

Reviewing Subcommittee Meeting Summary

111 SW Columbia St, Portland, OR 97201, Floor 5, Room 518

Wednesday, May 17, 2019

Attendees: Heidi Bullock
Micah Meskel
Colleen Johnson
Nadia Legorreta
Cristina Nieves
Dory Robinson
Angela Henderson
Dory Robinson

Opted out: Jamie Dunphy

Staff: Cinthia Diaz Calvo (PUB Coordinator)
Amy Archer- Masters (PUB Analyst)

I. Background / Introductions

Cinthia provided a reminder that the Portland Utility Board's purpose is to advise the City Council, on behalf of and for the benefit of the residents of Portland, on the financial plans, capital improvements, annual budget development and rate setting for the City's water, sewer, stormwater, and watershed services. The Board advises Council on the establishment of fair and equitable rates, consistent with balancing the goals of customer needs, legal mandates, existing public policies, such as protecting water quality and improving watershed health, operational requirements, and the long-term financial stability and viability of the utilities.

Cinthia introduced Yolanda Sanchez from Office of Equity and Human Rights who provided an overview of the Bias-Awareness training.

II. Bias Awareness Overview

Yolanda introduced three different types of biases and tools to reduce bias in decision making. Bias is a preference or prejudice toward a group of people. This can be categorizing, labeling, stereotyping or associating a group of people with another in a generalized way. Sometimes bias is known and sometimes it is unknown.

1. Implicit bias, also known as *unconscious* bias, are preferences and prejudices that we have about a person or a group of people, but *we don't know* that we have them.
2. Explicit bias operates in our conscious level, we know our biases and are aware of them.
3. Institutional bias, preferences and prejudice is legitimized in the policies, procedures, and practices. This reinforces harmful stereotypes that feed into the unconscious bias that individuals have.

Tips & Tools

1. Make a conscious effort to address bias through education and training.
2. Recognize it in yourself and others and name it when it is happening.
3. Challenge policies and practices that have bias.
4. Dispel first impressions.
5. Be as objective as possible.

6. Evaluate candidates against the qualifications that you are looking for and not against other candidates.
7. Have rational decisions for selecting the candidates you selected and have conversations about that.
8. Don't shame individuals for having bias, but rather recognize it, name it and try to find ways to address it.

III. Interview Session

Max Jones

- Engineer, specializing in commercial projects and construction.
- He is a subcontracted employee with ACMS; subcontracted by Stantech who is working with the Bureau of Environment Services. Their Focus is Columbia water treatment plant.
- He mentioned holding space and time for everyone involved. When there isn't consensus, he defers to core values, equity, health and Safety.
- Ensure the poor and underrepresented neighborhoods are represented. He wants a well outline emergency preparedness plan especially for those who are underrepresented.
- What he has found by working with Lyft is that many Portlanders think that their City doesn't care about them. He wants to build interface with the public and post flyers for localized events and providing them with options to engage. Holding open workshops would be a way to change Portlanders perspective about the City.
- He seeks the opportunity to build upon the knowledge base that PUB has to engage the community more. Engaging the community on their terms is important. i.e. in multiple languages and different outlets.
- He elaborated on his goal to increase preparedness on seismic and natural disasters i.e. water, power, etc. His interest as a PUB member would be to advocate for underrepresented/underserved neighborhoods to have better traffic lights/signage.
- He would work with PUB to take part in the way that money is distributed in different neighborhoods.
- Conflict of interest: They perform risk management and cost performance and indexes, and they oversee budget projections. The company' project currently counts with 50% of BES' CIP budget. He wouldn't disclose anything that the PUB discusses and vice versa, he wouldn't disclose to PUB anything that their company discusses.
 - **Deliberation:**
 - There was concern with his conflict of interest and his response to the conflict. It was mentioned that in order to mitigate the conflict, conversations about the conflict need to take place and Max' approach is not to disclose to either party which seems the opposite.
 - It was mentioned that it would be PUBs job to direct him to the City's attorney for guidance on dealing with his conflict of interest.
 - It was mentioned that any and all discussions that take place in PUB are public facing. It was also unclear how high of a role Max was in and the level of access he has may be limited – since he is a sub of a subcontractor, it seems like his access is very limited.

