

AGENDA DIVERSITY EQUITY & INCLUSION COMMISSION

December 9, 2025

Hybrid Meeting In-person and via Zoom



Accessibility

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CITY OF ELLENSBURG
DIVERSITY EQUITY & INCLUSION COMMISSION AGENDA
Council Chambers
501 North Anderson Street
Ellensburg, WA 98926
And remotely via [Zoom](#)
Tuesday, December 9, 2025
3:00 PM - Regular Meeting

- 1. Call to Order and Roll Call of Members**
 - 1.A Recognition of Tylenne Carnell
 - 1.B DEI Commission Meeting Grounding (Read)
 - 1.C DEI Commission applicant introduction - allow applicants in attendance a few moments to make an introduction
- 2. Approval of Agenda** (No Public Comment)
- 3. Approval of Minutes**
 - 3.A Approval of Minutes from November 11, 2025
 - 3.B Approval of Minutes from November 18, 2025
- 4. New Business**
 - 4.A Confirm availability for joint study session with the Ellensburg City Council on Tuesday, January 20, 2026 at 6 p.m.
 - 4.B Review 2025 Annual Report Draft
 - 4.C Purchase Name Plates For Commission Members
 - 4.D Juneteenth Discussion
 - 4.E Chapter 9 Brief Update on City Council Meeting
- 5. Previous Meeting Motions & To-Do List Review**
 - 5.A Previous Meeting Motions & To-Do List Review
- 6. Liaison Reports** Teresa Chanes - Ellensburg Downtown Association; Dr. Elvin Delgado and Ruben Cardenas - CWU; and Rhonda Schmidt - Ellensburg School District
- 7. Subcommittee Reports**
- 8. Commission Member Reports**
- 9. Staff Report**

- 10. Public Comment PUBLIC COMMENT RULES FOR ALL MEETING PARTICIPANTS**
1. Each speaker's comments are to be limited to 3 MINUTES and must state their name and city of residence. 2. Speakers are cautioned not to engage in conduct that disrupts, disturbs or otherwise impedes the orderly conduct of the DEI Commission meeting. 3. Comments must be related to the commission's business or over which the Commission has control. 4. Speakers may not identify themselves as candidates for elective public office or make any statements which assist or discuss the campaign of a candidate for elective office or discuss or campaign for or against a ballot proposition.
- 11. Preview Next Meeting: January 13, 2026**



For more information on the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Commission, contact Public Information Officer Nicole Klauss at 509-925-8657.

DEI Commission Meeting Grounding: What We Mean by DEI

Diversity: We recognize and celebrate the wide range of backgrounds, experiences, identities, and perspectives that make our city unique.

- For example: Unity Park's grand opening included a variety of performances that reflected the cultural richness of our community.

Equity: We understand that not everyone starts from the same place, and acknowledge the unique needs of different groups and residents. We strive to identify and help remove barriers that prevent people from having full and complete access to opportunities and resources, so everyone has the ability and self-determination to thrive.

- For example: DEI grants have supported small, local businesses and events that center underrepresented voices.

Inclusion: We strive to create spaces where people from all walks of life feel welcomed, safe, respected, and invited to be an active part of the community.

- For example: Conversations with Parks & Rec have led to more inclusive restroom options for different families and visitors.

Accessibility: Everyone deserves the opportunity to take part in community life, so we work to address and remove barriers (ex. physical, language, social, and communicative) so everyone can fully take part in community life.

- For example: We've encouraged the city to use interpretation services and listening devices in meetings so more people can engage.

Belonging: We all want to feel like we're part of where we live and make our home—seen, valued, respected—and that our contributions are welcome. Belonging is at the heart of a healthy community.

- For example: We've supported heritage month proclamations, Juneteenth celebrations, and partnerships that build bridges between groups.

CITY OF ELLENSBURG
Date of Meeting
Time of Meeting
Place of Meeting

Minutes of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
Commission Meeting
November 11, 2025
3:00 PM
Council Chambers & Zoom

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Nancy Goodloe called the meeting to order at 3:03 p.m.

Roll Call Present: Phil Backlund, Kande Cleary, Nancy Goodloe, Amber Hofer, M. Eliatamby-O'Brien, and Serena Turney.

