

---

**Allegheny County M/W/DBE Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**One Smithfield Street Building, Liberty Conference Room**  
**Wednesday, April 1, 2009**  
**5:00 p.m.**

---

**Advisory Committee Members in Attendance:**

Frank Alessio III – Deputy Chief Purchasing Officer, Allegheny County Division of Purchasing  
Randolph Brockington – Deputy Director, Allegheny County Department of Human Services  
Ruth Byrd-Smith – Director, Allegheny County Department of M/W/DBE  
Diane Daniels – Owner, DID and Associates  
Victor Diaz – President, Pittsburgh Metropolitan Area Hispanic Chamber of Commerce  
Winston Jones – Manager of Contracts, Allegheny County Department of Economic Development (for Dennis Davin)  
Kathleen Kennedy – Director, Allegheny County Human Resources Department  
Philip La May – Deputy Director of Operations/Administration, Allegheny County Department of Public Works (for Joseph Olczak)  
Paul Messineo – Board of Directors, NAIOP  
Joyce A. Query – President, i-Squared  
Arthur Sheffield – Designer/Minority Outreach Coordinator, Massaro Corporation  
Ramon Rustin – Warden, Allegheny County Jail  
Dr. Howard Slaughter – CEO, Landmarks Community Capital Corporation  
Tim Stevens – Chairman, Black Political Empowerment Project (B-PEP)

**Advisory Committee Members Absent:**

Joey Ahia – Vice President, JEC Technologies, Inc.  
Al Ahmed – President, A & A Consultants, Inc.  
Earl Brooks – President, Apcon, Inc.  
Doris Carson-Williams – President, African American Chamber of Commerce  
Dennis Davin – Director, Allegheny County Department of Economic Development  
Brenda Frazier – Advisory Committee Co-Chair  
Kenneth Huston – Director of Employment, Training & Entrepreneurial Development, Urban League of Pittsburgh  
Timothy Johnson – Director, Allegheny County Department of Administrative Services  
John Laymon – President/Owner, JRL Enterprises  
Barbara McNeas – President, Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce  
M. Gayle Moss – President, NAACP Pittsburgh Branch  
Joseph Olczak – Director, Allegheny County Department of Public Works  
Dan Onorato – Chief Executive, Office of the Allegheny County Chief Executive  
Jack W. Ramage – Executive Director, Master Builders Association of Western PA  
V. Schnel Simmons – President, NAACP McKeesport Branch  
Will Thompkins – Chair of Economic Development Committee, NAACP Pittsburgh Chapter  
Ted Trbovich – Assistant County Solicitor, Allegheny County Law Department

**Also Present:**

Lisa Edmonds – Deputy Director, Allegheny County Department of M/W/DBE  
Shirley Muhammad – Workforce Diversity Specialist, Allegheny County Human Resources Department

**Agenda:**

- I. Call Meeting to Order**
- II. Approval of Previous Meeting's Minutes**
- III. Director's Update**
- IV. New Business**
- V. Adjournment**

**I. Call Meeting to Order****II. Approval of Previous Meeting's Minutes**

The minutes from the previous meeting were reviewed and approved as read.

**III. Director's Report**

Ruth Byrd-Smith gave an overview of the programs and meetings in which the M/W/DBE Department participated from October 2008 to present. Some highlights were the establishment of the Metropolitan Loan Fund, the Small Business Development Program with CEED for immigrant business owners, the Business Breakfast Meeting hosted by the County Executive, and Green Initiative meetings.

**IV. New Business**

Included in the packet of information distributed to the Committee were two pieces of proposed County Council legislation and preliminary and 2008 MWDBE spending totals.

Ms. Byrd-Smith presented information to the Advisory Committee regarding the Metropolitan Loan Program. A press conference announcing the Program took place on February 13, 2009. Dr. Slaughter described how he and Ms. Byrd-Smith made appeals to organizations for funding. In the week following the press conference, 60 inquiries were made about the Program. Dr. Slaughter was pleasantly surprised at the amount of attendees at the press conference. Both Ms. Byrd-Smith and Dr. Slaughter hope that this collaborative process benefits businesses.

Next, Kathleen Kennedy, Director of Human Resources for Allegheny County, introduced a new employee, Shirley Muhammad, who will work primarily with recruitment. Ms. Muhammad gave the Committee some background on her professional experience. Since a few Committee members arrived while the meeting was in progress, Ms. Byrd-Smith recapped the major points of the meeting thus far.

Ms. Byrd-Smith addressed a question posed via e-mail by Joyce Query regarding Allegheny County's total contract spend. Allegheny County's Director of Budget and Finance and the Controller's Office are working on that now. Ms. Byrd-Smith explained that in order to efficiently track MBE and WBE spending, an interface in JD Edwards, the County's financial software package, needs to be created so contracts that have MBE and WBE spending can be separated out from all of the other types of payments the County makes. At the next Advisory Committee meeting, Ms. Byrd-Smith would like to describe the process her department uses in handling that flow of information.

\* Please note the correction in red.

A discussion of the newly proposed County legislation as related to current reporting practices ensued. Tim Stevens asked if the Advisory Committee should send correspondence to County Council asking that the legislation be implemented. Some time was then spent reading through the legislation. Victor Diaz stated that in the few months he has been back in the Pittsburgh area, he has noticed more of a push for inclusion of minority and women businesses.

Mr. Stevens made reference to a discussion that took place toward the end of the Business Breakfast Meeting regarding the possibility of the performance of a follow-up audit on all contracts with all County Authorities and Departments. This was in reaction to a comment a female business owner made that contracts on paper were not being implemented. Mr. Stevens feels that a letter from the Advisory Committee requesting that Council back up the audit would be helpful. Ms. Byrd-Smith replied that it is likely that there are three readings of each piece of legislation so as to allow for revisions based on questions and comments that Council receives. Mr. Stevens pondered whether requesting the audit should be added to the support letter or be sent in a second letter by itself. He then made a motion for the Committee to both encourage County Council to pass the legislation and to request that included would be a provision to audit all contracts with MBEs and WBEs to ensure that the contracts are completed. Ms. Byrd-Smith abstained because the legislation would have a direct impact on her department, and the other Allegheny County staff remained quiet on this vote **as well as Dr. Howard Slaughter\***. The motion was passed, and it was agreed that Ms. Query would generate the letter.

Ms. Query raised the fact that at the Business Breakfast Meeting, MBE and WBE contractors requested an annual performance evaluation of all County Directors which would include an assessment of whether they are increasing MBE and WBE participation in contracts within their departments. A discussion ensued on past recommendations of the Advisory Committee as pertains to MBE and WBE contracting. Mr. Stevens wanted to include all prior recommendations that have not yet been fully implemented in the correspondence to County Council that will be drafted. Questions were raised regarding the methods the County uses to hire employees. Ms. Byrd-Smith reminded everyone that the M/W/DBE Department is not involved in hiring.

## **V. Adjournment**

The next Advisory Committee Meeting is scheduled for July 1, 2009 at 5:00 p.m. in the Liberty Room of the One Smithfield Street Building.

\* Please note the correction in red.