

FINAL

CITY OF LEBANON
DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION COMMISSION
July 15, 2025— 6:00pm
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL or
Remote Via Microsoft Teams: LebanonNH.gov/LIVE

MEMBERS PRESENT: Richard Ford Burley (Secretary); Keiselim Montas (Public Representative); Bise Wood Saint Eugene (Chair); Devin Wilkie (City Council Representative); Simone Whitecloud (Public Representative Alternate); Tia Winter (Vice-Chair as Acting Chair)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Karen Zook (City Council Alternate)

STAFF PRESENT: Deputy City Manager David Brooks

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3 **1. CALL TO ORDER**
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5 The July 15, 2025 meeting of the Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Commission (DEI) was called to
6 order by Chair Bise Wood Saint Eugene at 6pm.

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8 **2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
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10 **Minutes of June 17, 2025**

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12 Errors were corrected: incorrect dates in items 2 and 4.B.

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14 *A MOTION by Vice-Chair Tia Winter that the DEI Commission approve the minutes of the*
15 *June 17, 2025 meeting of the DEI Commission as amended.*

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17 *Seconded by Councilor Devin Wilkie.*

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19 **The Motion was passed unanimously.*
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21 **3. OLD BUSINESS**
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23 **A. Update on the Status of HB 511**
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25 Councilor Wilkie reported that they heard from the City’s legal counsel about the extent of the
26 conflict between the Ordinance and the law coming into effect, identifying many areas of
27 conflict. Spoke to the Ordinance’s original sponsors to determine what of the original Ordinance
28 could be salvaged, which does not appear to be much. Now the plan is to try to craft a resolution
29 for the City Council to consider that could serve a similar purpose without being in violation of

30 the law. Timing: push off decisions as late as possible to allow for hiring of the new City
31 Manager. Still hoping to have something to present by September, but will report back in the
32 next meeting.

33
34 Commission Member Keyselim Montas clarified that the Ordinance was passed by local voters
35 and are now being overridden by state-level actions.

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37 **B. Update on the Final Environmental Justice Task Force Report**

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39 Councilor Wilkie spoke briefly on the version of the report in the packet, which is the finalized
40 version after integrating feedback from various City Boards and Committees. Changes being so
41 minor, Wilkie suggested that the endorsement given last month by the Commission should still
42 stand. This was met with general agreement.

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46 **4. NEW BUSINESS**

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48 **A. After-Action Report on Juneteenth**

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50 Vice-Chair Tia Winter reported that an estimated 150 people attended the event. Representatives
51 from Bethel attended for the first time this year.

52
53 Commission Member Simone Whitecloud reported that, with the heat, some older community
54 members were struggling and a cooling tent might be a good idea next year. Hannaford was
55 handing out free cold water, which helped. Bethel’s representatives bussed themselves and other
56 attendees in, which might be an idea for expanding the celebration in future years.

57
58 Chair Bise Wood Saint Eugene asked what the key takeaways are and what we could learn for
59 next year. Key takeaways were: that a cooling area would be nice; that more collaboration with
60 Bethel would be desirable, especially further in advance, as well as more collaboration with
61 additional local communities Claremont, in order to better pool resources. To that end, Councilor
62 Wilkie suggested that there are motivated people from Windsor who might like to be a part of it
63 next year. Another takeaway was that attendees were optimistic to discover that Lebanon still has
64 a DEI Commission, and so the event contributed to positive visibility.

65
66 The Chair asked if there was any surveying or data gathering done. There was not, but the
67 consensus was that it could be done next year. Commission Member Whitecloud suggested a
68 raffle in exchange for attendees’ email addresses, in order to create a mailing list to invite and
69 spread the word for the following year.

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71 **5. OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

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73 No public comments were offered.

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75 **6. OTHER BUSINESS**

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77 No other business was discussed.

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79 **7. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

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81 Commission members brainstormed about future agenda items. Commission Member Keyselim
82 Montas suggested a discussion about the purpose and mission of the DEI Commission to help
83 direct efforts in the current political environment. Councilor Devin Wilkie added that the
84 Commission has vacancies and so it might be worth trying to recruit people to join, to avoid
85 potential quorum issues. Chair Bise Wood Saint Eugene would like to help Councilor Wilkie
86 with their efforts on the Ordinance. The Councilor would like to start talking to Lebanon
87 Libraries, Lebanon Arts, Parks and Recreation, and Lebanon Opera House organizers to see if
88 they would all like to coordinate efforts toward a joint multicultural festival next year. Chair
89 Saint Eugene raised the idea of organizing DEI Commission listening sessions, and added that he
90 would be taking suggestions by email as well.

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92
93 **8. OTHER BUSINESS**

94
95 Secretary Ford Burley suggested that the discussion at the next day’s City Council meeting about
96 the potential closure of the bridge might benefit from comment by the Commission on any equity
97 considerations, and asked whether the Commission should discuss submitting a comment.
98 Deputy City Manager David Brooks presented information secondhand from the last Council
99 meeting. “Closing the bridge could save as much as 25% or \$3 million” and take “4-6 months
100 less time” according to the City Engineers. There are other considerations, including an
101 unusually high number of bridges out to bid this year in New Hampshire. They are advising
102 sending out for bid with two options, with and without closure. Because of the Federal Grants
103 Process, all parameters must be set in advance, not after seeing proposals.

104
105 Chair Saint Eugene indicated frustration with the limited amount of time for comment. Councilor
106 Wilkie explained that the bid window is being set by the state, under pressure from challenging
107 negotiations with the railroad, and time limitations on the matching funding, with all parameters
108 to be set by the end of July.

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110 The City has reached out to many stakeholders, including Advance Transit and the School
111 District and others, who would be in attendance at the next day’s meeting offering comment.

112
113 Chair Saint Eugene suggested that, for future items, the City should send out notifications in a
114 more active way. Notices were posted at both libraries, in LebNews, in an article in the Valley
115 News, and other places. It was agreed that the DEI Commission should try to brainstorm and
116 suggest additional ways to notify the public. Commission Member Whitecloud suggested posting
117 flyers at bus stops, for those without internet access.

118
119 Chair Wilkie said that they would welcome individual members submitting their own feedback,
120 but it was agreed that the Commission members did not feel that a comment specifically from the
121 Commission would be appropriate.

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123 **8. ADJOURNMENT**

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125 Chair Bise Wood Saint Eugene adjourned the meeting at 6:40pm.

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128 Respectfully submitted,

129 Richard Ford Burley, DEI Commission Secretary