*The Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs mission is to lead innovation and excellence in public and life safety. Our vision is to inspire and influence a safer Ontario.*

*DEI vision: That every fire department in Ontario is equitable, inclusive, and reflects the*

*diversity of the community they serve.*

Thursday March 10, 2022, 10:00am

**ZOOM Meeting**

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82334308747?pwd=cG5zcDVNOVN3eTkxcEdHeEFKb1FHUT09>

Meeting ID: 823 3430 8747

Passcode: 008208

**Attendees**: Jeremy Parkin, Jeremy Inglis, Nick Ruller, Normand Beauchamp, Todd Aiken, Kalpana Rajgopalan, Ashley Russel-Taylor, Burt Lamoureux

**Regrets**: John Paradis, Vanessa Devolin

1. **Welcome – Committee Chair**

* The chair welcomed and thanked everyone for attending, followed by a quick roundtable of introductions.
* When this committee was founded, it focused on trying to understand DEI issues.
* What do our OAFC members need and want?
* A tool kit was mentioned as an aid to help those chiefs with no background or knowledge to help with DEI recruitment/engagement/community events/etc. and looking at internal and external engagements from a chief perspective.
* Burt Lamoureux has provided the start of a template. We don’t want a 150-page manual, but what do we want for it to become?
* OAFC is bringing in speakers and pushing the education aspect of DEI. How can we also support other groups? That’s the scope we’ve been working with.

1. **Agenda Additions**

* None

1. **Review of Previous Meeting Minutes**

**Motion**: To approve the October 21, 2021 and January 13, 2022 meeting minutes as written.

**Moved by**: Burt Lamoureux

**Seconded by**: Jeremy Inglis

**Carried**

1. **Declaration of Conflict of Interests**

* None.

1. **Terms of Reference**

* The committee reviewed the Term of Reference
* Our focus is to diversify the fire service, as part, the DEI vision statement was adopted into all OAFC committees.
* One year commitment for the term but can be extended if individuals wish to remain.
* Deleted the word “steering” from Section 4 title.
* Deleted the word “others” in Section 4.1 after LQBTQ+ as it is not inclusionary language.
* Replaced wording “equity seeking” to “equity deserving groups”.

Action item: To discuss and think of how to select a co-chair for the committee

1. **Toolkit Program**

* The resources should be available for those looking at DEI issues. DEI must be considered when hiring the best candidates.
* How does a department communicate out to the community that they are hiring and will the staff accept that person? Original thought was a checklist of items to consider helping with the DEI processes. Councils are making this a bigger priority. The problem is most departments don’t understand or know how to implement the lasting change.
* We did a members survey a while ago and found that the underlying consensus was “I don’t care who the applicant is, I just want to hire the best candidate”. Our view is that’s a good way to hire but how do you know the best candidates are even applying and how to increase those numbers? It is not a fire specific issue. How to change the hiring pools to be more reflective.
* One member commented that with a French name trying to get a job in the GTA is impossible. Combine an accent with a foreign name and you won’t get hired.
* The goal in changing departments is to move the conversation from talking about hiring and disrupting the status quo. It is not about quotas but about taking action, being intentional, and taking the DEI and turning it into action. For us, it is talking about biases and about the status quo, and making sure it isn’t a hostile environment.
* Equity shouldn’t be on the backs of the diverse individuals, but everyone. It is not the diverse people’s responsibility to fix the issues but everyone’s. Intentional hiring moving beyond DEI and not on the person but everyone to prove why they’re there.
* DEI focuses on hiring equity deserving groups but another aspect is the cultural element. We need an inclusive culture otherwise front-end initiatives will fail.
* DEI with inclusivity lens towards broader organization (training and equipment). We need to remember the culture aspect as people go through their careers.
* We need to be aware of the terms used. During certification “Grandfathering” was discussed, however it has historical racist connotations that date back to the US Civil War.
* We also lose sight by strictly defining people into one category. What about blended backgrounds or mixed-race individuals? It is something that needs to be considered too.
* Part of disrupting status quo is about making allies and creating new partnerships. How do people find those within the service as allies who both look and don’t look like them?
* Having allies is huge and should be leveraged.
* Another key word discussed at CAFC is ‘privilege’. There is so much to privilege that people don’t realize, i.e., sexual orientation, education, and more than just colour of skin.
* A lot of human trafficking work requires allies for the marginalized communities who are most often affected by this.

1. **Partnership and Event with Downie-Wenjack Fund**

* OAFC tried to partner and DWF is willing to do a virtual training session. We had it set up but poor registration.
* Mark Tishman mentioned rescheduling to June 21 which is national indigenous day in Canada.
* They’ll probably be busy that day, but we could set it up a week before as a lead in which could work.

1. **Next Meeting**

* April 14, 2022
* The chair asked all to read the tool kit, make notes and send to Mark Tishman and chair.

1. **Adjournment**