

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

SOCIAL EQUITY COUNCIL | POLICY GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING - **DRAFT**

JUNE 20, 2024 Meeting 10:00 A.M. - 11:00 A.M.

Virtual Meeting via Microsoft TEAMS

1) Call to Order

The meeting commenced with a call to order at 10:04 A.M. by Chairman Edwin Shirley. He welcomed Council Chairperson Comer, Director Clay, staff members, fellow committee members, and invited guests from the Personnel Committee. Edwin noted that this was a regularly scheduled meeting of the Policy and Governance Committee and proceeded to take attendance.

2) Attendance

Kyle Abercrombie  
Avery Gaddis  
Michael Jefferson  
Ojala Naeem - Absent  
Edwin Shirley  
Shirley Skyers-Thomas  
Corrie Betts  
Andrea Hawkins - Absent  
Kelli-Marie Vallieres

Staff: Ginne-Rae Clay, Executive Director, Karen Colebut, Paralegal Specialist, Kristina Diamond.

3) Approval of the Policy/Governance Committee - May 23, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Edwin Shirley requested a motion for the approval of the March 21, 2024, meeting minutes.

Motion – by Kyle Abercrombie  
Second – by Michael Jefferson  
In Favor – All  
Opposed – None  
Abstentions – None  
Motion passed unanimously.

4) Approval of the Personnel Committee – April 24, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Michael Jefferson initiated the motion to approve the minutes. However, Andrea Comer raised a point of order, noting that Councilwoman Vallieres had to step off, potentially

affecting the quorum. Despite this, Councilman Betts briefly joined the meeting before disconnecting again. Shirley Skyers-Thomas seconded the motion. The discussion faced interruptions due to Councilman Betts' intermittent presence. Ultimately, the committee faced challenges in proceeding smoothly with the approval process due to quorum issues.

## 5) Review Bylaws

Edwin Shirley began by acknowledging that the committee had initiated the bylaw review process the previous month, aiming to finalize additions and changes for presentation to the full Council on June 25th. Significant changes, mandated by recent legislation and presented by Kristina Diamond, had been under review for several weeks. Shirley expressed gratitude for the contributions of Director Clay, Kristina Diamond, Chairperson Comer, Councilman Abercrombie, Chairman Jefferson, and the Personnel Committee.

Councilman Kyle Abercrombie suggested a thorough review of the changes before voting, highlighting a potential discrepancy in the version he received. Director Clay confirmed that the latest version, sent on Tuesday, included updates from recent office hours. Chairperson Andrea Comer requested that the latest version be shared with the full Council. Shirley agreed and asked Director Clay to emphasize the legislative changes. Kristina Diamond reviewed key legislative additions, including the expansion of Council membership to 17 members, the inclusion of new rules for the Executive Director's removal, the creation of a final review board, and updates to the roles and duties of the Council and the Executive Director.

Focus was put on the language used in the bylaws compared to the legislation, with Edwin Shirley questioning the use of "role" versus "duty." Kyle Abercrombie expressed concern that several of his previous suggestions were not incorporated and proposed reviewing the changes point by point, which Michael Jefferson felt was too time-consuming given his schedule. Jefferson also objected to the phrase "for any reason" in the bylaws regarding the removal of the Executive Director, emphasizing the need for clarity to avoid unlawful removals based on discrimination. Kristina Diamond clarified that the exact language in the legislation was incorporated into the bylaws. After discussion, Abercrombie suggested striking the problematic phrase, while Shirley and Jefferson debated whether this was permissible. Diamond confirmed that all mandated legislative changes were included, but Jefferson remained concerned about potential legal issues, suggesting the need for more precise language to ensure compliance with the law.

Shirley raised concerns about the procedural steps needed for changing bylaw language and whether legislative notification was required. Abercrombie suggested that legislative permission wasn't needed for bylaw modifications but would be necessary for statute changes. Diamond emphasized that legal clarification was required. Vallieres noted that Connecticut is an at-will state, suggesting using appropriate language regarding employment termination.

Jefferson strongly opposed the phrase "for any reason" in the bylaws, arguing for clearer language to prevent potential unlawful removals, while Abercrombie and Shirley debated

the necessity of verbatim statute inclusion. Shirley and Abercrombie both agreed that more precise language was needed and discussed the possibility of holding another meeting to finalize changes.