- It was mentioned that his strengths seem to be more technical and his goals and interests lean towards emergency preparedness and traffic lighting signage which is not within PUB's scope of work.
- It was appreciated Max' general interaction systems, even if they were more transportation oriented. Having an eye/ear for what the public shares paired with his engineering background there is potential for growth there.
- He seemed like a thoughtful young man, but his responses were less in-depth or as sophisticated as the other candidates. At times his ODOT observations and interests revealed his level of understanding of what PUB does.
- There was a level of naivety on what PUB's scope of work entails.

Gabriela Saldaña-Lopez

- She grew up in E Portland. She is passionate about community engagement and organizing, both on campus and the community; low income upbringing; knows the need for public outreach.
- She faces disagreements often and believes it's important to have boundaries and built respect. Using a system of thumbs up, middle and down and talking about the whys even if someone was in the middle can be one way to deal with disagreement. Continue discussion until a set deadline and if there is still disagreement then the decision is based on a vote.
- In terms of government and equity there are restrictions to accessing resources. She spoke about institutional barriers. She thinks that by helping public with education and aide language barriers would make resources more available.
- She has done a lot of community organizing and engagement. Building trust and showing up. Southeast uplift is a neighborhood coalition she is involved with. She spoke about different types of outreach and working past current conflict to achieve goals.
- She is an Americorp member and she supported a cohort of over 100 students. She likes working with young people. She coordinated a lot of events. It involved a lot of email communication and follow up, goal setting and target reaching.
 - **Deliberation:**
 - The subcommittee enjoyed Gabriela's interview– mentioned she was passionate, with fresh ideas and practical experience in outreach, community organizing. She projected her ability, potential and capacity to understand the type of discussions that take place in PUB.
 - She has experience working and dealing with conflict and disagreements in various settings and has practical experience coming to consensus. She was very specific as to how she resolved conflict/disagreements.
 - There was a level of naivety on what PUB's scope of work entails.

Lisa Reynolds

- Pediatrician for 25 years; public health; evidence based for solutions. She has direct communication with families and prescribing methods that work for them. Meet the families where they are at.
- She collaborates with other 25 co-workers to come up with consensus, ideas and solutions. Volunteers against gun violence trying to find common ground. She is trying to be less dogmatic, listen and discuss to hear a variety of solutions.
- She has heard, and lead debates and knows the challenge of clear water, corrosion. She said that optimization of resources is a good start.

- Her practice includes many immigrant families. She speaks conversational Spanish. She has noticed a lack of diversity in volunteer groups. She looks forward to collaborating more.
 - **Deliberation:**
 - She talked about her interest and research in water.
 - The committee likes her background, however, Lisa admitted she didn't know a lot about sewer and water and the reason why she wanted to serve on the board.
 - She demonstrated that even though she had no experience she is aware and engaged in topics around water. She also took the time to research, attend a PUB meeting and took a tour on water systems, which shows her interest and time availability to learn and be engaged in this body or work.
 - Her use of evidence to reach fact-based conclusions and solutions was appreciated.
 - Lisa was not able to provide concrete examples of how her experience and education tie to the work that PUB does. She only mentions that she participates in the Gun violence and other committees but no concrete examples as to the set of skills she would bring to the discussions at PUB.
 - There was a level of naivety on what PUB's scope of work entails.

Ignacio Falcon

- He shared his focus in Geography as a PSU master's student. Ecology, forest dynamics and conservation in Mt St Helen's is the focus of his theses. Moisture availability is one of his main concerns. He noted that since the logging industry is big in Oregon, moisture will play a big role in its sustainability.
- He also counts with trainings on spatial analysis and GIS. He mentioned that he had read the minutes and the outcomes that resulted, and he thinks that voicing his opinion and listening to concerns would build upon this experience. This area interests him.
- His work background includes managing the operations of an Australian company in the cannabis industry. He learned to independently manage and operate and those are the types of skills he can bring to PUB – the ability to implement, find solutions in a way that is beneficial to everyone.
- The steps he would take to resolve conflict or reach consensus is: listening and being open to others' perspectives and stating what he thinks and have a discussion on what the best output would be. Sustainability and ensuring that no one gets the lower end of the stick is the most important for him.
- Listening to the community and learning and taking their ideas on potential solutions is essential.
- He thinks it's important to understand and play a role in how things work, and decisions are made from a governmental perspective and that is why he is interested in serving on the board.
 - **Deliberation:**
 - He seemed casual and casually dressed. There was an element to his approach how much he elaborated, and it didn't give a clear sense of how much he was invested.
 - There was general consensus about the statement above.
 - There was a level of naivety on what PUB's scope of work entails.