Also present: Nicole Klauss, assigned staff member to the commission; Christopher Horner, City Attorney; Heidi Behrends Cerniwey, City Manager; Ramona Bryant, League of Women Voters of Kittitas County, and 2 members of the public.

The Commission did not read the grounding statement.

2. Approval of the Agenda

Chair Goodloe suggested moving 4.B Discussion about 2026 Commission Goals to the December meeting in light of conversations that will be had in the next couple of months. Commissioner Cleary moved to table item 4.B to the regular meeting in December and approve the agenda as amended. Commissioner Hofer seconded the motion. There was no discussion. Motion approved 5-0.

3. Approval of Minutes from September 9, 2025 Commission Meeting and October 17, 2025 Commission Retreat

Commissioner Cleary moved to approve the meeting minutes from the September 9, 2025 DEI Commission meeting and October 17, 2025 DEI Commission Retreat. Commissioner Backlund seconded the motion. There was no discussion. Motion approved 5-0.

4. New Business

- A. The Commission reviewed the draft 2025 annual report. The Commission indicated an interest in adding a narrative piece. A subcommittee of Eliatamby-O'Brien, Hofer, and Goodloe will update the report and provide a draft to staff for the next meeting agenda. The item will be moved to the December agenda for approval to be submitted to the City Council's second meeting in December. Staff will provide a copy of the bulleted list, the 2024 report, and the 2025 spending plan to the subcommittee.
- B. Commissioner Hofer provided an update on the upcoming November 13 Planning Commission Meeting. Hofer attended a Planning Commission study session that briefed them on the background of the City Council

recommendations on Chapter 9. The public hearing will take place at the Planning Commission meeting on Thursday, November 13. City Council will hold a public hearing on December 1 and a second reading on December 15.

The Commission discussed providing formal feedback to the Planning Commission. Goodloe encouraged members to attend the Planning Commission meeting and the December City Council meeting.

Commission members expressed concerns about the transparency of the process and how the chapter got to the current version going before the Planning Commission, the erasure of marginalized communities and Ellensburg's history, measurable goals, and that they viewed the proposed changes as substantial. Commission members discussed potentially proposing alternate language to an updated Chapter 9.

Commissioner Hoefer made a motion to write an electronic recommendation sharing concerns and offering input on the draft to Planning Commission to be emailed by tomorrow (November 12). Eliatamby-O'Brien seconded the motion. During discussion,

Commissioner Cleary moved to table the discussion until after the executive session. Commissioner Backlund seconded the motion. Motion approved 5-0.

Executive Session

The Commission decided to hold executive session earlier in the meeting. The Commission left for executive session with the initial session held for 25 minutes, then extended the session by 10 minutes, and then extended the session by 5 minutes.

The Commission held an executive session related to RCW 42.30.110(1)(i)(iii),), to discuss with legal counsel representing the agency matters relating to agency enforcement actions, or to discuss with legal counsel representing the agency litigation or potential litigation to which the agency, the governing body, or a member acting in an official capacity is, or is likely to become, a party, when public knowledge regarding the discussion is likely to result in an adverse legal or financial consequence to the agency.(iii) Litigation or legal risks of a proposed action or current practice that the agency has identified when public discussion of the litigation or legal risks is likely to result in an adverse legal or financial consequence to the agency.

Upon return from Executive Session, the Commission decided to replace the main motion. Commissioner Hoefer moved to send virtual communication to the Planning Commission to vote no on the new Chapter 9 changes so the DEI Commission can offer input on the draft and share concerns. Commissioner Eliatamby-O'Brien seconded the motion. There was no discussion. Motion approved 5-0.

Commissioner Hoefer made a motion to send staff an email with the recommendation by 6 p.m. tomorrow (November 12), so staff can forward it to the Planning Commission.

Commissioner Backlund seconded the motion. There was no discussion. Motion approved 5-0.

Goodloe said the rest of the regular agenda would be moved to the December meeting due to lack of time.

9. Staff Report

Goodloe mentioned the Community Thanksgiving Dinner was listed in the staff report.

10. Public Comments

Chair Goodloe called for public comment. There was none.

