

Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Ad Hoc
Committee
March 22, 2023

HYACINTH MCKEE: So we're going to be taking roll. And I guess we'll be starting in one minute. It's good to see everyone. I'm telling you, it's good to see everyone.

EBONY HAVEN: Just checking to see if you guys can hear us?

RANDALL BROWN: I can, yes.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Yes. We can. And I want to check to see do we have a quorum? We are at 1:30 right now.

REKEESHA BRANCH: Yes, ma'am. We do.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Okay. That's super. So all right. Welcome, everyone. Good day. Today is Wednesday March 22nd, 2023. This is the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion Ad Hoc Committee for the Developmental Disabilities Council. We just want to take this time to do a roll call.

REKEESHA BRANCH: All right. Dr. Hyacinth McKee.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Present.

REKEESHA BRANCH: Mr. Rashad Bristo.

RASHAD BRISTO: Present.

REKEESHA BRANCH: Ms. Angela Harmon. Ms. Bambi Polotzola.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: Here.

REKEESHA BRANCH: Ms. Brooke Stewart. Mr. Randall Brown.

RANDALL BROWN: Here.

REKEESHA BRANCH: And Ms. Corhonda Corley. So we do have a quorum.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Oh, great, everyone. This is so super. And just really excited and thank all for attending today, the DEI Ad Hoc Committee. We are just really delighted that we are able to get this committee back up and running and want to thank every individual who responded with a yes. We know that you have a real busy schedule, and we are just happy that you all have decided to be a member of this committee. And so we want to just take a moment and review our last meeting

summary of the meeting and read the minutes. Just review the minutes. It looks like I see Angela just jumped on. Greetings, Angela. Thank you. So let's take a moment and review the minutes from the last meeting. And then we'll call for a vote. Did everyone get the minutes from the last meeting? I believe Rekeesha Branch did send it. And greetings to Rekeesha Branch who's now serving as our DEI appointed staff person. Greetings, Rekeesha.

REKEESHA BRANCH: Thank you so much.

HYACINTH MCKEE: And I'm not sure if anyone needs the minutes to be read aloud. But I will say that the last meeting was July 8th, 2021, was the last time we had a DEI Ad Hoc Committee meeting. And we had some of the members on the call in attendance for the last meeting as well. So if there are no corrections that's needed for these minutes and this summary, then I will entertain a motion to approve the minutes.

RASHAD BRISTO: I make a motion that the minutes be approved from the DEI meeting from July 8th, 2021.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Okay. Is there a second?

RANDALL BROWN: I'll second that motion for you, Hyacinth.

HYACINTH MCKEE: There's a second. Are there any objections or abstentions? Any public comment pertaining to the motion? Any public comment pertaining to the motion? Okay. Hearing none, motion carries. Minutes are accepted into the record. All right.

So now we're going to go onto the next item of the agenda. Thank you, Rekeesha, for putting it up there because I'm telling you on all these screens moving around sometimes it's a challenge. So let's see. Do you have it up there so everyone can see the agenda that you posted?

REKEESHA BRANCH: Yes, ma'am. Hold on just a second.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Thank you so much. Take your time. People are moving and I'm sure they want to see it as well. All right. Super. And so now we want to take this time and review the mission, vision and the goal of the DEI Committee. And so we can pull up our charter at this time so we can review it. You can click it, Rekeesha, so it can come up.

REKEESHA BRANCH: You see it?

HYACINTH MCKEE: Yeah. That's super. I hope everyone else can see. And so the purpose of DEI Committee, it was formed in July 2020, at the July 2020 council meeting at the full council as a motion from the Executive Committee. The DEI Committee is to discuss diversity, equity, inclusion practices and draft antiracism statements and positions for the council's consideration. Specific responsibilities of the DEI Committee is to address all emergent issues with regard to diversity, equity, inclusion meeting on an as-needed basis. It is to support the advocacy efforts for diversity, equity and inclusion to enhance culture, competence and create an overall inclusive culture for people of color, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual identity and orientation, religion and diverse language speakers. It is to establish, implement, revise and revisit policies that promote diversity, equity and inclusion that are aligned with the DD Act. Association of university centers on disability summary and statute. To adopt-- adapt to the diversity and embed an institutionalized knowledge of diversity, equitable practices inclusive of cultural competence and culture humility in council policies, procedures and practices. And to dedicate resources to policies, structures, practices and procedures to support DEI in the mission and work of the council. Those are the specific responsibilities of the DEI Committee. We have five council members and two non-council members. And we welcome any additional individuals from the public who would like to join and be part of the DEI Committee. It is staffed by Rekeesha Branch, our program monitor. Amy Deaville, executive director. And Ebony Haven is the deputy director. And I have requested to our chair, Rashad Bristo, to be reappointed as chair of the DEI Committee. Our antiracism position has already been adopted by the council. I think that's the next item on the agenda, Rekeesha, for us to review, the antiracist statement.

