

April 21, 2022

Dear Equity Review Committee, I first want to thank each of you for your hard work, insightful questions, and efforts to get your arms around all that you might accomplish in the Committee. Your efforts to have direct and honest conversations are refreshing and I honor each of you for listening and reflecting on what is said. I appreciate the challenges faced by Judge Cuthbertson in his role as facilitator, and the Committee's efforts to work with Judge Cuthbertson be clear about that role.

There were several statements that I heard at the Equity Review Committee meeting on April 14 that I wanted to ask about.

1. Judy Archer, the County Human Resources Director, said the proposed Equity policy (as required by the ERC's Resolution) had been ready for a month but had not yet been transmitted to the ERC. Did I hear that correctly and is there now a plan to get that proposed policy to the ERC in a timely manner? Which ERC meeting will include this item on its agenda?
2. Judy Archer also said (as I heard her) that the Equity policy to be brought forward is only about the County **as an employer** (my emphasis), not about the County overall. If I heard Ms Archer accurately, then this seems more narrow than Resolution R2021-109 actually requires. This Resolution clearly says, "The policy shall guide all aspects of Executive department and Council decision making, including services, programming, policy development, budgeting, and employment." Which seems to me to be far broader than "as an employer."

What is the plan for development of a policy statement that meets the expectations outlined in the Resolution? Will this be done separately? If so, by whom?

3. The summary of the four tasks given to the ERC by the Council includes one about recommendations about moving the County to "becoming a more culturally competent organization..." but this Section (6), specifically asks for the ERC's recommendations about ESTABLISHING AN INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE for moving the County to becoming a more culturally competent organization. As I understand it, this structure language is in there for a specific reason; an organization needs an ongoing internal office or group to be sure that equity work and professional development maintains its momentum (like the Office of Equity and Human Rights in the City of Tacoma.). The document given to the ERC did not include this institutional structure language, which I believe is a significant omission.

Is this indeed an omission, and if so, will it be corrected for the May 2022 meeting?

4. Lastly, I would like to note that the Executive's April 2022 supplemental budget proposal (Proposal 2022-30) contains FTEs and funding to **implement** a law enforcement ombuds program, oversight commission, Civilian Review Board or similar office after review by the Equity Review Committee created in Resolution No. R2021-109 and adoption by the Council.

It is my understanding that this supplemental budget proposal, released on April 15, 2022, amends the original budget for 2022-23, which contained funding of \$200,000 to "fund a law enforcement ombuds program, oversight commission, or similar office..."

The reason for the mark-up is that this amends the initial County budget Resolution (passed at the end of 2021) which called for an law enforcement ombuds (but not a Civilian Review Board). This April 2022 supplemental budget add funding, adds the language "Civilian Review Board" and deletes the previous \$200,000 appropriation, replacing it with a \$775,000 appropriation and 2 FTEs for staffing. The April 2022 supplemental budget proposal includes review by the Equity Review Committee and adoption by the Council.

This likely feels confusing; it does to me. It is my hope that Mr. Bridges can provide additional clarity to the ERC about this change and its meaning. Perhaps Mr. Bocchi, the Council's Senior Budget Analyst, can assist with this.

This language went to the Council's Rules and Operations Committee on April 18, 2022 and is slated for amendments and first reading next week (April 25-26) and final action by the Council on May 3. It is my hope that Mr. Bridges and Mr. Bocchi might provide you with additional detail about the Council's process on this item, particularly since Council action on it will likely occur prior to the ERC's regularly-scheduled May 12 meeting.

In closing, I want to thank each and every member of the Equity Review Committee for your service to the people of Pierce County. You are asking critically important questions and doing vital work. Your efforts are much appreciated.

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