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

AGENDA

Call to Order

1) Public Audience

2) Liaison Reports
   a. Board of Selectmen
   b. Town Manager's Office
   c. Simsbury Public Library
   d. Board of Education Equity Council

3) Chair(s) Update
   a. Financial Update

4) Review and Approve Regular Meeting Minutes
   a. June 1, 2026
   b. August 3, 2026

5) New Business
   a. Recommend Yusra Ali for Appointment to the Board of Selectmen
   b. 501(c)(3) Juneteenth Nonprofit Organization Discussion
   c. Hispanic Heritage Month Discussion
   d. Simsbury Civic Forum Update
   e. 350th Anniversary of King Philip's War Update (Let's Talk for Native American Heritage Month)
   f. Discuss Board of Finance FY2026 Annual Report Submission

6) Old Business
   a. Adopt DEI Council Logo

Adjourn
Next Meeting: October 5, 2026, 6:00 P.M., Weatogue Room, Simsbury Public Library

Spirit Council Funds Summary

Date	Source	Type	Amount
2/23/2022	Greater Hartford Gives Foundation	Contribution	$10,000.00
10/12/2023	Farmington Bank Community Foundation	Contribution	$1,500.00
11/18/2024	CT Council for Philanthropy	Contribution	$500.00
2022–6/2026	Bank interest credits	Interest	$12.19
	Total Contributions		**$12,012.19**
	Total Expenses		**$10,211.00**
	Funds Remaining		**$1,801.19**

First Church is happy to continue managing these funds.
Initially there was a $500 stipend to manage the fund and it was paid.

Check 04/26/2022	*First Church of Christ Operating*	*Stipend*	*$500*
Check 08/31/2022	*First Church of Christ Operating*	*Reimb Admin Fees/J. Sedor*	*$500*

If we close out the fund this year, they will not need to add a management fee.
If the fund remains open First Church will charge the $500 management fee going forward.
Contact: Shannon Lindsay at First Church 860-651-3593 x104
slindsay@fccsimsbury.org

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) Council

Regular Meeting
June 1 2026 - 6:00 P.M.
Weatogue Room, Simsbury Public Library
725 Hopmeadow Street, Simsbury, Connecticut 06070

RECEIVED
TOWN OF SIMSBURY, CT
2026 JUN -8 P 6:59
TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE

MINUTES

Call to Order:

- The Council was called to order at 6:02 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, Ed LaMontagne, Leah Pitfield, Yesenia Rivera-Ortiz, Lydia Tedone, Devonna Hall

- Liaisons: Town Manager Marc Nelson, Selectwoman Diana Yeisley, Simsbury Public Library Director Lisa Miceli, Simsbury Public Schools Director of Equity and Access Dr. Tayarisha Batchelor, Management Specialist Franklyn Barrueco

- Volunteer: Melissa Smith, Cassie Taylor (virtual)

Liaison Reports:

- **Board of Selectmen:** Updates were provided by Selectwoman Diana Yeisley:
  - June is Pride and Accessibility Month. Today the Town celebrated Pride Month by raising the Pride Flag and supporting the Pride Picnic.
  - During a meeting with Town officials and representatives, the Simsbury High School Graduation will take place on the stage at the Simsbury Performing Arts Center. Juneteenth was not approved to be held on the stage by the Fire Marshall, at this time.
  - The Town Budget Referendum passed. The projected tax increase is lower than originally projected: 1.97%
  - An AARP grant was awarded to provide Mobi Matts to increase accessibility at Town events that are held on grass surfaces. Grant funding will also support improvements for the teen center, Apple Barn, and Eno Hall.
- **Town Manager's Office:** Updates were provided by Town Manager Marc Nelson:
  - The tax rate increase has decreased over the past 5 years. This year will have the lowest increase of 1.97%
  - A surplus will be added to the general fund to be used for capital projects and mill rate relief.