REKEESHA BRANCH: Yes. Hold on one second.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Yeah. Take your time. The antiracist statement was adopted by the DD Council in July of 2020, I believe. Or was it 2021?

REKEESHA BRANCH: It was 2020.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Uh-huh. So it was in the minutes of the July 2020 meeting from the DD Council, we adapted an antiracist statement. Rekeesha's going to pull it up in just a second. Council meeting summary. There it is. Yeah. Keep going. Keep scrolling. It should be right here. Okay. So the antiracist statement was as an antiracist and ethnically unbased community, the Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council affirms its commitment to recognizing, addressing and denouncing all forms of racism and oppression. We believe in the diversity of individual life experiences and employ inclusive practices regardless of race, ethnicity, disability, culture, age, gender and sexual orientation. We continue to aim to appreciate individuality and promote awareness to disrupt systems of privilege, inequality and oppression. This statement was adopted and passed without any objections by the DD Council. At this time I'm asking that the committee ask that the DD Council place this antiracist statement on the website as we discussed back in July 2020 and on any literature that we will be sending out as the DD Council. We discussed placing this at a minimum on the website in 2020 and we haven't had much success with that. And so I'm asking that the committee engage in dialogue to consider asking the DD Council to place this antiracist statement on our website.

RANDALL BROWN: May I speak to that?

HYACINTH MCKEE: Yes.

RANDALL BROWN: Since I was chair at the time this passed. Yeah. It's definitely something that the council, we unanimously voted to approve so therefore it is our public stance on the issue of racism and inclusion. So yeah. I think it should be on the website. And it's something I think the staff can probably do now because it is our official position we adopted back in July of 20. So this is almost three years later and shouldn't be an issue. We should be able to just place it on the website.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Thank you, Randall, for that comment. Do we have anyone else? Do we have anyone else?

AMY DEAVILLE: I'm sorry, Dr. McKee. This is Amy.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Yeah.

AMY DEAVILLE: We will pull it out of this summary and place it on our letterhead and get it up where we have the rest of our position statements.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Okay. Great. So we really wouldn't need to entertain a motion if this is something that's actionable at this time. Thank you, Randall.

RANDALL BROWN: We've already acted on it so it should be able to be handled today.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Okay. Great. Thank you, Randall. Thank you, Amy. Ms. Corley, I see your hand raised. You're recognized.

CORHONDA CORLEY: Thank you, madam chair. Good afternoon. And I'm actually in my car in route to the actual office. Just because I know it said in order for us to vote we had to be present in the office so I'm making sure that I'm going to be present in the office for a short period of time so that I can vote. But I do think that that statement needs to be included not just on our website and in our literature, but also as it comes to solicitation for proposals. All the proposals from any entity that ask for money from our DD Council should know that that is our policy and that that is our stance. And the reason I'm saying that is because also in order for any entity to receive federal funding the federal government make sure that they let them know that that is the stance that they are supposed to have. So it is our due diligence to make sure that any entity that is trying to get money from the DD Council know that this is a stance and that is what we believe in. And that that is what we are standing on. And if they're going to try to get funding from us that they have to be in line with that stance as well.

And I also think that we need to make sure that we include that saying as it relates to people being placed on the different committees because having just one individual that is an indigenous black or brown person on the committee does not suffice. So I do think that we need to make sure that that is a practice that is represented as it relates to people being placed on a committee. And I do think that this is something that should be actually addressed as it

relates to our hiring practices as Chairperson Randall, former Chairperson Randall Brown stated when he was chair we had a letter that we received talking about that we were under violation as it relates to our hiring practices with people that were individuals with disabilities as well as individuals based on race for our DD Council. And it is very sad that we still have yet, three years later, we still have yet to hire someone that is a person with a disability. And that is part of our stance. So and that is also in line with the federal DD Act. So I really and truly hope that our executive director can make that a priority of having this stance actually be addressed when it relates to our hiring practice. Because that is a model for the state and that has not been addressed yet by our DD Council.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Thank you so much, Ms. Corley, for that. And it seems like you packed a whole lot of work for us in that one statement. And we going to have to-- we'll chunk it out and work at it. That's part of the committee's responsibility to chunk it out and hear these comments and these ideas and kind of break it out into tasks. So thanks for sharing that information.

As it stands right now as a committee it sounds like we are in agreement that this information as it's written can go on our website, it can go on our literature and that's something we don't need a motion to happen. I'm also hearing that this can also be placed on any literature. It can be our individuals who want to do business with the DD Council. Them understanding and adopting this position statement cause this is our position statement as well. And so it doesn't sound like we need a motion to do that, committee. I think that this is something that can happen expeditiously by our staff.

RANDALL BROWN: Yes. You're correct.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Anyone have a comment about this? Okay. Good.

