connections." She stated the main focus is to lead a statewide convening of Filipino leaders and community members in Fairbanks on October 2. She stated that FNSB Mayor Hopkins has offered support for the event, which will be held in conjunction with the Filipino Cultural Celebration. She stated that during her term as the FAS President, she has made a lot of changes, and she tried to consider whether the changes would be sustainable. She wondered whether the FDC could provide some guidance, advice, resources, and collaboration with the FAS.

L. Marney stated that getting the FDC's name out in the community is vital. He expressed disappointment that the Human Library event never came to pass.

D. Hamilton stated that the meeting had been very informative and thanked fellow members.

J. Rogers thanked everyone for their comments and spoke to the opportunities of the FDC. She shared that what keeps her involved is that people have new ways of taking care of each other. She stated she values the work of the FDC even when it has gone backwards. She indicated that everything takes time, and she is grateful for a leader who believes in the FDC's mission.

H. Butler stated that what happened in the meeting is a good example of what lies ahead.

J. Merritt stated that he is happy to be at the meeting.

Clerk Snider suggested that if members would like to get a better understanding of former Mayor Eberhart's vision for the FDC, a good way to do that would be to read the original enacting ordinance, which he sponsored. She offered to send the original enacting ordinance to members. **Mayor O'Neall** suggested that the ordinance could be added to the next regular agenda for discussion.

MEETING DATES

a) Next Regular Meeting Date, April 14, 2026

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor O'Neall declared the meeting adjourned at 6:26 p.m.



Mayor O'Neall, Chair



D. Danyielle Snider, MMC, City Clerk

Transcribed by: DS