- The Town will continue look for efficiency in local government.
- The Sustainability Committee will now have direct support by the Town Manager's Office as of July 1, 2026.
- The Town Manager thanked the Council for all the important work that they do for the Town.

- **Simsbury Public Library:** Updates were provided by Director Miceli:
  - Over 300 people attended the Pride Picnic. It was a great success.
  - Summer Reading Program begins June 22nd: This year's theme is Simsbury Shines.
  - The Strategic Survey has closed and analysis has begun. Primary results yield that people shared that they want to live in a friendly, supportive, helpful, and inclusive community. Results will be shared with the Board of Selectmen and the Council.
  - A Little Free Food Panty will be available at the Library. Food donations will be collected for people to take as needed. The concept is similar to Free Libraries that are around town.
- **Board of Education Equity Council:** Updates were provided by Dr. Batchelar:
  - June 17th: SHS seniors will participate in Grad Walks at their elementary schools.
  - June 18th: SHS graduation
  - June 19th: A portion of the professional development for Simsbury Public Schools staff on June 19th will be learning about Juneteenth, how it represents the freedom of Black Americans, and the end of slavery in this country. The professional development will honor its significance and focus on inclusion. In addition, restorative practice professional development will be provided with representatives from each of the seven schools.

Co-Chair Updates:

- At the last Council meeting, information regarding two potential candidates to fill the one vacancy was provided to members. Juan Carlos Aguilar organized an online voting process and shared the results. The Council voted to appoint the candidate with the most votes to fill the vacancy.
- Co-Chair Rose Vigdal moved for Abigail Vacca to fill the Council vacancy. Juan Carlos Aguilar seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Action Item:

- Ed LaMontagne moved to accept the minutes from the May 4, 2026 meeting, as presented. Carol Clark-Flanagan seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed. Yesenia Rivera-Ortiz abstained.

New Business:

- Juneteenth Discussion:
  - We are prepared to have a great evening of music, performers, vendors, food trucks, and fireworks. We have surpassed our fundraising goal for the event.
  - The event is being publicized on the radio, bill boards, and social media.

- Volunteers to help with the event are still needed. If interested, please notify Dr. Batchelar.
- Selectwoman Yeisley and Town Manager Nelson are working with the Fire Chief in attempts to seek permission for Juneteenth to use the stage that will be used during SHS Graduation. Anyone who supports these efforts are encouraged to reach out to Selectwoman Yeisley and Town Manager Marc Nelson.
- Lawn signs to publicize the event are available and can be displayed on Town property two weeks prior to the event and private property (with permission) at anytime.

- 350th Anniversary of King Phillip's War Discussion: November is Native American History Month. This year, we should be respectful and honor the history of King Phillip's War and the direct impact it had on the Indigenous tribes in Simsbury. A request to facilitate a Let's Talk to honor Indigenous people in November by Natalie Montoria Barnes, Programs Manager for the DEI Institute at Williams College was made. The Council should consult with the Historical Society to consider collaborating on this event.
- The Council is interested in hosting this event. Yesenia Rivera-Ortiz will be the point person from the Council to work directly with Cassie Taylor to organize this event. A motion was made to sponsor and start planning a November event to honor 350th Anniversary of King Phillip's War by Yesenia Rivera-Ortiz. Juan Carlos Aguilar seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Old Business:

- Simsbury Civic Forum Update
  - Suggestions for the topic and structure of the first forum were discussed. The preference is to have a local topic rather than a national topic. A discussion was held regarding the type of conversations to facilitate: information sessions or collaborative conversations regarding topics that people have diverse opinions.
  - The first forum will be held on September 15th from 6:30 – 8:00 P.M. in the Tariffville Room in the Simsbury Public Library facilitated by Braver Angels.
- Honor Flight Recap & Adopt DEI Council Logo: Juan Carlos Aguilar moved to table the two items to the next meeting. Lydia Tedone seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Adjourn:

- Juan Carlos Aguilar moved to adjourn the meeting. Leah Pitfield seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 8:04 p.m. by a unanimous vote.