RANDALL BROWN: This is Randall again. You're correct. This has been our official position since July of 2020, and it has been made clear to any of our vendors or partners that we worked with in that time since that this was our position. I can speak to when I was chair, anyway, up until the beginning of October

21 this was made clear. And so and I would advise it continue to be made clear if it's not already. Although assume that it is because it's been our position since its adoption. But to make it publicly clear to put it on the website so anyone can find it I think is key, yes.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Okay. Great. Okay, committee. It sounds like we're going to be moving in that direction. We don't need a motion. All right. Let's go to the next item. Do we have any other comments about this before I move on to the next item on the agenda? I don't want to dismiss anyone.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Cosse has her hand raised.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Hi, Ms. Cosse. You're being recognized.

BRENDA COSSE: Good afternoon.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Good afternoon, Ms. Cosse. You're recognized.

BRENDA COSSE: Yes. I wanted to ask does this antiracist statement, does that include the letterhead for the council? Did you say that? And I also mean even if it shows up digitally. Do we have room to put it on the letterhead maybe at the bottom? Thank you.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Thanks, Ms. Cosse. That's a great recommendation. But I think it's so wordy it might be challenging to put it on every letterhead. But I do like the comment about it digitally. I don't know like agendas maybe a link or something. But I don't want to speak for the staff, but I love the recommendation. I'm just not sure if it would fit cause it's so wordy. Amy, would you speak to that. It would be kind of wordy huh, Amy?

AMY DEAVILLE: Yeah. I agree. I think it would be a little wordy. We could link it in agendas. Yeah, putting it on the letterhead is going to create a lot of-- I don't think that would work. But yeah, we could link it in agendas. But yeah, I think it might be a little too wordy to put it on the actual letterhead.

HYACINTH MCKEE: It might be a little too wordy, Ms. Cosse. I like the recommendation and maybe we can think of creative ways to link it to the letterhead in some way, but it might be too wordy for it. But I love the idea. Ms. Corley, you're being recognized.

CORHONDA CORLEY: Yes, madam chair. I actually

like the recommendation and I would love to entertain and provide a friendly motion that we actually put some type of summary of that particular statement, our antiracist statement on our letterhead so that we are being very explicit to let everyone know that that is our stance. (Inaudible) but when people think about people with disabilities they don't necessarily think about people with disabilities being a very diverse community and I think that it should be very explicit as far as just a small summary just saying (inaudible) that we do take that stance. And I've seen where many other agencies and entities do have a statement like that on their letterhead at the very bottom. So it could be something as simple as just a single statement, just one statement that we do have an indirect. But I definitely would entertain a friendly motion or actually make that motion if needed.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: This is Bambi. I just want to be clear. This isn't just an antiracist policy. This includes more than just race so we need to be inclusive.

HYACINTH MCKEE: So what I'm hearing is is two things. I'm hearing a friendly-- well, the motion hasn't been made yet. The motion would have to be made in order for me to entertain if that is going to be a motion. But I am hearing a request for something to go on a letterhead. And I cannot ask the committee to, we can perhaps talk about this or talk about drafting it, right. And then drafting said statement and then come back to the committee maybe at another meeting to have that particular statement drafted and then propose to put that on the letterhead. And the only reason why I say that is right now we don't have the statement drafted and I've seen letterheads that say stuff like this entity supports, you know, antiracist policies. You know, I've seen those type of sentences that I think Ms. Cosse is asking. I'm assuming she's not asking for the entire statement to be put on the letterhead cause it's wordy, but I understand the request of just having a statement of language. So can I ask the committee to consider moving that dialogue to maybe another meeting when we start talking about policies and implementing policies and going through our DD bylaws and things of that nature? And come to

the meeting with a drafted statement for the committee to consider. And then if we can ask the full council for that. So I'm asking that committee members come back to the committee with a drafted statement to include in that dialogue.

I'm also hearing from a member that we need to be mindful that it's not just an antiracism position that we're taking. That we also need to be mindful that we are pulling inclusion for all, not necessarily for all, but just making sure that we have an inclusion that's in there as well. And I'm hearing that too. So again, let me ask the committee to draft a statement and then come back at our next meeting with a statement and let's engage in that dialogue. Is that something that we can do with the committee?

REKEESHA BRANCH: Yes, ma'am.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Okay. Super. So now let's go on to the next item on the agenda which is professional development and training for the committee. This is why we really wanted to meet today, y'all, because we have to really get to some conversations on how we want to make sure that our committee is trained, that our staff is trained and that our council is trained. And we've been talking about this for a couple of years now. And we thought we were ahead of the game and now time has passed and now we're kind of catching up and kind of behind the game. Actually being that we are a DD Council, we should really be ahead of the game and making sure that people are trained in DEI and really DEIJ practices.