Karen Williams

- She has lived in Portland since 1989. She has experience with water quality, received hydrogeologist academic training. Has background work experience with DEQ and is an active volunteer at home associations, and the union.
- She seeks consensus by finding the middle ground and then finding a solution that everyone can live with, understanding that it might not be everyone's ideal method. She mentioned that having a clear purpose, goal or outcome is important, as well as seeking the greatest good for the greatest number of people and trying to meet the needs for the most vulnerable.
- She thinks it's important to spend time collecting, examining and evaluating data and asking what the gaps are. One of the challenges that she sees is that government operates from a place of feeling like they don't have enough information. Another challenge is that entities place limitations on themselves based on past failures – looking into the past can be helpful but it can also be limiting, to a point entities feel like that is all they can do, which is not always the case. She thinks that the challenge that government faces is balancing resources for delivering services.
- She had a very informative and transformative experience supporting a campaign. This experience led her to be more observative in how the organizers found leaders within the community that supported them in leading the campaign. Her role was to help and support and what she learned is what she would like to bring to PUB.
- She had an organizer role with the Union advocating for underrepresented individuals. She values supporting others.
 - Deliberation:
 - She was good on paper and good on the phone.
 - It was appreciated how specific she was about her experience and skills.
 - She talked about the support she provided Motor Voter and Causa and this validated her statement that about providing to those that need it the most.
 - Her equity responses were underdevelopment.
 - Her response of looking into past failures as being a limitation seems to be representative of her own background and not representative of other groups. (equity)
 - Her responses were strong at the beginning but weaker towards the end.
 - Her science background is strong and that helped balance the score.
 - Karen mentioned that history is important, but it can't be the focus – Some subcommittee members thought this was concerning because history is a huge factor to improve future efforts and not make the same mistakes. Other subcommittee members interpreted more as like the way things have been done historically isn't necessarily the way we will continue doing things.
 - She kept laughing and that was confusing to some subcommittee members. It was explained by one subcommittee member that sometimes it can be funny to be address the fact that part of the company/organization is resistant to change and others are change agent champions.

Mia Sabanovic

- Water is her passion since she learned how to swim. She has 13 years of experience working with the City. She is familiar with both BES and PWB and wants to help them optimize how to

preserve and deliver on those services- familiar with the needs of the PUB. Mia has desire to be a public servant.

- She mentions that prior to building the team or inviting people to the table, they have to identify the needs, the vision and outcome as well as the time frame.
- She has experience with team dynamic. She mentions that the team needs to understand challenges and past failures, have good communication and trust.
- She is expressed ability and awareness in equity and has good understanding of having the right voices on the table. She thinks that in order to be successful in engaging the community is to simplify (speak their language) and not use complicated words.
- She has personal experience as a refugee and thinks it's important to find portals to reach communities. She understands the oppression that communities have gone through and gave examples of barriers that need to be addressed in order to ensure all voices are heard. She has a cross cultural lenses.
- Conflict of interest: She was clear that she does not profit from any decision that takes place. She will advocate for the groups she supports and is interested in optimizing the resources that we have (water) and the work that BES/PWB does.
- She is interested in integrating PUB in the strategic objective of the bureau and making sure that the budget ties to the vision and mission of the bureaus. She thinks there is more gain to focusing on this than just approving or prioritizing the budget.
- She is a leader in the Bosnian community, engineering groups and in the Muslim Educational Trust.