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) Council

Regular Meeting
August 3, 2026 - 6:00 P.M.
Weatogue Room, Simsbury Public Library
725 Hopmeadow Street, Simsbury, Connecticut 06070

MINUTES

Call to Order:

- Co-Chair Vigdal called the meeting to order at 6:02 P.M.

Roll Call:

- Members: Co-Chair Cheryl Cook, Co-Chair Rose Vigdal, Vice Chair Mala Matacin, Abigail Vacca, Leah Pitfield, Lydia Tedone
- Liaisons: Town Manager Marc Nelson, Selectwoman Diana Yeisley, Management Specialist Franklyn Barrueco
- Volunteer: Rick Brush

Liaison Reports:

- Board of Selectmen
    - Selectwoman Yeisley informed the Council that there is a Selectmen meeting next Monday where they will talk about capital bonding and finalize their goals for the term.
    - She discussed the recent Simsbury Volunteer Ambulance Association ambulance lease agreement, the approval of the Head of Children's Services/Deputy Library Director (Stephanie Prato's promotion), ribbon cutting for the Simsbury Performing Arts Center bandshell project, and Nod Road proposed solar array project.
    - She reported that the Library is finishing their review of the results from the Strategic Plan survey.
- Town Manager's Office
    - Manager Nelson informed the Council that his team is going to start next year's budget and capital planning shortly.
    - Former Library Business & Career Center Coordinator Cyn Thomas is now working part-time in the Town Manager's Office as the Town's Business Development Coordinator and she is staff support to the Economic Development Commission.
    - Human Resources Intern Jose will be starting in late August.

- There is a scheduled meeting later in the week to debrief on the 2026 Juneteenth Celebration with stakeholders, officials, and Council leadership.

Chair(s) Updates:

- Co-Chair Cook shared the Valley Life article on the 2026 Juneteenth Celebration.
- The Council discussed the student representative membership slot and will seek a new representative.

Due to a lack of quorum, the June 1, 2026 Regular Meeting Minutes were not reviewed.

New Business:

- 501(c)(3) Juneteenth Nonprofit Organization Discussion
  - The Council discussed various possibilities and logistics regarding establishing a nonprofit organization focused on serving as the fiscal agent for future Juneteenth Celebrations. The Council further discussed different names for the organization.
- The Hispanic Heritage Month Discussion was not discussed due to key members not being present.

Old Business:

- Juneteenth Recap
  - The Council discussed the location and availability of food trucks, the fireworks finale, and the need to have more t-shirts for sale.
- Simsbury Civic Forum Update (Wednesday, September 16th at 6:00 P.M. in the Library)
  - Volunteer Brush outlined the scope and discussed the logistics for the event.
- 350th Anniversary of King Phillip's War Update not discussed due to key members not being present.
- Honor Flight Recap
  - Co-Chair Vigdal mentioned that it was a great event where more than twelve (12) people attended.
- Adopt DEI Council Logo
  - The Council discussed redesign the logo to include more diversity.

Adjourn:

- Co-Chair Vigdal adjourned the meeting at 7:19 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Franklyn Barrueco
Management Specialist

OFFICE OF THE TOWN MANAGER

Marc S. Nelson, MPA

MEMORANDUM

To: Cheryl Cook, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) Council Co-Chair; Rose Vigdal, DEI Council Co-Chair; Mala Matacin, DEI Council Vice Chair
From: Marc Nelson, Town Manager
cc: Franklyn Barrueco, Management Specialist
Date: September 9, 2026
Subject: Farmington Valley Juneteenth Celebration Non-Profit Organization Roadmap

---

As you know, Juneteenth National Independence Day was recognized as a federal holiday on June 17, 2021. On June 14, 2023, Connecticut established Juneteenth as a state holiday. Since 2021, the DEI Council has held a multi-town, regional celebration of the Juneteenth holiday hosted at the Simsbury Performing Arts Center (SPAC). This summer's event was a tremendous success, thank you for all the work the Council and volunteers did to make it happen.

