

MINUTES

WAR MEMORIAL BOARD OF TRUSTEES

RACIAL EQUITY & CULTURAL AWARENESS COMMITTEE / SPECIAL MEETING

Thursday, September 12, 2024

The Racial Equity & Cultural Awareness Committee of the Board of Trustees of the War Memorial of San Francisco met in-person at 1:00 p.m. on Thursday, September 12, 2024, in the in the Trustees’ Board Room, War Memorial Opera House, Chair Wright presiding.

ROLL CALL

Committee Members Present:	Chair Wright, President Horn, Vice President Wilsey, Trustee Muduroglu, and Trustee Newstat
Committee Members Absent:	Trustee Gatti and Trustee Lui
Staff Present:	Kate Sofis, Managing Director; and Rob Levin, Assistant Managing Director; and Francesca Cicero, Board Secretary

**Staff Report on War Memorial Equity and Inclusion:** Chair Wright opened the meeting inviting Managing Director Kate Sofis to present to the Trustees on the work the Department has done towards its equity and inclusion goals. Director Sofis introduced the staff steering committee and thanked them for their work on behalf of the Department. She noted that many larger City departments have a dedicated staff member or team of employees who work on equity issues full-time. She noted that as a smaller department, the War Memorial does not have the headcount to provide a full-time staff person focusing on equity, so a team of staff members volunteer their time, and the department has engaged a consultant to work on facilitating some of the equity work within the Department. She reviewed the accomplishments of the Department including redesigned signage, gender-neutral language in all contracts, land acknowledgments, increased parking access, and increased outreach to diverse Bay Area arts organizations for all War Memorial job announcements. There was a discussion about the current limitations of hiring due to the civil service requirements of the City. Director Sofis noted that the staff equity steering committee is focusing on equity and inclusion broadly, as both a function of internally within the Department, but also on inclusion and belonging for guests, patrons, and licensees of the War Memorial. She discussed some of the initiatives include solutions for gender inclusive restrooms within the buildings as well as the installation of lactation pods for staff.

Trustee Muduroglu emphasized that the most important part of equity work is taking action, and that people feel that their voices are being heard. Trustee Newstat thanked staff for their work and remarked that part of inclusion is accessibility and asked about whether the companies considered giving away free tickets. Vice President Wilsey noted that her work supporting Free Saturdays at the Fine Arts Museums has been very successful in getting thousands of new visitors to the museums who then become members. Trustee Newstat mentioned she would be very interested in seeing the data on those increases in membership. The Committee discussed the impact of programs such as Opera in the Park, which allows families to attend in a casual outdoor environment and how it encourages patrons to attend a performance in the Opera House. Director Sofis suggested it might be helpful to convene the companies together specifically around the topic of price accessibility. Jane Garland, a member of the security staff and staff Inclusive War Memorial steering committee, suggested multilingual signage that promotes the \$10 standing room tickets at the Opera House. Chair Wright thanked staff for their work on the work they are doing on behalf of the Department.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Public comment is an opportunity for members of the public to directly address the Trustees on items within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Board, but not on the agenda.

There being no public comment, Chair Wright closed public comment.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Chair Wright adjourned the meeting at 1:59 p.m.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'FC' with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Francesca Cicero  
Board Secretary