Skyers-Thomas suggested clarity on renewable terms for council members and supported removing the phrase "for any reason." Gaddis joined the meeting via phone, confirming his presence. The committee acknowledged the urgency to finalize the bylaws by July 1 to avoid audit findings and agreed on the need for another meeting to address unresolved issues.

Chair Edwin Shirley enquired whether certain language from the bylaws should be removed, given that statutes would supersede these bylaws. Michael Jefferson emphasized that the statute would override the bylaws and advised against including specific language until further clarity was obtained. Edwin Shirley proposed voting on the document with the condition that the contentious language be removed.

Avery Gaddis expressed his preference for a clean, thoroughly reviewed document and stated he would not vote for the current version. Shirley Skyers-Thomas and Michael Jefferson were willing to proceed with the document if the specified language was removed. Kyle Abercrombie and Avery Gaddis both insisted on a clean document free of highlights and strikethroughs. There was an agreement to call a special meeting to finalize a cleaned-up document, incorporating necessary changes suggested by Abercrombie, before the July 1st deadline. The committee aimed to ensure thoroughness and accuracy in the bylaws amidst the scrutiny they faced.

Chair Edwin Shirley initiated the voting process on the document, with mixed responses from the committee. Kyle Abercrombie and Avery Gaddis opposed, while Edwin Shirley, Michael Jefferson, and Shirley Skyers-Thomas initially supported it. Andrea Comer sought clarification on the voting results, which led to further discussion. Michael Jefferson explained that some committee members may have voted prematurely. Shirley Skyers-Thomas confirmed her support for the document, provided it would be available for review before final approval. Avery Gaddis inquired about responsibility for distributing the document, to which Edwin Shirley confirmed it would be handled by Director Clay. Shirley Skyers-Thomas later rescinded her vote, expressing a desire to review the full document before making a final decision.

Kyle Abercrombie emphasized the need for a special meeting to review a version of the bylaws with only mandated changes before the full council meeting on June 25th. Kristina Diamond clarified the legislative requirements for the bylaws, which need to specify duties retained by council members and those delegated to the executive director. The committee agreed to prepare a clean document with mandated changes and to schedule another meeting for further review.

## 6) Review SEP Scoring Rubric and Updated Criteria

Edwin Shirley initiated the discussion, inviting Director Ginne-Rae Clay to present her updates. Clay detailed the scoring rubric and clarified recent changes in the criteria, aiming to ensure a comprehensive review of social equity plans. Andrea Comer questioned the equal weighting of different aspects of the rubric, such as letters of support and community needs assessments. Clay explained the rationale behind the uniform scoring, emphasizing the interdependence of various plan components. Comer also suggested using broader terms like "food insecurity" and "offender reentry" instead of specific goals, to avoid steering applicants toward certain actions. Clay confirmed these changes were incorporated. After further discussion, the committee moved to approve the rubric, with Shirley Skyers-Thomas proposing the motion, Avery Gaddis seconding it, and members including Kyle Abercrombie voting in favor. The rubric was approved to be presented to the full council on June 25th.

Motion to approve the Social Equity Plan rubric as presented:

Motion – by Shirley Skyers-Thomas

Second – by Avery Gaddis

In Favor – All

Opposed – None

Abstentions – None

Motion passed unanimously.

7) For the Good of the Order

No further matters were raised for discussion.

8) Adjourn

Avery Gaddis called a motion to adjourn.

Motion – by Avery Gaddis

Second – by Kyle Abercrombie

In Favor – All

Opposed – None

Abstentions – None

Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:19 AM.



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**Date: June 20, 2024**

**RE: Minutes: May SEC Policy/Governance Committee Minutes (Draft)**

**Please be advised that the above-referenced typewritten minutes are a true and accurate description of the proceedings obtained from the recorded conversations to the extent that the audio could be clearly heard/understood. Portions that could not be heard/understood have been notated with a (an “inaudible” or “?...”).**

**Sincerely,**

*Brenda LaFleur*

**Brenda LaFleur**  
**Owner, A Plus Reporting Service, LLC**

**I certify that this document is a true and accurate description of the proceedings obtained from the recorded conversations contained in the listed audio file.**

*Boden Truitt*

**Boden Truitt,**  
**Transcriber**