For some time, the Simsbury Performing Arts Center has graciously agreed to act as the Fiscal Agent for the DEI Council's financial side of the event management, paying vendors and holding deposits, and so on. Unfortunately, due to their own growth and expanding business plan, SPAC can no longer act in that capacity.

Because our continuing hope is that the annual Juneteenth Celebration will remain a regional event, supported by other towns and communities, the Council may wish to investigate, in co-ordination with the other host towns, establishing a legal entity to serve as the fundraising and fiscal sponsor entity for the event and any related activities. Such an entity, once formed, could apply for IRS 501 (C)(3) status and, hopefully, continue to expand fundraising and private sponsorships.

The DEI Council has asked staff to provide the broad strokes of the steps that would be required to accomplish this, assuming the Board of Selectmen approve. We believe it important to note at the concept is for the establishment of a *single-purpose-entity* whose governance would be shared amongst the participating Towns. Assuming the DEI Council views the concept favorably, the initial step would be a presentation to the Board of Selectmen describing the vision, including the ability to raise private donations, and the desire to assure the sustainability and continuation of the Region's premier Juneteenth celebration.

Here are some of the key steps required. We would obtain legal support for the process once approved and this list is provided solely for planning purposes at this point.

DRAFT

1. Choose and reserve the business legal name[1] (ex. *Farmington Valley Juneteenth Committee*, LLC) and confirm name availability with the Connecticut Secretary of the State (CSOTS).[2]
    a. Do a trademark search to make sure the name is not trademarked.
2. Identify the physical address of the business. Every business formed in Connecticut must have a physical location including street address (not a P.O. Box).[3]
3. Decide the type of business you will form; most likely a **domestic non-stock corporation**.[4]
    a. A potential business category could be "Promoters of Performing Arts, Sports, and Similar Events without Facilities" (North American Industry Classification System [NAICS] Code 711320).
4. File a Certificate of Incorporation ("Certificate") for a Domestic Nonstock Corporation with the CSOTS.[5]
    a. Note that an Organization and First Report form must also be filed to record the addresses and officers and directors of the corporation within 90 days of the filing date of the Certificate.
    b. The Certificate is important for a future 501(c)(3) designation, because this organizing document needs to contain the appropriate charitable purpose and dissolution language required for federal tax exemption.
5. Register the business with the CSOTS, including email, physical address, NAICS code, and identify a business or individual as the "agent."
    a. It's best practice to create a separate email address for the business.
    b. A business agent is a person or company in CT that can receive legal documents from the State on behalf of your business.

Links are embedded in the electronic version of this memorandum solely for convenience and will direct you to websites not run by the Town, but if you have any difficulty accessing any of this information please let us know and we will assist.

Additional Resources:

Business.CT.gov Resource Center

8 Steps to Start a Small Business

---

[1] Currently, it costs $60 to file a new business name with the State of Connecticut.
[2] As a non-stock corporation, the nonprofit's legal name should end with words like "Corporation", "Incorporated"; or abbreviations like "Corp.", or "Inc.".
[3] The municipality the nonprofit is based in may have additional requirements that you would need to be aware of.
[4] There are different forms and fees associated with the type of business formed. For more information on domestic non-stock corporations, please click here.
[5] Currently, a $50 filing fee applies.

Simsbury Civic Forum

A COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

As Citizens, Do We Have a Civic Duty?



Civic Engagement Matters

Join us for a community conversation about our civic responsibilities, the importance of engaging with one another, and what civic duty means to each of us.



Simsbury Public Library
725 Hopmeadow St.
Simsbury, CT 06070
Wednesday, September 16, 2026
6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

Register by scanning the QR code or visiting the September events calendar.

simsbury.calendarevents.com

Presented by the Simsbury Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Council in partnership with the Simsbury Public Library.