- **Deliberation:**

- It was mentioned that at the State level there is a third category and that is “perceived” conflict of interest and that addresses the optics of how it would look to the public.
- Mia got the highest score for some subcommittee members.
- It was mentioned that Mia was delightful; she has 13 years of experience; but she came across as a very strong advocate for the bureaus and PUB may benefit more from a member that is more of an advocate for the community. City employment is a relevant topic and it was mentioned that PUB may not need another City employee; there are enough city-employee-members now that are very articulate now.
- It was mentioned by a City employee/PUB ex-officio member, that they themselves received clarification from their manager at the beginning because they were supposed to be supporting the PUB by providing their bureau knowledge and expertise, and not advocating for the community and the tax payer and saving them money. It was mentioned that just because you work for a bureau it doesn't mean you'll going to solely advocating for the bureau. They said that they can see both perspectives bureau's/community's and they can be objective in wanting to optimize resources and services and the rates to be low.
- It was mentioned that it is important to make clear in their recommendation to council that the restrictions are specific that it's not a conflict to be an employee of the utility bureaus. There is, however, an opportunity for council to decide to institutionalize that response and that those remaining seats

should go to community members. It should be explained why the subcommittee has decided to move Mia forward, if it is decided.

- Mia would bring the community leadership and outreach aspect that the board doesn't have.
- Her common theme is that her intent is to optimize services for BES and PWB.

Karen Spenser

- She has technical skills and expertise in strategic planning, looking at financial statements and moving the process along, through her role at Nike.
- She is a lifelong learner and loves to learn a variety of topics. She is comfortable going into the details of things and looking at the bigger picture at the same time.
- She is a team player and loves to be on teams and working to advance goals.
- She has always been involved in non-profit activity and giving her experience and personal status she finds it appropriate to take on a broader leadership role and exposing herself to government. On the personal side she does improvisation and film direction and she is interested in continuing to expand her abilities in this field as well.
- She has been on advisor boards before and understand that educating herself and doing the *homework* is vital to the effectiveness of the board. She is comfortable picking up the phone and talking to anybody.
- In teams that she has led, she listens and understands where each person is coming from. Understanding people's perspective is important. Disagreement is seen positively and as a path forward to innovation. Most people want to feel listened to, respected and valued for their opinion and if they can be heard it goes along way towards consensus. Sometimes there won't be agreement and in that case prioritizing the purpose, needs and what decisions need to be made now and who is the ultimate decision maker. She understands that sometimes the vote is towards a recommendation and the group must understand that there will always be disagreements.
- She is analytical when weighing choices. She likes to visually place pluses and minuses and sometimes use weights; ultimately is about trying to find what the best of the worst choice is when making decisions on affordability and services.
- She explains that the City faces a challenge when dealing with a 100-year-old system that needs regular maintenance and future upkeep. Challenges also come from climate change which can be costly. There are mandates around what the City can and cannot charge rate payers which impacts the affordability piece. It's important for her to listen to the rate payers and understand what their current economic challenges.
- She has worked with immigrants and has understanding in working with refugees and immigrant communities. In her career she has often been the only woman or the only African-American, or both. Sometimes she has been the only diversity and inclusion effort and she has been in an equity and inclusion team.
 - **Deliberation:**
 - Karen has been in advisory bodies before - she understands dynamics. There was general consensus that she would be great to have on the board.
 - She was specific about connecting objectives and priorities with metrics and evidence, specifically, around equity and diversity. There was general consensus around this comment.

- There was general consensus that Karen was among the top candidates interviewed and the subcommittee decided to move her forward.

SUMMARY:

Votes concluded the following:

	Nadia	Heidi	Micah	Gabe	Angela	Cristina	Ana	Dory	Colleen	Vote	Alt.
Gabriela	4	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	9	9
Karen S	5	3	2	3	3	2	3	2	2	8	9
Mia	1	1	3	2	2	5*	1	3		7	8
Karen W	2	4	4	4	4		4		4	7	7
Lisa	3		5	5		4		4	3	4	6
Max					5	3	5	5		1	4
Mike		5							5	0	2
Ignacio										0	0

**Cristina's preference is Mia Sabanovic as the third if there was clear direction from the Commissioners-in-charge and the PUB.*

Alt. – Alternate sums up points which include members fifth alternate.

Recommendation based on vote:

1. Gabriela Saldañes-Lopez
2. Karen Spencer
3. Mia Sabanovic
4. Karen Williams

Recommendation based on vote and alternate:

1. Gabriela Saldañes-Lopez
2. Karen Spencer
3. Karen Williams
4. Lisa Reynolds

Process for interviewing Mike Weedall

The subcommittee identified options which include the following:

1. Evaluate candidate based on the application
2. Schedule an interview or
3. Discard the application

After deliberation and vote casting, the subcommittee decided to give Mike Weedall the opportunity to interview.