And so with that being said, we want to share with you all that Rekeesha Branch, along with staff, they've been trying their best to do some research on finding entities that can provide professional development to us. Initially we had a discussion about providing the DEI training to the DEI Committee first, Executive Committee and then the full council. You know, kind of scaffolded in that order. Because we know that these trainings require, it really requires a lot of work. You know, it's not something that you can just kind of breeze through and just oh, I went to my DEI training. And so Ms. Branch was able to do some research and some legwork along with some staff to find out about who's out there actually doing the trainings. I will

highlight and say that Amy and Ebony both attended a training-- what year was that, y'all? Was that 21 that y'all went through some kind of training? It was something y'all went to together. I want to say maybe it was 21.

AMY DEAVILLE: Yeah. I think it was last year.

HYACINTH MCKEE: It was last year that y'all went to a training. And it wasn't, you know, as probably as extensive as some of these trainings, but at least you all took the chance and took the stance of going to a training. And pushing this whole idea of DEI. But here we go, we have three proposals that's in front of us. I'm going to let Rekeesha talk to you a little bit about what she's done and then I'll jump in in support of some of the things that we've been doing. And we can start off by going over this first proposal.

REKEESHA BRANCH: Okay. As Dr. McKee said, we do have three proposals that we attached to the agenda. Unfortunately, the LSU proposal we're going to have to disregard that one because they are no longer doing the program. And that's actually, I've been on a call with them to talk to them a little more about their program and I was informed that as of right now their program is placed on hold because of the lack of staff. So they don't anticipate bringing the program back until the end of the summer. So trying to be a little proactive I reached out to a few other companies that were doing the same type of program. So I reached out to Xavier University and I'm waiting to hear back from them. I also reached to Abaleta LLC and they will be sending a quote in by the end of this week or at the beginning of next week. I reached out to Cornell University. I'm waiting to hear back from the department head to give me a call because actually the program that they have is more of like a course. So you have to, I guess, participate for several hours in order to be certified or to even be considered as trained. So in order for them to do something that's specific to us it would take them months to create. So again, I have to wait for the department head to call me back and talk a little bit more about what we're looking for.

I also reached back out to Team Dynamics and also Allied Folks to give them a little bit more detail of

what we're looking for and to also give them potential training topics that we might be interested in. Some of the topics or ideas are unconscious bias, addressing micro aggressions, leading compassionate conversations and safe space training. So Team Dynamics said that they can get a quote sometime next week. And Allied Folks stated that they could give us something by the end of this week. So I really hate that I couldn't have it in for you guys today, but I should definitely have something soon we can review.

HYACINTH MCKEE: And so the reason why Rekeesha is saying this is because the proposals that you have attached inside this agenda, if you all read them, the content, other than LSU, the content did not appear to be what we were looking for and what we needed in terms of training us on diversity, equity and inclusion. It did not appear to fit the needs of what we were looking for as a DEI Committee and also fit the needs of what we were looking for as a DD Council.

And so LSU appeared to have more in line what we were looking for, but LSU, again, is tabling their program until the summer. And so what we're wanting at this time, Ms. Branch went back and she told both entities, Team Dynamics and Allied what we were actually looking for, but we also want to get some information from the committee on where do you think we should go for this. Cause she is still in the researching process to find someone to train us. We were thinking about, whoever trains us we were thinking that it needs to be an option for people to participate virtually and then also maybe at their own pace training as well. And so what we're looking for from the committee is some ideas on where do you think we should go from here in terms of what type of programming-- well, delivery of content we're looking for.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: So this is Bambi. How do we get the information out that we are looking for vendors or an entity that can provide this type of training?

HYACINTH MCKEE: That's a good question. And I had a question about that too. Do we have to do an RFP if it's a training for staff or if it's a training for the DD Council? We don't have to do an RFP for that.

RANDALL BROWN: No. You don't have to do an RFP.

This is Randall. I'm sorry to interrupt. If it's a training you want to do for council members, you don't have to do an RFP for that. That's something that you as chair of this committee, Hyacinth, and Amy could work together on it to try to figure out how best you want to use your resources and time for people to attend and how you want to structure that. Trainings are strictly the purview of the executive director and the chair of the council can work together with you, Hyacinth, to figure out how best to get, how you want the training structured and how you want it to work.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Okay. Thanks for that feedback. And that was something we were thinking about too, Bambi. About do we have to do an RFP. That question you brought up is something we thought about too, you know. And so we don't need to do an RFP on that. Thank you for that.

RANDALL BROWN: Not for a training, no.

HYACINTH MCKEE: I see a comment in the chat from public member about Disability Rights Louisiana. Thank you, Susan, for putting that. Recently held a training on DEI for all their staff. So Ms. Branch, we might be able to contact Disability Rights of Louisiana and see who they used too as well. Thank you for that resource. Yeah. So again, so the dialogue is what will be the preferred delivery of the content. Should it be virtual. Should it be something where people can do it on their own pace. Are we looking for a certification. We need that feedback from the committee to help us better guide what we're looking for in terms of the training.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: Have we reached out to the disability, like our disability network, the DD network to see if other councils have done this similar thing? There may be national organizations. And just from my knowledge and my experience you may have better resources within the independent living network. Like, you know, NCIL. I know that's not within the DD network, it overlaps. But I just find that they're more progressive sometimes. And so I would imagine that they have some really good contacts that could do this training really well and be inclusive of all the things that we want to be inclusive of.

