

## OP&T

March 8, 2021

Chair's statement

Chair Murray:

[00:10:38](#)

Okay. Thank you. Before we get into the balance of the agenda, I do have some remarks to make this morning. I know that there are a number of very significant, serious issues going on that I'm sure we're all aware of. As a board member, I recognize the courage of the employees who have come forward with their testimony of alleged harassment, discrimination, and intimidation at Met, because no one should be subjected to any of that ever, and to apologize to them for what they have had to endure.

The General Manager has had 15 years to address equal opportunity for all employees and zero tolerance for harassment and discrimination based on gender, race, gender identity, and disability. And I have not heard nor seen that even following proven cases, nor have I heard or seen the General Manager take responsibility for the actions of the offending employees, or effectively and personally implement the solutions necessary. Policies and binders are not what create fair, open and supportive culture. Active management and a focus on those issues with substantive solutions in real time are what is required. Harassment, discrimination, and intimidation once proven should be dealt with, with strict discipline up to and including termination. Women must never be treated as less than men or treated as though they are taking jobs men should have.

The Board should not have had to learn of an employee suicide in a newspaper article and to this day have not been briefed on the matter, despite it apparently having occurred two years or so ago. Also that a firearm, according to the LA Times article, was used, which presented the possibility of extreme risk to others. What is the Met policy on firearms on Met property, and is that something the Board needs to establish?

That in the Times article it was reported that the GM refused to be interviewed by the reporter and responded only "by email and without attribution info." Met is a public agency and has the duty to be both transparent and responsive and the failure to speak with the reporter needs to be corrected immediately.

Those persons who have applied to be the next General Manager need to understand the importance of the culture change needed at Met and to truly make Met welcoming and supportive for all. We are a water wholesaler, but we produce our services through the hard work, creativity and dedication of our employees. They are job number one for management and the Board.

I want a report back at the April OP&T meeting on the tragic suicide at the desert facility and the related issues. We look forward to the findings of the Shaw law firms to direct us to where management needs to address its efforts and solutions on the issues raised by our employees. And I thank you and I look forward to those, that report coming back, and I look forward to the actions that will be taken to correct the issues that have been brought forward. I understand that Chairwoman Gray wants to make a comment.