



TOWN OF WESTFORD  
**DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION  
COMMITTEE**

TOWN HALL  
55 Main Street  
WESTFORD, MA 01886  
Telephone (978) 692-5501 Fax (978) 399-2557

**MEETING AGENDA**

Wednesday, Sept 29, 2021

7:00 PM

Meeting will be held virtually via Zoom and Recorded  
Registration instructions for remote attendance are below

1. 7:00 PM **Call to Order**
2. 7:05 PM **Open Forum**
3. 7:15 PM **Review and Approve July 28, 2021 and Aug. 25, 2021 Meeting Minutes**
4. 7:25 PM **Review Committee/Subcommittee Chair Responsibilities**

From training materials quoted by Westford Town Manager: "The Open Meeting Law specifies that the chair is responsible for determining what goes on a meeting agenda, G.L. c. 30A, §20(b), and for keeping order at the meeting, G.L. c. 30A, §20(g). Otherwise, the chair has no greater rights than any other member. While, in theory, a chair can refuse to place items on an agenda or refuse to allow a member to speak, these practices are discouraged. Rather, the chair should work with the other members to ensure that they all have a voice on the board or committee. However, the chair does have a degree of discretion to exclude matters from the agenda, which can be exercised in their reasonable judgment."

5. 7:30 PM **Funding Opportunities For DEI Committee Work**
  - Westford Mass Cultural Council grant application for cultural events
  - ARPA Funds: Westford is receiving funds from American Rescue Plan re: lost local revenue or any COVID-related expenses.

6. 7:40 PM **Update/Review/Approval of Subcommittee Priorities (15 mins each)**

**School & Edu. Subcommittee- Haining Bao/ Derek Lo**

- Update Regarding WPS Survey
- Discussion Regarding Grey Ghost Mascot (see **Exhibit A**, attached, for Superintendent's 9/25/21 Statement Regarding Mascot)
- Discussion Regarding Face Painting At WPS Events
- Request for More Members to Join School & Edu. Subcommittee

**Town Policy Subcommittee -- Nancy Cook/Anjali Rajput**

- Questions for the Town HR department (See **Exhibit B**, attached)
- Websites for posting open positions
- Status of DEI Committee's Social Media Page
- Discussion of Indigenous Peoples Day

**Community Outreach Subcommittee -- Omar Laurino/Corinne Badenhoff**

- Discuss DEI Public Relations Guidelines

7. 8:25 PM **Schedule Next Meeting(s)**

8. 8:30 PM **Adjournment**

**To access the virtual meeting remotely:**

Register in advance for this meeting with following link (click or copy and paste URL into your browser):

[https://westfordma-gov.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_B\\_eZVp-iRvy6xSQj7pnoqg](https://westfordma-gov.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_B_eZVp-iRvy6xSQj7pnoqg)

After registering, you will receive an email confirmation email about joining the meeting.



## EXHIBIT A TO 9/29/21 DEI COMMITTEE MEETING AGENDA

Published on *Westford Public Schools* (<https://www.westfordk12.us>)

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## WA Mascot Update...WPS 9-25-21

Recently, the news cycle took an interest in a specific conversation that has been taking place in our community for a little while although it seemed to be presented as new information. For some people, it may feel as though this conversation has actually been taking place for too long already. To those people, whether they seek change or not, I ask for continued patience; as Superintendent, I believe strongly that it should not be taken lightly and deserves significant investment of attention.

For anyone not aware of what I might be referring to, WA Principal Mr. Antonelli recently presented an update to the School Committee regarding the current WA mascot, the Grey Ghost. The news reported much more than the actual conversation at the School Committee meeting and I was informed that it ignited some rather hostile local online chatter. While we spend a lot of time trying to educate our students on the importance of their digital footprints, I dare say many of our adults might still need to consider the impact of their online commentary. Arguments via social media tend to do more damage to reputations than actually change the minds of the people with whom they are arguing.

This week, I engaged our WPS DEI Team in the conversation in order to solicit their perspective and feedback. Even within a group of individuals passionate about creating spaces where multiple perspectives and experiences can be shared and heard, there was not an immediate consensus. Where some see clarity in a specific decision, others see complexity. We are going to continue our conversation over the next month and I will be sharing a more definitive response as to what I believe we should be doing with the School Committee in November at the latest.

In the meantime, if you did not see the statement that School Committee Chair Chris Sanders and I shared with some of the news outlets seeking comments, I wanted to include it for you here:

*Our community is engaged in an ongoing conversation about our high school mascot, which was adopted in 1959. The School Committee was briefed by the principal of our high school this past Monday about the various stories that have circulated describing the origin of the Grey Ghost mascot.*

*While there may be a lack of clarity around the true origin of the mascot, there is no ambiguity that Westford Public Schools must be a welcoming place for all students and families. And if our mascot is preventing students from feeling like this is their school district or their community, then we obviously have more work to do.*

*Self-reflection and a drive for self-improvement are hallmarks of both good educators and good students. In that spirit, the School Committee and the Superintendent are committed to listening to the full range of diverse voices in our community, and to ensuring that we are creating a culture of belonging for all students and families in Westford.*

Sincerely,

Chris

Dr. Christopher Chew

Superintendent of Schools

Westford, MA

**Source URL:** <https://www.westfordk12.us/district/superintendent-schools/news/wa-mascot-updatewps-9-25-21>

## EXHIBIT B TO 9/29/21 DEI COMMITTEE MEETING AGENDA

### Interview Questions From DEI Perspective For Westford HR Department

*(Ask one or two questions as applicable to the position and consistent with all candidates.)*

1. What are your thoughts about diversity, equity and inclusion, and what does the concept “diversity, equity and inclusion” mean to you?
2. How would you handle a person who needs to interact with you for business, but with whom you are having difficulty communicating due to language barriers, disabilities or any other reason? Can you please provide some examples from past experiences if you have encountered such a situation? If not, what will be your approach in the future if such a situation occurs?
3. What is your approach to dealing with discussions about potentially difficult topics, such as race, religion, politics, or sexual orientation? Please provide a specific example if you can.
4. How did you handle a situation where you thought that your colleague was being culturally insensitive or made remarks that did not align with your personal values?
5. Town of Westford and its policies are committed to supporting diversity, equity and inclusion. What can you do in your position to help advance/implement these policies?
6. If you found a problem area where these views were not being supported how would you acknowledge the issue, attempt to solve it, and make sure the issue did not reoccur?