RANDALL BROWN: I would echo what Bambi just said

and I think they're a great place to start looking.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Thank y'all for that.

RASHAD BRISTO: I agree. I had a chance to attend the NCIL conference and are very resourceful from an individual living stance. And also just add to what you were saying, like I said, once we find what we find we can try to see something that can be inclusive. Because I do know we do have some parents, some committee members where, you know, tangibly making it to the office may be a challenge for them. That's another place, bridge to cross.

HYACINTH MCKEE: No. That's actually good. We need to know that so when we were looking for trainings and when Ms. Branch is on the phone, she needs to be able to say what our needs are. So no, we appreciate that feedback from the committee on this. And so what we want to do now since we know what we're looking for in terms of the needs we're going to need to ask the council or to let the council know what our intent is, right, as per our charter. So our intent is to train the committee, train the staff and then, you know, Executive Committee and then full council. Is anybody in agreement with that, that the committee and the staff may be the individuals that get trained first?

RANDALL BROWN: I think-- and this is Randall again. Sorry to just interject. But I think that's the best way to start because you will make sure that you have your core people trained well and then move out to your council and then maybe hopefully the community at large with some training.

RASHAD BRISTO: I agree.

HYACINTH MCKEE: And so and I'm not sure if we would need a motion on this, but I think that we will need to ask the council to give us the autonomy to search for the training and get the training lined up to get it going. You know what I mean. Like we've been sitting on this dialogue for three years now and I think that it's important for us to get our people trained. We need to get our people trained. And so I don't want us to have like we're talking about it, and we push it off and it's another two years. And so what we're trying to do right now is to get, to ask the council for permission to allow us to independently research, select and get the individuals or the entity

that's going to train us and put this into motion. And that will be the request for us to ask the council.

RANDALL BROWN: Randall again. I'm pretty sure this committee already has that authority, but I do think it's a great idea to go ahead and make a motion of what we intend to do and why. Because as you do so it will spur discussion among the larger council and get them involved in the process too. And they may have better ideas and resources than we all do and could add to what we're trying to do. I think a motion's a good idea.

HYACINTH MCKEE: I see two hands up. I see Ms. Corley and then I see Ms. Cosse. Ms. Corley, you're being recognized.

CORHONDA CORLEY: If it pleases you, madam chair, can I let the public speak first before I give my input?

HYACINTH MCKEE: No.

CORHONDA CORLEY: You want me to give mine first?

HYACINTH MCKEE: Uh-huh.

CORHONDA CORLEY: Okay. I just was asking first. And the reason I was saying that is because sometimes I do, I agree with Mr. Randall as far as making a motion and I would like to entertain the motion. However, I do think that if we're going with the diversity, equity, inclusion training that we do need to actually be mindful of what entity we select. And so I do, if I make the motion, then my motion would actually have that the proposals come back to our committee for us to actually be able to make that selection. And the reason being is because not everyone that teaches DEI training is very well versed nor have experienced the reasoning for DEI training being taught. And so I think that it is very prudent of us to actually be mindful of our eclectic community and making sure that whatever entity that we pick that we actually be the ones to pick it and make sure that that is a group, an entity that can actually address all of our community and that's all.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Yeah. Thank you for that.

CORHONDA CORLEY: And so that would be my motion.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Okay. Thank you for that. That's a long motion, Ms. Corley. We're going to try to synthesize it. We're going to try to pull it together.

So I'm hearing a motion on the floor to-- restate your motion cause it's a lot. You want just to get all the proposals to come back. So we're not going to do proposals, Ms. Corley.

REKEESHA BRANCH: Dr. McKee, I hate to interrupt you. But unfortunately because Ms. Corhonda's not in-person--

HYACINTH MCKEE: She can't make a motion.

REKEESHA BRANCH: Yes, ma'am.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Thank y'all. Awe. Thank you for that. And thank you for correcting me on that.

CORHONDA CORLEY: I was sitting down in the building because I was helping someone that is disabled (inaudible).

HYACINTH MCKEE: Something's breaking up. It sounds like she's close. All right. When you get in, we'll talk about that.

AMY DEAVILLE: What I put on the screen as the motion is not, came out of what you were saying, Dr. McKee, so it is not the formal motion. But just to start with the wording I just put that up as a starting point.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Yes. Okay. So that motion is, there's a motion that Amy has written. And then I want to say to Ms. Corley's comment that it's not a proposal kind of thing because we talked about we're not needing to do an RFP, Ms. Corley. We can just select what entity can provide the training to us. We don't have to do a request for proposal. So just for clarification to let you know that. I will let Ms. Cosse speak and then we'll circle back when Ms. Corley gets in the room. Ms. Cosse, you're being recognized.