12. Preview Next Meeting December 9, 2025

- Annual report review and approval
- 2026 goals discussion

Meeting adjourned at 4:40 p.m.

Nicole Klauss

Drafted: 11/11/2025

Approved:

CITY OF ELLENSBURG
Date of Meeting
Time of Meeting
Place of Meeting

Minutes of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
Special Commission Meeting
November 18, 2025
4:00 PM
Council Chambers & Zoom

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Nancy Goodloe called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

Roll Call Present: Phil Backlund, Kande Cleary, Nancy Goodloe, Amber Hoefler, and M. Eliatamby-O'Brien.

Also present: Nicole Klaus, assigned staff member to the commission; Ruben Cardenas, CWU liaison; Christopher Horner, City Attorney; Heidi Behrends Cerniway, City Manager; and 7 members of the public, (4 were online).

2. Approval of the Agenda

Commission member Kande Cleary moved to approve the agenda. Commission member Hoefler seconded the motion. There was no discussion. **Motion approved 4-0.**

3. New Business

The Commission discussed an alternate draft to Chapter 9 of the City's comprehensive plan that was written by a commission subcommittee (of less than quorum). Discussion included comments that the draft approved by Planning Commission and written by staff included substantial changes that removed the intention of the chapter and that the chapter could be rewritten to remove the terms "diversity, equity and inclusion" without losing the meaning behind the chapter. Commission member said the draft captures discussion from the common ground workshop. Commission members suggested minor changes to the draft. Commission members asked questions about the process.

Commission members indicated an interest in writing a letter to accompany the draft chapter framing why the DEI Commission is proposing a new draft, mentioning what was lost from the community conversations, and why it is an intermediate option as work continues with the Comprehensive Plan 2026 update.

Commission member Phil Backlund made a motion to accept the DEI Commission's Chapter 9 draft as written with changes agreed upon and send it to the City Council to be accompanied by a letter explaining the rationale for the draft. Commission member M. Eliatamby-O'Brien seconded the motion. **Motion approved 4-0.**

M. Eliatamby-O'Brien and Amber Hoefler will write the letter to accompany the draft and will present the draft as a communication item at the December 1 City Council meeting and provide it as comment during a public hearing. Commission members will provide staff with the letter by end of day Monday, November 24 to get it on the City Council agenda for December 1.

Meeting adjourned at 4:48 p.m.

Drafted by: Nicole Klauss, assigned staff member to the DEI Commission

Drafted: 11/19/2025

Approved:

DRAFT



Meeting Date: December 9, 2025
City of Ellensburg

Diversity Equity & Inclusion Commission Agenda Report

Agenda Subject: Confirm availability for joint study session with the Ellensburg City Council on Tuesday, January 20, 2026 at 6 p.m.

Submitted by:

Department: City Manager

Suggested Motion/Action:
Confirm availability for January 20 joint study session.

Background/Summary:
A joint study session between the Ellensburg City Council and the Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Commission is tentatively scheduled for the second meeting in January - Tuesday, January 20, 2026 at 6 p.m. (the meeting is held on Tuesday due to the MLK Day holiday). In order to hold the study session, we need to confirm availability of every commission member for quorum purposes. If someone is not available, the joint meeting cannot happen.

Previous Council Action:
The DEI Commission last held a joint study session with the City Council in June 2025.

Analysis:
N/A

Financial Impact:
N/A

Budget Adjustment: No

Attachments:
None



Meeting Date: December 9, 2025
City of Ellensburg

Diversity Equity & Inclusion Commission Agenda Report

Agenda Subject: Review 2025 Annual Report Draft
Submitted by:
Department: City Manager

Suggested Motion/Action:
Review and approve sending the Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Commission 2025 Annual Report to the Ellensburg City Council.

Background/Summary:
Review and approve sending the Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Commission 2025 Annual Report to the Ellensburg City Council.

Previous Council Action:
The Commission reviewed a draft at the November meeting and assigned a subcommittee of Amber Hofer, M. Eliatamby-O'Brien, and Nancy Goodloe to write a narrative version. Staff provided subcommittee members with a copy of the 2025 bulleted list, the 2024 report, and the 2025 spending plan to the subcommittee.

