



August 8, 2024

Dear Board Chair & Board of Directors,

In regard to your decision to place the General Manager, Adel Hagekhalil on administrative leave, the Black Employees Association (BEA) would like to express the following key points for your consideration.

We support the decision to conduct an independent and thorough investigation into the allegations submitted by the Chief Financial Officer, Ms. Katano Kasaine, and would ask that you also consider past claims made against the General Manager, including closed cases as these may shed light on a pattern of behavior. While the unfortunate leak to the press may appear to have compromised the integrity of the investigative process, the BEA hopes that you do not allow this surreptitious maneuver to diminish the serious nature of the underlying assertions or to impair your ability to make a sound decision in the best interests of the District.

“We are *not* one” when a culture of separatism has been cultivated. This is reflected by Mr. Hagekhalil’s creation of an inner circle of high-level executive staff who are given autonomy and charge over areas where they have limited expertise. These appointments have far-reaching operational and financial implications to Metropolitan, its workforce, member agencies and service area.

We would also like to express concern regarding the numerous responses the Board received in favor of Mr. Hagekhalil from individuals and organizations outside of Metropolitan. Our simple question to you is...how do they know what has transpired? Those that are not currently or previously employed at Metropolitan are not in a position to state factually what it is like to work under Mr. Hagekhalil. We also would like to understand his relationship with these outside commentators to clarify if there are any potential interests – financial or otherwise - pending.

The BEA has been made aware of a pattern of behavior by Mr. Hagekhalil negatively affecting several members, particularly Black women. We want to ensure these concerns are given the proper consideration to protect the interests of our members.

It has always been the BEA’s desire to foster a work environment that is diverse and inclusive, a work culture where one race or group is not favored over another. We ask that you govern Metropolitan with courage by allowing your decision at the conclusion of this investigation to stand in accordance with the core principles of our EEO office:

Awareness – We seek to create a heightened awareness of EEO rights and edify the Metropolitan family through professional and personal growth. We commit to creating a harassment-free work environment and enhancing cultural competency.

Integrity – We will communicate openly and honestly, listen, and respectfully value multiple perspectives. We will do what we say and be accountable for everything we do. We strive to do the right thing, always, even when it isn't easy.

Accountability – We hold ourselves to the highest standards. We live our values and truths and work to maintain reliable and trustworthy governance. We enforce a zero-tolerance policy, that prohibits discrimination, harassment, and retaliation in any form. We will work diligently to ensure corrective action is taken in response to any EEO policy violation.

The BEA, in alignment with the principles of Awareness, Integrity and Accountability, stands in solidarity with the Hispanic Employees Association and MAPA that the right decision was made to place Mr. Hagekhalil on administrative leave to ensure all claims are thoroughly investigated.

Sincerely,

The BEA Response Committee