BRENDA COSSE: Good afternoon.

HYACINTH MCKEE: We hear you, Ms. Cosse.

BRENDA COSSE: Thank you. I just wanted to clarify it says training, but I heard you say certification. Are we looking into that also? And who would, if yes, then who would we be certifying and why? And would it be separated kind of like oh, is it the emergency preparedness contract we have where they hold the training for professionals and then there's a separate training for stakeholders? Thank you.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Thank you, Ms. Cosse. Great comment. So in Ms. Branch's research she is going to,

she's researching whether or not these entities can offer a certification in it where people can get certified and that you will be a certified DEI, you know, you got a certification in DEI practices or whatever. She's researching if there's a certification that you get once you complete. She's researching, you know, if professional development in terms of, you know, if you're a certain profession you get continuing education credits for it. She's researching all those different layers, Ms. Cosse. So we don't have the answer to that. We will be doing that in our research. And again, it's not a request for proposal. We have the autonomy to just select the training and not have to go through that piece. But we are going to reach out to different organizations that are in the DEI community as well continue to do outside to find the best fit for us. Okay. All right.

And so there is a motion now we can talk about it. We were just trying to draft it up about doing independent research and select the entity that will conduct the trainings for the council to be rolled out to the DEI Committee and staff first, Executive Committee next and then to the full council. I can't make the motion because I'm the chair so I'm asking that someone look at this motion, see if it needs to be wordsmith and see if it can be considered.

RASHAD BRISTO: I make the motion.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Thank you.

RASHAD BRISTO: I make the motion for the-- I'm going to go ahead and read it just for the sake of argument in the record. I make a motion for the DEI Committee to independently research and select the entity that will conduct the trainings for the council. Rolled out to the DEI Committee and staff first, executive next and then the full council.

HYACINTH MCKEE: It's motioned by Rashad. Is there a second?

CORHONDA CORLEY: I will second the motion.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Second by-- is that Ms. Corley?

CORHONDA CORLEY: Yes, ma'am.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Hi, Ms. Corley. All right. Seconded by Ms. Corley. Any objections or abstentions? I'm sorry. Any public comment? Any objections or abstentions? Is there any public comment to the motion

on the floor? Any objections or abstentions?

SPEAKER: Brooke Stewart is on the council.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Yeah. Brooke is on the committee. Is she on as a panelist?

EBONY HAVEN: She's being added now.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Okay. No objections or abstentions. Hearing none, motion carries. Okay.

SPEAKER: Thank you.

HYACINTH MCKEE: All right. So we got that. Now the other issue is with this training once we get this information if we need to convene or call an emergency DEI meeting. I just need to let y'all know that we may have to call one if we're able to get some prices and quotes and all that in order to, you know, get this information to the DDC. All right. So just be on notice we might be calling one before the next council meeting. I'm just letting y'all know, be on notice. Okay. All right. Anyone else have any comments before I move onto the next item on the agenda regarding this item on the agenda?

REKEESHA BRANCH: Ms. Corhonda Corley has a comment.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Ms. Corley, you're being recognized.

CORHONDA CORLEY: Madam chair, I just wanted to get clarity on that motion that we just voted on. I just want to be clear were we saying that we were allowing the staff to choose what entity was going to be doing the DEI training?

HYACINTH MCKEE: No. That's not what we said in the motion, Ms. Corley.

CORHONDA CORLEY: Okay.

HYACINTH MCKEE: No.

CORHONDA CORLEY: Because that's how it could have been interpreted from the way that it was written. So that's why I was asking for the clarification.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Okay. No worries. No. That will not happen. On the record. We will work as a committee to select what's best.

CORHONDA CORLEY: Thank you, madam chair.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Okay.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: I have a comment. Just for clarity. So the process was that this committee makes a recommendation to the Executive Committee then to the

full council. And just looking at the timeline our next meeting is in April.

HYACINTH MCKEE: No. That's not the recommendation, Bambi, no. The recommendation is that we would get trained first, then the Executive Committee would get trained and then the council would get trained. We don't have to bring our committee recommendations to the Executive Committee as per our charter. We can bring our recommendations straight to the council for consideration. We don't have to bring it to Executive Committee.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: Okay. So then I totally misunderstood what the motion was.

HYACINTH MCKEE: We'll put it back up, but it passed. But let's put it back up just for the sake because people have questions about the motion. Let's put it back up so everyone can see. So the motion is for us to independently research, meaning Ms. Branch, of course, and I helped her, the other day we were researching together, to independently research and select the entity that will conduct the trainings for the council, right, for us to do that, right. And to be rolled out to the DEI Committee to be trained first. Oh, that's the piece. The DEI Committee will be trained and then the staff will be trained and then Executive Committee and then next on to the full council. That's what the intent is, is for the trainings to go from DEI Committee to staff, Executive Committee and then full council.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: So now that it's clear, is there a reason why we all couldn't be trained together? I mean, like I'm okay with it being separately, but why would we have to do it?