Analysis:
The Commission needs to submit the annual report to the City Council. It will need to be approved at this meeting to make the deadline for the second meeting in December.

Financial Impact:
None.

Budget Adjustment: No

Attachments:
1. 2025 Annual Report(2)



Draft 12/1/25

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Commission 2025 Annual Report

Compiled and submitted by Chair Nancy Goodloe, Ellensburg City Council

The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Commission operates under the authority of Chapter 1.88 of the City Code and is responsible for advising the City Council on diversity, equity and inclusion matters with the mission to support Ellensburg in celebrating a diverse, equitable, and inclusive community that welcomes and is supportive to all residents and visitors because doing so enriches each individual's life and the community's wellbeing and vitality.

Membership

The Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Commission is a nine-member commission of community volunteers. The 2025 membership includes:

- Phil Backlund, term expires 5/31/2026
- Tylene Carnell (now VACANT), term expires 5/31/2027
- Kandee Cleary, term expires 5/31/2026
- Teresa Divine (now VACANT), term expires 5/31/2028
- M. Eliatamby-O'Brien, term expires 5/31/2027
- Amber Hoefler, term expires 5/31/2026
- Alex Mandujano (now VACANT), term expires 5/31/2028
- Serena Turney (now VACANT), term expires 5/31/2026
- Nancy Goodloe, City Council Member & Commission Chair

2025 DEI Commission Report & Accomplishments

Over the past year, the Commission continued its work in the midst of public debate and widespread misinterpretations of what equity efforts seek to achieve in our community. What follows is a summary of the Commission's key highlights and accomplishments from 2025, illustrating the breadth of our work amid these challenges.

Community Engagement & Outreach

- Updated the Commission's Listening Tour policy and pre-session script to strengthen consistency and community trust.
- Hosted four Listening Tours in 2025 in partnership with Central Washington University, the Filipino American Student Association, MEChA, and EQuAI.
- Reached out to organizers of multicultural events in neighboring communities to build relationships and gather ideas for a multicultural event in Ellensburg. Explored options for hosting a Multicultural Day at the Farmers Market or Unity Park; the event did not materialize in 2025 but is still considered for 2026.
- Planned two Community Conversations for 2025; due to community constraints and ongoing controversy, these events did not move forward.
- Continued relationship-building with liaisons at the Ellensburg School District, Ellensburg Downtown Association, and Central Washington University.
- Three Commission members attended the Braver Angels Community Workshop as listeners to hear multiple perspectives from the community. The workshop aimed to identify shared ground regarding DEI-related concerns driving local controversy; the workshop concluded without consensus on the issues discussed.



Arts, Culture & Inclusivity Initiatives

- Met with the City’s Arts & Economic Development Manager to discuss opportunities for Commission involvement in citywide inclusive arts initiatives, and appointed a representative to participate in ongoing planning.
- Commission members served on the Juneteenth Event Subcommittee and attended the celebration.
- Created a grounding statement used at the start of Commission meetings, including definitions of diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility, and belonging, as well as examples of how Commission work aligns with each principle.

Proclamations & Community Acknowledgements

- Over the past four years, the Commission developed a suite of cultural and heritage proclamations to promote understanding, recognition, and celebration of communities represented in Ellensburg. These proclamations were submitted for inclusion in City Council meeting packets and historically read aloud, often by a member of the honored community. February 18, 2025, in response to some public scrutiny about the DEI Commission, Mayor Rich Elliott announced that these proclamations would no longer be read aloud at City Council meetings. The Commission continued submitting proclamations for the agenda packet despite this change. Proclamations developed and submitted by the Commission include:
 - National Black History Month
 - National Women’s History Month & International Women’s Day
 - Irish American Heritage Month
 - National Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month
 - Transgender Day of Visibility
 - Asian American, Native Hawaiian & Pacific Islander Heritage Month
 - Jewish American Heritage Month
 - LGBTQ Pride Month
 - Juneteenth Day of Observance
 - Hispanic/Latinx Heritage Month
 - National Disability Employment Awareness Month
 - National Native American Heritage Month
- In 2023, the Commission created additional Recognition Days to be shared on the City’s Facebook page, providing opportunities to uplift significant cultural observances and communities in Ellensburg. At the June 2, 2025 City Council meeting, Mayor Elliott announced that only federal holidays would be recognized on the City’s Facebook page moving forward. Recognition Days developed by the Commission and their 2025 posting status:
 - Posted: Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Random Acts of Kindness Day, Presidents Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Indigenous Peoples’ Day/Columbus Day, Veterans Day
 - Not posted: Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women Day, Race Unity Day, International Day of Peace, Día de los Muertos

