



General Government & Social Services Committee

June 15, 2021

Summary and Motions

Committee chair, Council Member Susan Lamb, called the meeting to order at 1:04 p.m. Committee members Vice Mayor Steve Kay and Council Members Richard Moloney, James Brown, Hannah LeGris, Liz Sheehan, Fred Brown, Whitney Baxter, Jennifer Reynolds, and Kathy Plomin attended the meeting. Council Member Josh McCurn attended as a non-voting member.

Note: Item IV. *LFUCG Diversity, Equity, and Inclusions Statement* was reported to the council on Tuesday, June 22, 2021, at Work Session.

I. Approval of April 13, 2021 Committee Summary

Motion by Plomin to approve the April 13, 2021, General Government & Social Services Committee summary; seconded by Reynolds. The motion passed without dissent.

II. CivicLex Public Comment Proposal – Preliminary Findings Update

Richard Young, Director of CivicLex, provided a preliminary update on their comprehensive evaluation of the city's public comment process. He explained how they are specifically interested in hearing from folks who are somewhat or likely to engage with LFUCG. They released a survey on April 22, 2021, which closed on June 18, 2021. The survey was shared through direct contacts, media channels, posters, social media advertisements, etc., plus gift cards were used as incentives. They've collected almost 1,000 responses to date. He reviewed the demographics of the respondents, including education level, gender, race, and age. He also shared several opinions collected in the survey such as how residents primarily email council members to engage with city government and that many people have never given public comment. Young said about 50 percent of respondents believe LFUCG takes their input somewhat seriously. As far as new methods to provide input, the most popular option was for there to be a way to provide comments outside of meetings and have them entered into the record. They plan to survey staff and eventually present a final report.

Plomin and Young talked about CivicLex collecting survey responses outside of their existing listserv, which Young estimates less than half of survey respondents were already in their system. Regarding possible new times or locations for meetings, he plans to follow up with people who provided their contact information about this.

Sheehan and Young discussed the possibility of making this survey data available to the public, particularly because policy recommendations could come from this work. A deeper statistical analysis of the data will be conducted once the survey closes. The options for new methods to provide public comment mostly derived from focus groups, mixed with best practices from other communities. J. Brown asked where in the legislative process the public would prefer to weigh in; he believes the staff survey will provide feedback about the most appropriate and effective time for input. He is concerned about the public's perception that decisions are already made in meetings because that is not the case.

Kay talked about how the information was framed, asking if this is more about public comment or public engagement, and that engagement could be applied more broadly. "Public input" is reflected throughout the survey; CivicLex is focused on the way residents provide input in LFUCG's legislative

process. Kay talked about how input changes into engagement, agreeing that public comment doesn't have the element of back-and-forth engagement. He said it's hard for folks to understand what happens when they provide public comment in the council chamber.

Reynolds has heard a lot of complaints about people not knowing how to follow the legislative process and stay involved. Young said people have to go hunting for this information and mentioned the idea behind Building Eye that allowed people to monitor issues in their area. He believes designing better public input mechanisms will build trust and eventually make public comment more productive. Moloney mentioned how this idea to make meetings more accessible has been explored in the past and there were limitations due to employee overtime. He spoke about people who want to speak directly with a person, not an automated service and other people who are familiar with the legislative process.

Young said that respondents preferred to be able to make comments via Zoom. McCurn then confirmed that CivicLex would share council member newsletters through their newsletter. Baxter mentioned how most people hate public speaking so public comment can be overwhelming. Of the residents who expressed the time of meetings as impossible for them, she asked if there was any indication of whether those people were aware of when meetings are held. A few other council members also asked about the time and location of meetings. CivicLex will be looking at the difference between people who have and haven't engaged with city government to see how the meeting time and location responses differ.

LeGris asked about the conflation of public comment, which can differ from input. For example if "more options for virtual public input" means during the public comment process. Young said *input* is a broader concept, *comment* is more specific, which is the reason for the options; he will review this to see if that distinction was specified and report back at the next update. No action was taken on this item.

III. Diversifying, Hiring, and Promotional Opportunities within LFUCG

Sally Hamilton, CAO, introduced the presentation by thanking the Civil Service Commission who expressed concerns that the salary levels were not indicative of diversity and inclusion. She explained how the first part of the presentation shows the city's workforce in diversity exceeding the local workforce but said the issues are with wage distribution because the majority of the city's diversity is in the lower-paid jobs. John Maxwell, Director of Human Resources, explained the overall assessment of diversity among classified civil service (CCS) positions. Ultimately they concluded efforts should focus on attracting and retaining talent and building a larger applicant base and pipeline for employee growth. Ethnic and racial representation in job families mostly exceeds the available labor market. Of the community population, about 18 percent represent minorities; of LFUCG's CCS, about 30 percent are minorities; this data and assessment is required by and reported to the federal government. Examples of jobs that fall within job family classifications were provided, such as the job family of technicians.

The chart for wage distribution shows the breakdown of positions by salary quartile, separating the positions by race. White employees are more evenly spread across quartiles, versus 70 percent of black employees that fall in the two lower salary quartiles; Maxwell said they would like to smooth that out more and they have some initiatives planned to help do that. He explained that statistically speaking, people with bachelor's degrees make more money than individuals without it; 32 percent of CCS positions require a bachelor's degree. Then he reviewed community labor statistics of the racial breakdown of people in Fayette County with a bachelor's degree. It was noted that related experience can be used to substitute education. There were 638 promotions processed over the last five years, 23

percent were minorities. Promotions are directed by ordinance and other requirements for CCS are outlined in Section 21-6 of the Code of Ordinances.