HYACINTH MCKEE: Because depending on the type of trainings some of the trainings that Ms. Branch and I looked into they were eight hours. You going to sit there eight hours with everybody. You feel like it huh, Bambi, I know, right. So we were really just based on what we've been researching, y'all, it's been like, it has been, come on, Ms. Branch, it's been like intense like two hours here. So whatever we find we're trying to see if it's workable for everybody

REKEESHA BRANCH: And I've also been trying to talk to the different places because the problem is the

topics that we're looking for is kind of two hours per topic. So I'm trying to make sure that everybody understands, you know, as far as the people that's trying to train us that not only do they kind of, you know, kind of slim it down for us and not be so long because they'll lose a lot of attention from a lot of the participants taking the course. But also make it where everybody can understand and not just this difficult training for everybody just to kind of sit through.

HYACINTH MCKEE: And then I don't know if anyone on this committee has sat through like a really fully engaging DEI training. It's not just like a simple training, right. There's a lot of candid conversations. There's a lot of, just a lot of intensity in terms of what we're doing together very interactional, very transformational, right. It's not a simple just open up the book, you know, this person is presenting kind of stuff, right. And so we want to keep that in mind too. People I've sat through people had to take frequent breaks. People had to walk out and take moments just to kind of breathe because the information can be so impactful, right. And so we want to keep that in mind because we know the type of training. And so as the motion is saying that we want to have that committee to be trained first and then the staff. Kind of like in that way.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: And so but when you think about it basically what you're saying is three different trainings. DEI and staff, Executive Committee and full council. But I'm thinking just in practical terms you may not be able to get all DEI and staff on the first training and all Executive Committee for the next training. So like I'm okay with there being like three different times the training is happening, but I almost think that just a practical matter it may be better to give people three options and whoever can come to the first option come, the second and third. I don't know if that was clear or not but.

HYACINTH MCKEE: I hear you on that. And I hear your position on it. But the reason why I'm going to disagree with that is because I think we're already three years in of kicking this can down the road and I think if we allow people to keep kicking the can they

will not select, you know, oh, I'll just select the last training. I'll go when the DD Council goes. And then they don't go, right. And so I think where we are is that we're just constantly keep kicking the can down the road. That's one.

And then two, I think if the DEI Committee gets trained first and the staff gets trained first it shows that we are actually committed to actually getting this work done, right. It shows that we have already taken a stance that hey, this committee is trained. The staff is trained. There's no reason why no one else should be trained on this council. And so I just am at the point where the can's being kicked down the road too much. And so I'm happy that this motion passed in this way to ensure that we can get some traction happening for this DEI Committee. And so I hear your position, hear your position on it, but we're just actively wanting to get this done. Any other comments on this motion or, you know, anything to discuss to gain more clarity on this particular motion and this topic on the agenda?

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Cosse has her hand raised.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Ms. Cosse, you're being recognized.

BRENDA COSSE: Really quick. Will the training become a requirement for new council members? Are we considering that also?

HYACINTH MCKEE: Great point, Ms. Cosse. I love that. So now you're talking about next meeting's agenda. Now you're talking about the future. Now you're talking about the responsibilities of the committee. I love that. And that is the direction that the intent back in 2020 that we discussed, right. That we wanted, right. And I remember you being part of that conversation that ultimately this would be a requirement to be part of the council. And so that is something that we would have to have more dialogue. Ms. Cosse, thanks for bringing that back up to our attention. And don't forget, come to the next meeting and remind us to put that back on there as a discussion. Thank you so much. Anyone else about this here? Okay. All right.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Corley has her hand raised.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Yes. Ms. Corley.

CORHONDA CORLEY: I would gladly make that motion right now for the DEI training to actually be a requirement for all future council members as well as committee members and staff members.

AMY DEAVILLE: Dr. McKee, this is Amy.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Hi, Amy.

AMY DEAVILLE: I don't think that you need that motion. In either the last council meeting or the meeting before, I can't remember which, you made a motion in the council meeting that stated that this training, that DEI training would happen in the full council and that it would happen for new council members.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Oh, good. Did it pass, Amy?

AMY DEAVILLE: Yes.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Oh, well great. Guess what, Ms. Cosse and Ms. Corley. We don't have to make that. It's done. Thank goodness for technology and good memory. All right. Great. There it is. All right, y'all. Anything else on this particular item on the agenda? All right. So we can move on.

REKEESHA BRANCH: All right. Next thing is public comment and closing comments.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Oh, wow. I cannot believe this. Y'all need to write this in the books. Did we actually get everything done on an agenda that we needed to accomplish. I did want to note, don't be surprised, y'all, if I call for an emergency DEI Committee meeting before the next council meeting. When is the next council meeting, folks? Isn't it April 19th?