Policy, Advisory, and Government Engagement

- Provided multiple equity-informed advisory recommendations to City Council, including guidance on the docketed Comprehensive Plan process and other policy issues related to inclusion and community wellbeing.
- Attended City Council meetings to offer public comment and address ongoing public criticisms and misinformation regarding the Commission’s work.
- Requested and participated in a joint study session with City Council in June 2025 to clarify the Commission’s scope, address widespread misinformation influencing Comprehensive Plan amendment proposals, and support a clearer understanding of the city’s DEI values.



- Attended a Planning Commission Study Session to discuss the DEI Commission’s recommendations to City Council regarding the Comprehensive Plan – Chapter 9.
- Received a briefing from City staff on the 2025 Comprehensive Plan update process; several Commission members also individually participated in community conversations about the future of the Commission and the DEI chapter in the Comprehensive Plan.
- Submitted a third-option advisory recommendation to the Planning Commission regarding its proposal to City Council; this recommendation was not publicly acknowledged or discussed by the Planning Commission.
- Invested significant time drafting an equity-informed version of Comprehensive Plan Chapter 9, submitted to City Attorney for review, and formally recommended its adoption as part of City Council’s review in the docketing process. The Commission held a Special Meeting to prioritize and advance this guidance to Council.

DEI Commission Grants

- Launched the 2025 DEI Commission Grant Cycle, reviewed 6 applications, and awarded \$5,000 in total funding to five community-based projects (approved by City Council). 2025 Grant Recipients included:
 - Valley Voices Choir: Hosted 4 concerts and supported program accommodations for hearing-impaired participants, ASL interpretation at two concerts, and a language coach for a performance in a non-English language. All concerts were open to the public and advertised as such.
 - Kittitas County Recovery Community Organization: Provided Back-to-School supplies to help offset costs for low-income families.
 - Gallery One: Funded Spanish-language youth arts workshops, expanding access for low-income Hispanic/Latinx youth.
 - Ellensburg Ski Team: Provided skiing equipment for local youth who face financial barriers to participation.
 - Juneteenth Celebration: Funded culturally relevant musical performances for the community celebration.

Looking to the Future:

As we reflect on 2025, the Commission underscores its desire to have played a more active advisory role to City Council throughout the year’s significant challenges. Our members bring professional expertise in diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility, and community engagement, areas directly relevant to the issues at hand. We stand ready to support Council in navigating complex community dynamics, particularly when misinformation or heightened tensions arise. Not being consulted during key decision-making moments conveyed, intentionally or not, that our perspectives and expertise were not valued in this process.

While we anticipate changes to our Commission’s scope of work in 2026, we hope that one thing does *not* remain consistent: the experience of being sidelined during public controversy about our work and, at times, about us as individuals. We remain committed to service, collaboration, and the well-being of all Ellensburg residents, and we look forward to opportunities for more meaningful partnership with Council in the year ahead.



Meeting Date: December 9, 2025
City of Ellensburg

Diversity Equity & Inclusion Commission Agenda Report

Agenda Subject: Purchase Name Plates For Commission Members
Submitted by:
Department: City Manager

Suggested Motion/Action:

Consider expense for name plates and approve if desired.

Background/Summary:

After the November DEI Commission meeting, a member expressed interest in having name plates for commission meetings, similar to the plates used for Planning Commission and the City Council meetings. The plates would help members of the public know the names of each commissioner and would sit before them at meetings at City Hall.

Staff reached out to Jerrol's for a quote on name plates sized 10" wide by 2" tall, to fit the current name plates at the dias. The quote was \$26.99 per plate (tax and shipping not included). At this time, the Commission only has four members plus a chairperson. Chair Goodloe already has a name plate, so four would need to be purchased. Staff recommends approval of up to \$150 for name plates to be ordered out of the 2025 spending plan's admin line item.

