# Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) Council

Regular Meeting
September 9, 2026 - 6:00 P.M.
Weatogue Room, Simsbury Public Library
725 Hopmeadow Street, Simsbury, Connecticut 06070

## MINUTES (AMENDED)

**Call to Order:**

- The Council was called to order at 6:19 p.m.

**Roll Call:**

- Committee Members: Co-Chair Cheryl Cook, Co-Chair Rose Vigdal, Vice Chair Mala Matacin, Meg Evans, Juan Carlos Aguilar, Carol Clark-Flanagan, Leah Pitfield, Lydia Tedone (virtual), Abigail Vacca

- Liaisons: Selectwoman Diana Yeisley, Town Manager Marc Nelson, Head of Adult Services Chris Carney, Director of Equity and Access Dr. Tayarisha Batchelor

- Volunteers: Rick Brush, Cassie Taylor

**Liaison Reports:**

- **Board of Selectmen:** Selectwoman Yeisley reported that there is a great deal going on in town: Burgers on the Bridge this evening and a public hearing next week to discuss providing Veterans who are TDIU to receive tax exemptions/relief. The Town has received feedback from the public regarding the flock cameras in Simsbury. The Nod Road solar array has been approved by the State. The Board of Selectmen goals were approved and are posted on the website. The Town received grant funding to offset costs to cover special education expenses.
- **Town Manager's Office:** Town Manager Nelson reported that grant funding was given for renovations to the Teen Center at the Library, the Apple Barn, and Eno Memorial Hall. While three vacancies remain, two new officers were hired in the Police Department. The Town is updating the Ethics Code.
- **Simsbury Public Library:** Head of Adult Services Carney reported on the Library events:
    - There are 21 registrations for the Simsbury Civic Forum event on September 16th.

  - The 4th Sweet Social Connections will be held on October 4th. This event is a partnership between the Library, Aging & Disability Commission and Grassroots. The program seeks to help end loneliness among our community members.
  - The Age in Place Expo will be held on September 18th at the Library. This program is a partnership between the Library, the Aging & Disability Commission, and the Senior Center.
  - The Simsbury Public Library is going to host a monthly discussion group on a variety of important topics of the day. Group participants can engage in lively and respectful discussions in a neutral space. The first meeting will be held on September 21st: Domestic Policy & Affairs Discussion Group: Is Civics Important?

- **Board of Education Equity Council:** Dr. Batchelor introduced the prospective DEI student representative. The theme for the SPS school year is Better Together. Data celebrations were shared:
  - Simsbury High School is ranked 10th best High School in CT
  - Grades 3-6 ranked 3rd in our DRG for SBA ELA and Math
  - Grade 11 ranked 1st and Grade 8 ranked 5th in our DRG for NGSS

**Chair(s) Updates:**

- Co-Chair Vigdal shared that we have funding that is being held by First Church. To avoid paying a fee for them to continue to hold the money, the Council discussed potential options.
- Co-Chair Vigdal will submit a summary of DEI priorities that will be included in the Town Annual Report.
- Co-Chair Cook submitted her resignation from the Council.

**Action Item:**

- Review and Approve Meeting Minutes
  - A motion was made to accept the June 1, 2026 minutes as presented by Juan Aguilar. Meg Evans offered a friendly amendment, that was accepted, to the motion: to correct the time and date of the Civic Forum, to September 18th from 6:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m. and the spelling correction of Philip's in the bulleted discussion on the 350th Anniversary of King Philip's War. Leah Pitfield seconded the motion. A discussion was held. The vote to approve the motion with the corrections passed unanimously.
  - A motion was made to accept the August 3, 2026 minutes as presented by Vice Chair Matacin. Juan Aguilar seconded the motion. The vote to approve the motion passed unanimously.

**New Business:**

- A motion was made to recommend Yusra Ali to be appointed by the Board of Selectmen as the DEI Council Student Representative by Vice Chair Matacin. Leah Pitfield seconded the motion. The vote to approve the motion passed unanimously.
- A discussion was held regarding creating a 501(c)(3) Juneteenth Nonprofit Organization. The pros and cons of this were discussed. Meg Evans made a motion to adopt the concept

of creating a 501(c)(3) Farmington Valley Juneteenth Nonprofit Organization. Co-Chair Cook seconded the motion. A discussion was held. The vote to approve the motion passed unanimously.

- Hispanic Heritage Month starts on Tuesday. Hartford Performs will be working with Simsbury Public Schools to make a mural at Simsbury High School and be guest readers at each of the elementary schools. Hispanic Heritage Month will be added to the May, 2027 DEI Council Agenda in order to have enough time to plan for a 2027 DEI sponsored event.
- The Simsbury Civic Forum is being held on September 16th. Please encourage people to register for the event. We are looking forward to a great conversation regarding Civic Duty. Three Simsbury residents will share their thoughts on the topic and Braver Angels will facilitate the discussion among all participants.
- There will be a Let's Talk for Native American Heritage Month. She will use the 350th Anniversary of King Philip's War as a segway to Indigenous history and appreciation in Simsbury. Sunday, November 8th is a possible date.

**Adjourn:**

- Juan Aguilar moved to adjourn the meeting. Vice Chair Matacin seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 7:56 p.m. by a unanimous vote.

**Next Meeting:**

- October 5, 2026, 6:00 P.M., Weatogue Room, Simsbury Public Library