RASHAD BRISTO: Nineteenth and the 20th.

HYACINTH MCKEE: So there's a high probability that Ms. Branch is going to get this information and we have to call for a quick meeting to just go over what we found to ask our council to approve. So just want to put you on notice for that. Any other comments or questions? Thanks everybody for being here today. Any other comments or questions?

CORHONDA CORLEY: Dr. McKee, I would greatly appreciate if we can, because I know that one of our LaCAN agenda items is regarding virtual participation and all as it relates to being virtual, having hybrid. I think that it would be extremely prudent of us to set the example by making sure that all members on any

committee can actually have voting privileges whether they are in-person or hybrid as well. Like I said, I was downstairs helping not one, but two individuals with disabilities before I went into this actual room and had I not just ran up in here to get in here so that I could be part of that motion I wouldn't have had the opportunity to second even though I am a member of this committee. And so I do think that we have to lead by example and so by leading by example I do think that that should be a rule or something that we should entertain going forward.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Thank you, Ms. Corley, for that comment and that rule. I know there's some discussion outside of the council. Yep. Look at that. Action three alert and confirm with your regional. I see it, Christi. I saw it. I was just going to say it and I'm so glad you put it in the chat. But we know that there's some dialogue about, you know, hybrid and virtual attendance and making things more accessible to individuals with disabilities. And we know that there's some discussion on that. There's some key actions that we need to take on that. Thank you, Ms. Corley, for mentioning that today, us setting as an example. So that is something we need to really talk about. I don't know if you're trying to make a motion right now or what you're trying to do before I close the meeting out, but you need to make the intention known.

CORHONDA CORLEY: I would like to make the motion right now for this committee and then to actually have the motion go to the full council in April that from this day going forward that any member of any committee or council, whether they're in-person or hybrid, actually be able to be counted in the quorum and actually have full participation as any other member including voting privileges.

AMY DEAVILLE: Dr. McKee, if I may. This is Amy.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Hi, Amy.

AMY DEAVILLE: It's not quite as easy as just making a motion. We could do that with the council, but it goes against the open meetings law. And so if anything, any action taken in a meeting gets challenged it could be overturned. So until we can amend open meetings law to allow for that virtual participation

for people it kind of still needs to stay in place. We could choose to do whatever we wanted with the council, but we put the decisions made by the council at risk when we do that.

CORHONDA CORLEY: Okay. Then I could make a nice adjustment to my language, Dr. McKee. And that would be that this committee sends a statement to every committee that every legislative committee and body including the governor's office informing them of what the impact is for our disabilities community as it relates to this particular topic.

HYACINTH MCKEE: So that motion would be, Ms. Corley, to ask that the DD Council sends a statement. It wouldn't be coming from our committee. So that motion would be us to make this motion to ask the DD Council to draft a position statement. I don't want to like reword your motion, but is that what you're saying?

CORHONDA CORLEY: Yes, ma'am.

HYACINTH MCKEE: Okay.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: So this is Bambi. I think that already exist because of our legislative agenda item on this.

RANDALL BROWN: Right.

EBONY HAVEN: Yeah. I was going to say the same thing. So even with the action alert that's active right now, Corhonda, so LaCAN members can take action and contact that task force that is meeting on Friday to discuss these recommendations that they're going to make. And I'm pretty sure Senator Hewitt is going to bring--

HYACINTH MCKEE: Senator Hewitt, yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Yes. She's going to bring legislation. So once she does, we'll know what the council's position will be based on what the intentions are of that agenda item. They want to make things open and they want members to be able to be counted towards the quorum and to be able to vote. And so once she does bring that legislation we'll know whether or not LaCAN will be in support or if we need to educate the legislators on how this will affect families and people with disabilities negatively, if that makes sense. So I feel like we're already doing that. I don't know if we need a separate motion to--

HYACINTH MCKEE: To give to the council to do that, right. Cause Senator Sharon Hewitt is doing some work. And not to just (inaudible), but there is work already out there on this issue. And I believe that, I guess maybe about two council meetings ago Ms. DeJean brought that to our attention too as well that there was some work that was going around this. So, you know what, Ms. Corley, there's work already happening in this area. Thanks for bringing this up again. Our LaCAN leaders are aware of this as well. And so we will continue to work it through that process. And then if need be step in where we usually do step in as a council. So thank you for that.

Any other comments regarding today's meeting? We are about to adjourn. All right, y'all. Thank y'all so much for coming and everybody taking their time out today. I'm excited about the DEI Committee. I'm so excited. Thank you so much. Thank you for the people that's in-person that was able to get there today in-person. Thank you, virtual people, for taking time out your schedule. Just a pleasure to have you on this committee. And I will be seeing y'all soon before the DD Council meeting, full council meeting. You guys have a great day. Thank you for your time.