Previous Council Action:

None.

Analysis:

The 2025 DEI Commission spending plan includes \$300 for admin expenses. In the past, this has been used for commission member business cards, magnetic nametags, translation, and supplies (such as orientation binders). Staff recommends approval of up to \$150 for name plates to be ordered out of the 2025 spending plan's admin line item.

Financial Impact:

The DEI Commission's admin budget has \$300 for admin expenses. The expense would fall within the \$300 budget available.

Budget Adjustment: No

Attachments:

None



Meeting Date: December 9, 2025
City of Ellensburg

Diversity Equity & Inclusion Commission Agenda Report

Agenda Subject: Juneteenth Discussion
Submitted by:
Department: City Manager

Suggested Motion/Action:
Discuss Juneteenth 2026

Background/Summary:

City staff has already received communications from the Parks & Recreation Department inquiring about whether the DEI Commission will be holding a Juneteenth event in Unity Park in 2026. The Juneteenth event community subcommittee has included representation from the City's DEI Commission. In 2025, CWU and EDA representatives took on much of the planning efforts for the event.

Staff reached out to Delano Palmer (CWU) and Teresa Chanes (EDA) asking if they have plans to hold an event again. The EDA may not have capacity to continue leading this event in the new year as they are down a staff person and not sure if they will be filling the position. Would the DEI commission be able (or interested) to include this in their work plan and take the lead? I'm not sure if it falls within their scope, but it would be great to have one entity take point and then let the rest of us support."

The EDA provided the full list of Juneteenth subcommittee members to City staff. Does a DEI Commission member have capacity to reach out to the list to see if any other agency has capacity to take on the event in 2026? Discuss capacity of commission members to execute an event or whether there is a different way to recognize the holiday. Since the commission does not yet have an approved 2026 work plan or spending plan, it may be too early to make a commitment.

Please note Juneteenth is a federal holiday recognized by the City of Ellensburg, so City staff will not be available on June 19.

Previous Council Action:

The DEI Commission has participated on the Juneteenth event planning committee.

Analysis:

The DEI Commission has not yet finalized the 2026 work plan or received approval from Council on work plan.

Financial Impact:

A 2026 spending plan has not yet been established or approved by the City Council.

Budget Adjustment: No

Attachments:

None



Meeting Date: December 9, 2025
City of Ellensburg

Diversity Equity & Inclusion Commission Agenda Report

Agenda Subject: Previous Meeting Motions & To-Do List Review
Submitted by:
Department: City Manager

Suggested Motion/Action:
Review Previous Regular Meeting Motions & To-Do List Review

- Commissioner Cleary moved to table item 4.B to the regular meeting in December and approve the agenda as amended. Commissioner Hoefler seconded the motion. There was no discussion. Motion approved 5-0.
- Commissioner Cleary moved to approve the meeting minutes from the September 9, 2025 DEI Commission meeting and October 17, 2025 DEI Commission Retreat. Commissioner Backlund seconded the motion. There was no discussion. Motion approved 5-0.
- Commissioner Hoefler made a motion to write an electronic recommendation sharing concerns and offering input on the draft to Planning Commission to be emailed by tomorrow (November 12). Eliatamby-O'Brien seconded the motion. During discussion, Commissioner Cleary moved to table the discussion until after the executive session. Commissioner Backlund seconded the motion. Motion approved 5-0.
- The Commission decided to replace the main motion. Commissioner Hoefler moved to send virtual communication to the Planning Commission to vote no on the new Chapter 9 changes so the DEI Commission can offer input on the draft and share concerns. Commissioner Eliatamby-O'Brien seconded the motion. There was no discussion. Motion approved 5-0.
- Commissioner Hoefler made a motion to send staff an email with the recommendation by 6 p.m. tomorrow (November 12), so staff can forward it to the Planning Commission. Commissioner Backlund seconded the motion. There was no discussion. Motion approved 5-0.

To-Do List Review

Commission does not yet have a 2026 work plan, so this is not applicable.

Background/Summary:
Previous Meeting Motions

Previous Council Action:
N/A

Analysis:

N/A

Financial Impact:

N/A

Budget Adjustment: No

Attachments:

None