



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and City Council
FROM: Tom Crawford, City Administrator
SUBJECT: Response to 6/29/2021 Independent Investigation Re City Administrator
DATE: July 13, 2021

This is a follow-up regarding the June 29, 2021 Independent Investigation about insensitive comments I made to staff during the past year (see attached for reference).

Prior to seeing the final report, I indicated to the investigator, “Having had time to reflect on my comments, I want to reiterate how disappointed I am in myself for the hurt I have caused others by my comments. Over the past eighteen months I’ve had many conversations about diversity, equity, and inclusion. It’s an issue I care about deeply because it fundamentally involves how we as individuals can affect the health and quality of life of others, specifically those who have been marginalized either intentionally or unintentionally. This is core to public service and core to how I hope to improve the organization, our community and the world. The comments you shared with me represent a very small sample from the larger, positive comments and actions I’ve taken to help others and improve diversity, equity and inclusion in the city organization and community. During this past year, out of stress, frustration, or just being argumentative, I regrettably and errantly made private remarks that have contributed to the pain, discomfort and exclusion to those who heard them and to those who weren’t present. The comments do not reflect how I feel or communicate on a daily and regular basis, nor do they reflect the value I place on each human being. There really is no context where these comments are acceptable, and I am genuinely and deeply remorseful for the pain and exclusion they caused. Those whom I’m closest to know that these remarks were an aberration and do not accurately represent who I am or who I strive to be, and that I believe each of us is responsible for making a better more inclusive world for everyone. I believe my long history with the city demonstrates this, and I remain committed to improving myself personally and the lives of every individual in our community.”

As the City Administrator and leader of the organization, it's critical that I speak and act in a manner that represents the values, beliefs and priorities of the city at all times. Foremost among these is to ensure *everyone* feels valued and safe at work and in this community. As the referenced report illustrates, I failed to do so on a number of occasions over the past year.

I take full responsibility for all of these comments and the harm they have caused. Whether I remember all of them or not is irrelevant, because individuals heard and felt harmed or excluded from the conversations we had.

When you hired me, I indicated I wanted to lead the city in its journey to improve diversity, equity, and inclusion both within the organization and in the community. I am not perfect, I have erred here, and I have personal and professional growth that remains needed in these areas, but I'm also excited and committed to build on the work we've started. Leadership requires setting the example, and I will. My recommended plan to move forward in a positive manner includes the following:

Accountability

Accountability for my position is required. After a lot of reflection on the impacts my comments have had on others and without knowing where Council might stand on this matter nor the organization's full history in dealing with these matters, I am self-initiating a five-day suspension immediately. I understand this will be considered by Council when they make a final determination. Because I have a previously scheduled two-week vacation planned starting next week, and I don't want this suspension to be associated with a vacation, I will take it in the following manner:

- Effective immediately be on suspension for three days 1
- Work this Friday
- Be on a previously planned vacation for two weeks
- Work the Tuesday I return
- Be on suspension for the two remaining days on the Thursday & Friday after my return

Personal & Professional Development

I will prioritize my time to study, reflect, and learn more deeply about racial equity and antiracism. Specifically, I've identified the following immediate plans:

- Review my course materials from the 6-month Champions for Change program I participated in in 2019, which I felt was very good.
- Read Ibram X. Kendi's book *How to be an Antiracist*.
- Complete the city's DEI certificate program. The two remaining sessions are Inclusive Leadership and Tips for Talking about Taboo Topics
- Work with the new HR Director and soon to be hired DEI manager for an ongoing individualized growth plan.

DEI Leadership

As I've previously stated, setting an example for others to follow is vitally important, and I will do so. However, I will also:

- Engage in equity training with other city managers to support and reinforce my DEI leadership skills as the City Administrator.
- Proactively expand my network into the community of historically marginalized populations to identify opportunities for collaboration, support, and change.
- Ask the DEI Committee and HR Director to explore and investigate a new innovative approach for employees to raise concerns about insensitivity, racism or inclusiveness in the workplace with a focus on restorative justice. The purpose is to make it easier for employees to raise concerns and to seek a positive outcome when it occurs. A new process could be internal or in partnership with an outside organization. Structural changes and innovations like this will be critical to improving the city's culture to allow employees to bring their whole selves to work.
- Build upon the efforts we've already started including:
 - Leverage the talented internal DEI leadership I've been pulling together, including Mr. Guajardo, Dr. Stults, the Employee DEI Committee, and the open DEI manager position
 - Establish and further develop the Community DEI Steering Team
 - Provide extensive DEI training for the senior management team via Champions for Change or similar program
 - Ensure all City Managers complete the DEI certificate program presently being deployed
 - Create volunteer Employee Resource Groups comprised of women, people of color, LGBTQ and others to advise on how to improve the work environment
- Develop and implement an internal and external DEI strategic plan to drive new organizational and community initiatives and actions for improvement. I will enthusiastically support these plans and initiatives to ensure cultural change in the organization and community.

Investigation Report Observations

Separately, I've been reflecting on the investigative report's Observations and wanted to share some thoughts for your consideration.

Item #1 - memory: I do not have any existing health issues. I do have an occasional tendency for making careless and insensitive remarks when I'm fatigued - and this past year was unprecedented and exhausting. I know words matter, and the expectations of my position require greater care than I've given. I will be changing the way I manage my time (by delegating more) to ensure I am less careless. Again, the insensitive remarks I've made did not and do not reflect who I am or who I strive to be as a leader. This is evidenced by the lack of concerns raised during the substantial number of years I've been employed by the city.

Item #2 - having the new DEI leader report to the HR Director: I do not recommend this idea because to be successful in changing organizational culture the DEI leader needs the credibility of having direct access to the City Administrator rather than indirect access through someone else. In addition to be most effective, I would benefit from a closer tie to this leader rather than a more distant one.

Item #3 - a 360 review: My annual review process is starting soon and includes a 360 review. I've already recommended a change to the survey to obtain additional feedback from employees on their perception of my commitment to improving DEI. I'd encourage Council or the Administrative Committee to make any additional changes you feel would be helpful.

In conclusion, my careless words have caused unnecessary hurt, confusion, and concern. I am deeply remorseful for this and committed to be a more sensitive and inclusiveness leader in the future. As I continue the journey to improve myself and the organization, I'm committed to making Ann Arbor a leader in DEI and represent the city in a positive light. I am taking the importance of my role and the consequences of my actions very seriously and would appreciate your support for both my leadership and development.

1 – I had planned to indicate that in lieu of an unpaid suspension that I'd contribute the equivalent pay to NEW (a local non-profit doing racial equity work that I already contribute to personally) but having consulted with HR it was more difficult to implement than I realized.

Attachments

June 29, 2021 communication from Jennifer B. Salvatore, Salvatore Prescott Porter & Porter, PLLC regarding the Independent Investigation Re City Administrator