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**Allegheny County MBE Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**204 County Office Building, 542 Forbes Avenue**  
**Wednesday, March 29, 2017**  
**9:00 a.m.**

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**Advisory Committee Members in Attendance:**

M. Gayle Moss – Chair, MBE Advisory Committee  
Roxanne Sewell – President, The LJS Group  
Toni Silva - Supplier Relations Director, UPMC  
James Overton - President/Principal Advisor, Overton Financial Group  
Austin Davis – Executive Assistant, Office of the Allegheny County Executive  
Barbara Parees – Deputy County Manager, Office of the Allegheny County Manager

**Advisory Committee Members Absent:**

Abass Kamara- Partner, Carey Group  
Victor Diaz – President, VideoTek Construction  
Marc Little – CEO/President, Minority and Women Educational Labor Agency (MWELA)  
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  
Dana Missouri – Administrative Assistant, Allegheny County Department of M/W/DBE

## Agenda:

- I. **Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes**
- II. **Director's Report**
- III. **Open Seats on Committee**
- IV. **Consultant's Report**
- V. **General Discussion**
- VI. **Adjournment**

- I. **Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes**  
Members approved the previous minutes.

- II. **Director's Report**

Ruth informs the committee she was at the Transportation Research Board meeting and gave a presentation that was well received.

Barb Parees asked what were some of the PNW issues, since that was one of the subjects that came up?

Ruth answered people hiding money, hiding real estate, family passing property or businesses along, parents gifting to their children or husbands and wives wanting to gift things to each other.

At the PA UCP Oversight Committee meeting, PennDOT, who is the developer of the new PA UCP database, went through the update and overview. Marc Pentino with U.S. DOT came in from Washington to provide technical training. JoAnne Lubart, who is the Senior Counsel in PennDOT's Office of General Counsel, presented on a couple of lawsuits that are currently at the Supreme Court level. One is at the 9<sup>th</sup> district and one is at the Supreme Court. There are around 10,000 cases that go before the Supreme Court every year but they only hear about 80 cases a year.

There are two events coming up. SHARE 2017 will take place on Thursday, March 30, 2017. DYNET Pittsburgh, which is on Thursday, May 25, 2017, will be held at Carnegie Mellon University.

Jim Overton asked about the M/WDBEs and groups Ruth participates in, if there are any changes from a federal level from the Trump administration that would affect their business?

Ruth answered that the budget on the federal level appears to be in a state of fluctuation with modifications. If it affects CDBG grants which are from HUD, it would affect people in public housing and projects that are sensitive to the community.

- III. **Open Seats on Committee**

Gayle asked how many open seats are available on the committee. Austin Davis responded that there are three seats currently open, but some seats will be reappointed. Councilman Walton said he has some suggestions that he will share with the Executive. Austin suggested bringing younger people aboard the committee and small business people as well. Ola Jackson, Greg Spencer, Larry Brinker and Iftikhar Malik are no longer Committee members. Ruth confirms that there are actually five seats open.

#### **IV. Consultant's Report**

Gayle says the last time the Committee had a meeting, there were things that needed to be addressed when County Manager Willy McKain was there about the consultants' report. Gayle wants to see something accomplished within the year and talk about some things she would like to see happen. Mr. McKain said that once the Committee picked things out in the report he would come to the meeting and they could discuss what they wanted to do.

Next Advisory Committee meeting will be on Friday, May 5, 2017 at 10am.

**The Program Evaluation's table of contents are discussed:** Toni Silva asked about the first table of contents – Allegheny County should consider increasing the resources that are currently provided to MWDBE Department? Toni asked, is this taking place? Ruth answered yes. Toni asked Ruth was it all the resources Ruth requested? Ruth explains that since the staff has been increased the budget has been increased. In addition, software upgrades have increased for the B2GNow systems. The second table of contents – the MWDBE Department should monitor more County bid documents, contracts, and leases for MWDBE contracting opportunities. Ruth says the department receives most of them now. The Department doesn't get sole source or piggyback contracts, RFQs, or MPOs. The third table of contents – Allegheny County should standardize MWDBE contract language and reporting procedures for all Departments of the County whenever possible. Ruth says the only department whose documentation is being worked on is Public Works. Somehow with organization changes the newer language was removed and an older version replaced it. Lisa Edmonds presents at Human Services pre bid meetings.

The fourth item - the MWDBE Department needs to consolidate its data management systems and reduce its paper processes to enhance departmental efficiency. There are some manual logs, and the Department is working with County Stats to consolidate keeping track of records. The fifth item – on average, the salaries of MWDBE personnel were not commensurate with median salaries of Allegheny County employees who had similar job titles in 2015. Ruth states there was an article where the Pittsburgh Courier has all six thousand salaries of Allegheny County and it is public record. The MWDBE salaries are low and need to be explored. There are no union jobs in the MWDBE Department. The sixth item – the County should ensure effective web-based communication procedures for the MWDBE Department. The department does have permission to update Facebook and posts its own information there. Also, the department met with Kevin Evanto who does the marketing for parks and shared some techniques for social media. The seventh item the County MWDBE Program should consider tracking DBE certification graduation performance as well as continue to recognize the accomplishments of both internal and external DBE participation advocates. Graduation that means someone has left the program.

#### **V. General Discussion**

Ruth informs the Committee that office manager Viola Baker and part-time employee Micaela Simmons are no longer with her department. Kristy Kwisnek will be moving into the position as office manager. She will be moving someone into Kristy's as the contract compliance specialist. There are currently two temporary employees working with the MWDBE Department and a new part-time employee is needed as

well. Ruth says that Viola was doing the web-based communication through Facebook and Kristy will start doing this for now.

**The Committee would like to have a call in feature for those unable to attend a meeting in person.**

#### **IV. Adjournment**