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**Allegheny County MBE Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**204 County Office Building**  
**Tuesday, June 5, 2012**  
**9:00 a.m.**

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**Advisory Committee Members in Attendance:**

Austin Davis – Executive Assistant, Office of the Allegheny County Executive  
Victor Diaz – CEO, Pittsburgh Metropolitan Area Hispanic Chamber of Commerce  
Amy Griser – Deputy Controller, Office of the Allegheny County Controller  
Ola Jackson – Founder/CEO – Onyx Woman Network (OWN)  
Marc Little – CEO/President, Minority and Women Educational Labor Agency (MWELA)  
M. Gayle Moss – Chair/President, MBE Advisory Committee/NAACP Pittsburgh Branch  
Joseph Olczak – Director, Allegheny County Department of Public Works  
James Overton – Chairman/President, City of Pittsburgh Equal Opportunity Review  
Commission/Overton Financial Group  
Roxanne Sewell – President, LJS Publishing/Talk Magazine  
Toni Silva – Supplier Relations Director, UPMC

**Advisory Committee Members Absent:**

Larry Brinker – President/CEO, Brinker Group  
Abass Kamara – Director of Government Affairs, Pittsburgh Penguins  
Iftikhar Malik – President, Shawn Malik, Inc.  
Gregory Spencer – President/CEO, Randall Industries, LLC  
Tim Stevens – Chairman, Black Political Empowerment Project (B-PEP)

**Also Present:**

Ruth Byrd-Smith – Director, Allegheny County Department of M/W/DBE  
Lisa Edmonds – Deputy Director, Allegheny County Department of M/W/DBE

**Agenda:**

- I. Open Meeting/Introductions**
- II. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes**
- III. Old Business**
- IV. New Business**
- V. Adjournment**

**I. Open Meeting/Introductions****II. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes**

The minutes from the December 7, 2011 meeting were approved.

**III. Old Business**

Since there were so many new Committee members, folders with information on the MBE Advisory Committee and the M/W/DBE Department were distributed. M. Gayle Moss stated that the Committee had been meeting every other month but noted that they can meet as often as they would like. She asked for suggestions on a meeting schedule. Ola Jackson asked for clarification on the Committee's responsibilities. Ms. Moss explained that the Committee works to help minority and women businesses obtain contracts. She noted that when she was on the NAACP board numerous complaints were received regarding contracting but after becoming part of the Advisory Committee she found that many opportunities existed that were not being pursued.

Roxanne Sewell inquired about the Chapter 435 legislation that was in the folder. Ruth Byrd-Smith replied that it is the part of Allegheny County's Administrative Code that outlines what the M/W/DBE Department does. She went on to review Chapter 435 for the new Committee members and gave a brief history of the M/W/DBE Department. Ms. Moss asked the new Committee members to read through the draft after the meeting. The changes the Committee proposed had been approved by the Law Department, and the Committee was awaiting the County Executive's feedback. Austin Davis confirmed that the County Executive had reviewed it and signed off on it. Amy Griser noted that the revised Chapter 435 will still need to go before County Council for final approval before it can be incorporated into the Administrative Code.

James Overton asked how the County has been doing with relation to the goals. Ms. Byrd-Smith answered that the goals have been met over the last few years. Ms. Griser asked if veterans are included under disadvantaged, and Ms. Byrd-Smith explained that they are not unless they can prove that they have suffered socioeconomic disparate treatment. Victor Diaz offered that he participates on the Committee to represent Hispanic businesses but also because he wants to help establish a uniform program so people are aware of the opportunities available to them. He referenced another objective the Committee pursued in the past, unbundling large contracts to provide opportunities for smaller companies.

Ms. Moss stated that the new administration wants the Advisory Committee to be visible because good things happen but are not always apparent to the public. Ms. Jackson offered that she has encouraged small business owners to apply for certification but some have been resistant for various reasons such as the amount of paperwork involved and disclosure of financial information. She would like the Committee to counteract those issues and suggested creating a video to walk business owners through the process.

Ms. Moss referenced the event that the Committee had discussed holding. Ms. Byrd-Smith suggested that the Committee plan a large-scale, statewide event for fall of next year that would focus on entrepreneurship opportunities for minorities and women.

#### **IV. New Business**

Ms. Byrd-Smith explained that the M/W/DBE Department is a County agency that oversees a federal program in order to receive federal funds. Changes to the program occur occasionally, such as the increase to the personal net worth cap that was instituted last year. She gave the Committee an overview of the tasks that the M/W/DBE Department performs. With regard to monitoring participation, Ms. Byrd-Smith expressed concern that primes do not always follow through with the participation plans that they present during the vetting process and asked the Committee for ideas on how to make sure the committed participation is achieved throughout the life of a contract. Ms. Jackson asked if consequences are specified within contracts if participation is not achieved. Mr. Diaz offered that some items within contracts are contingent and are not always needed during the course of a contract, and that complicates M/W/DBE usage. Mr. Overton commented that a prime should know in what capacity their subs will be working and when that will come into play, whether it is at a specific point during the contract or whether it is throughout the contract. Mr. Diaz felt that the onus is on the sub to follow up with the prime. Ms. Byrd-Smith reiterated her request for assistance with enforcement on open-ended contracts.

Marc Little asked if Ms. Byrd-Smith has enough staff to perform enforcement. She made reference to the organizational chart in the folders that outlined the M/W/DBE Department staff. Mr. Little talked about how the City EORC has increased their staff over time to be able to better monitor contracts and felt that the same needed to be done for the M/W/DBE Department. Ms. Moss has spoken to County Executive Fitzgerald about this as well. Ms. Byrd-Smith stated that the M/W/DBE Department contracts with three consultants to help keep up with the workflow. She described the volume of work regarding administering the certification process and the amount of files that are maintained. She stated that some processes have become automated but there are still tasks that can be done better. With regard to outreach, beginning June 16<sup>th</sup> the M/W/DBE Department will have a radio show on WBGN.

Mr. Little suggested forming a subcommittee to deal with enforcement. He volunteered to chair the subcommittee, and Mr. Overton, Mr. Davis and Toni Silva volunteered to serve on the subcommittee.

Ms. Moss proposed that the Committee meet next month, and asked each Committee member to bring a suggestion to the next meeting for something the Committee can pursue. The bulk of members preferred the 9:00 a.m. meeting time. Joseph Olczak offered the Public Works conference room for meetings. The next meeting will be on either July 24<sup>th</sup> or 26<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. Byrd-Smith went over the detailed statistics report with the Committee that reflected the M/W/DBE Department's activity during 2011. The report included statistics on the number of onsite visits performed, certification workshops conducted, construction status meetings attended, certification applications processed and certification files maintained. Also included in the folder was a news release detailing the largest case of disadvantaged business enterprise fraud in the nation's history, for which the owner of a PA UCP-certified firm was convicted. Mr. Little urged the new Committee members to read and understand the federal regulations that govern the PA UCP.

#### **V. Adjournment**

The next meeting will be in July.