



Town Council Committee on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging

The Orono Town Council articulates the following core priorities as it undertakes its overarching mission:

1. Promote an environment that supports diversity and a strong sense of belonging within the community;
2. Identify and encourage widespread and diverse citizen participation in the local governance process;
3. Select and resource inclusive and equitable municipal practices and service delivery.

Further, the Town Council acknowledges that the community's voice and participation, especially from those members who have historically not been represented or heard in the governance process, are critical components in meeting these priorities. In order to ensure that all voices are heard and Orono's duly elected municipal officers understand the needs, vision, and values of the entire community as it undertakes its legislative responsibilities, the Town Council hereby creates a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Committee as follows:

Committee Charge: The Committee's work shall be focused on the needs, experiences, and resources of the Orono community and will:

1. Advise the Town Council regarding its ordinances, policies, and practices through feedback aimed at ensuring that they promote the goal of accepting, respecting, and valuing differences including attributes such as age, race, gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender expression, sexual identity, ability, language, family circumstances and cultural backgrounds.
2. Create greater awareness about opportunities to advance issues of age, race, gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender expression, sexual identity, ability, language, family circumstances and cultural backgrounds, to ensure concerns are heard and considered when creating Town Council policy and ordinances.
3. Identify methods for ensuring that the systems in place that encourage community members to participate in the governance process are inclusive and, further, to encourage those with historical barriers to participate.
4. Act as a resource to Town staff, assisting as requested, as staff seeks to ensure equitable and inclusive operations and service delivery.
5. Understand and promote the Town's internal processes for addressing individual operational concerns and complaints against employees.

Committee Membership: The Committee shall consist of between 10-12 community members. Committee members shall be appointed by the Town Council based upon their experiences, perspectives related to the Orono community, and with an overall goal of ensuring diversity within the membership. Given the nature and focus of this Committee, the Town Council's preference is to seat members who reside in Orono; however,

applicants who have particular perspectives or experiences that are not found within the resident applicant pool and who work, study, or worship within the boundaries of the Town of Orono may, at the discretion of the Town Council, be appointed. All committee members shall be appointed by the Town Council to serve three year terms except for the initial members appointed immediately following the creation of the Committee which shall be for up to: four members serving three year terms, four members serving two year terms, and four members serving 1 year terms. Once seated, the Committee may provide recommendations regarding new members; however, the Town Council remains the appointing body. The Council shall work to include members with a wide variety of perspectives and interests on the Committee. Application for membership shall be made on the forms used for all other Town committees.

Given the importance of this work, it is important that those community members who are selected to serve fully participate in the Committee's meetings. While circumstances arise that create conflicts with volunteer service, the Town Council reserves the right to declare seats vacant and replace members due to an unreasonable pattern of absences. Individuals who are invested in this work, but unable to commit to attending routine monthly meetings should consider participating as a member of the public.

Committee Function:

1. In accordance with State Law, all meetings of the Committee shall be public proceedings, noticed in accordance with Town policy, open for the public to attend, and meeting minutes archived. As the Committee is not charged with dealing with confidential topics, all records in the possession of the Town or Committee members related to the Committee's work are public records and subject to the Town's archival procedures.
2. The Committee shall be charged with selecting its Chair or Co-Chairs, decision-making processes, and by-laws (if desired) as long as said procedures are not inconsistent with Town rules.
3. A Town Councillor, appointed by the Town Council, and Town Manager shall serve as technical advisors to the Committee and liaisons to the Town Council and staff, and provide support to the Committee as needed.
4. The Town Council liaison will provide monthly reports of general Committee activity with the Committee itself reporting directly to the Town Council Community Development Committee quarterly, or more frequently if needed by the Committee.
5. This initial Committee assignment shall be to review the Committee Charge and develop a general work plan to discuss with the Town Council Community Development Committee. As with other Town Committees, having a general work plan shall not be construed as limiting the Committee from identifying time sensitive or higher priority issues to work on or fielding requests for support from the Town Council and/or staff.
6. Since the Committee's role is to work collaboratively and as an advisory body, there is no budget or financial resources assigned; however, the Town will support the work of the Committee within the constraints of the approved operating budget.

Committee Timeline: After the creation of the Committee, the Town will promote an opportunity for community members to apply to serve. After appointment, the Town will convene the first meeting of the Committee at which the group will select its Chair or Co-Chairs and determine a meeting schedule. Approximately one year after the initial meeting, the Town Council shall meet with the Committee to formally review the Committee Charge, accomplishments, and address any concerns.