Maxwell outlined strategies for improvement for both external and internal candidates. Externally, to address diversity in higher-paying job classifications, the focus was on recruitment, such as expanding the advertising approach. Internally, the retention and promotion strategy should create and ensure opportunities are accessible to all employees. Initiatives include more offerings of The Academy (a 60-hour training program for employees to gain one year of supervisor experience). [There was a motion to give an additional five minutes for the presentation.] Another new initiative is the mentorship program, an idea that came from the Civil Service Commission that will allow employees to earn credit for another year of supervisor experience. Maxwell moved on to say wages need to be competitive and explained the impact of periods (36 months) with no increases, which makes recruiting more challenging. Lastly, he emphasized how critical it is to increase the employee base, particularly because the lists of eligible applicants for positions are significantly declining.

Baxter was supportive of the mentorship program but asked how mentees will complete their normal job responsibilities while completing the mentorship program. Maxwell agreed that is part of the challenge but they hope to make this part of the person's job duties. Plomin established that women were not a part of this analysis and presentation. She and Maxwell discussed the Academy program; classes typically have about 20-25 people and fill up quickly. In the past, Human Resources offered the class two or three times per year; they expect to offer it at least twice per year, possibly three times. McCurn mentioned reverse mentorship programs, which pairs folks together with generational differences. Maxwell said the mentorship program is in the development stage but agreed this should be considered.

J. Brown said the city has done a good job in the past with hiring minorities but hasn't done a good job with promotional opportunities or wage growth. He asked what considerations have been given for ways to standardize or improve job promotional boards. Maxwell said that employees who want to be considered for promotions are required to apply for the job; the process is not different for promotions. Hamilton spoke about how they want to advertise in places that reach minorities and how they are insisting that hiring panels have diversity; explaining that people often choose people who look like themselves or people they are comfortable with. They told commissioners and directors to watch this presentation. J. Brown mentioned the need to standardize this, adding that the diversity training will help but also referenced the help of Lucas' work.

J. Brown said compensation is a huge issue and asked if there is any immediate action that can be taken to address it. Hamilton agreed and said we need to have more conversations with the council about various compensation systems and what they do. Maxwell feels confident the current system works fine but the problem is because the city does not keep up with it. For example, Maxwell surveyed equipment operators and other equivalent jobs, it's about a \$600,000 increase across the board. We have to commit to a yearly look at certain jobs to keep up with the system.

Moloney first compared the starting salary (\$14.49) of a building inspector position to making \$15 per hour at a hamburger joint and then mentioned the use of CDL certifications to create a job path for people, emphasizing the importance of people having a way to move up. He said we need to restructure payment because the issues are across the board, plus people can make a lot more money elsewhere.

Reynolds and Maxwell clarified that the job family availability slide (page 37) includes women but not as a separate category or minority category. Reynolds offered to help find more outlets to share job opportunities with minorities, such as radio stations, publications, and places on social media where minorities are.

J. Brown and Maxwell discussed how the new training position in Human Resources will focus on the mentorship program as it rolls out. J. Brown confirmed the Section 21-6 outlines requirements for civil service positions, including minimum specifications in the job descriptions, and asked if there is an ordinance that directs the city's hiring panels. Hamilton promised that she will put something out to standardize this. Lamb said there might be another opportunity for more discussion on this item in the next few months. No action was taken on this item.

IV. LFUCG Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statement

Arthur Lucas, Diversity and Inclusion Officer, reviewed the suggestions the committee provided at the last meeting, which included the use of "citizenry", action plans for each commitment, and develop and demonstrate a work plan. Words such as *commit*, *develop*, *increase outreach*, and *improve our ability* were added to the statement based on the suggestions made by the committee in April. The presentation provided an action plan for each of the bulleted items that are part of the DEI statement that ranged from better use of social media outlets to enhancing the city's distribution lists to recruitment fairs. Lucas reviewed a work plan example from 2017 to recruit people from historically black colleges and universities in the region, which is ongoing. Other action plan items include diversity and inclusion workshops for employees and more coordination with the Minority Business Enterprise Liaison to increase outreach to diverse businesses in the procurement process. He highlighted efforts such as the Mayor's Commission for Racial Justice and Equity and partnering with the University of Kentucky to help implement the commission's recommendations, which help LFUCG strive to serve as a model for equity for all residents within our community. Lamb pointed out a draft resolution that was shared with the committee for their consideration to approve the proposed DEI statement.

Motion by Moloney to approve the diversity, equity, and inclusion statement; seconded by Reynolds. The motion passed without dissent.

Motion by Kay to report out this item to the council on June 22, 2021; seconded by LeGris. The motion passed without dissent.

V. Items Referred to Committee

No action was taken on this item.

Motion by Baxter to adjourn (at 2:51 p.m.); seconded by LeGris. The motion passed without dissent.

Meeting materials: [Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government - Meeting of General Government & Social Services Committee on 6/15/2021 at 1:00 PM \(legistar.com\)](#)

Recording of the meeting: [General Government & Social Services Committee - Jun 15th, 2021 \(granicus.com\)](#)