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**Allegheny County MBE Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**Facilities Management Conference Room, County Office Building**  
**Friday, June 26, 2015**  
**9:00 a.m.**

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**Advisory Committee Members in Attendance:**

M. Gayle Moss – Chair, MBE Advisory Committee  
James Overton – President/Principal Advisor, Overton Financial Group  
Toni Silva – Supplier Relations Director, UPMC  
Roxanne Sewell – President, LJS Publishing/Talk Magazine  
Ola Jackson – Founder/CEO, Onyx Woman Network (OWN)  
Marc Little – CEO/President, Minority and Women Educational Labor Agency (MWELA)

**Advisory Committee Members Absent:**

Larry Brinker – President/CEO, Brinker Group  
Austin Davis – Executive Assistant, Office of the Allegheny County Executive  
Barbara Pares – Deputy County Manager, Office of the Allegheny County Manager  
Tim Stevens – Chairman, Black Political Empowerment Project (B-PEP)  
Victor Diaz – President, VideoTek Construction  
Gregory Spencer – President/CEO, Randall Industries, LLC  
Abass Kamara – Partner, Carey Group  
Iftikhar Malik – President, Shawn Malik, Inc.

**Also Present:**

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

**Agenda:**

- I. Open Meeting**
- II. Introductions**
- III. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes**
- IV. Director's Report**
- V. Old Business**
- VI. New Business**
  - A. Ideas for Future Projects**
- VII. Miscellaneous**
- VIII. Adjournment**

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

The minutes from the February 12, 2015 meeting were approved.

**IV. Director's Report**

Ruth Byrd-Smith has provided a document detailing the Department's activities since the last meeting, which she also details aloud. Either she or someone else in the Department has taken part in 23 events between March and June 2015. She has also included a list of the members of the PA UCP Oversight Committee. In addition to the two satellite sites for one-on-one certification counseling sessions, a third site has been added at the Community Empowerment Association. Ms. Byrd-Smith would like to add a fourth site in the Mon Valley area (Braddock, McKeesport, etc.) Roxanne Sewell suggests reaching out to Fawn Walker-Montgomery and also indicates that Rashad Byrdsong has another staffed facility in McKeesport.

James Overton inquires about the status of new certifications; Ms. Byrd-Smith informs him that there is a spike in applications, which typically happens every summer due to the amount of construction projects happening in Pittsburgh. Ola Jackson is curious about how many African American-owned businesses are currently in the city of Pittsburgh. As far as certified African American-owned businesses go, that information is included in the Annual Report and the internal side of the PA UCP database; however, Ms. Byrd-Smith will provide the Committee with a figure later because she doesn't know the number off-hand, with the disclaimer that this information is not to be shared with the general public.

**V. Old Business**

Due to Austin Davis' absence, no update on the Chapter 435 Legislation will be available at this meeting.

Ms. Sewell refers to the February 12, 2015 meeting minutes in the section where the 13% MBE and 2% WBE participation percentages for Allegheny County are discussed. She asks why the numbers have not changed since conception in 1981. This subject was discussed at length during the last meeting. Ms. Byrd-Smith details why the figures were probably chosen and the process to eliminate the figures: Either a disparity study will need to be conducted, or a race-neutral program would have to be created. A disparity study will

probably cost anywhere from \$500,000 and up. A race-neutral program will eliminate MBE/WBE goals since race and gender do not necessarily determine criteria for a race neutral program. Ms. Sewell would like the Committee to make the recommendation to conduct a disparity study in order to raise the participation percentages. Toni Silva warns that they would need to understand the percentages relative to the population of Allegheny County before they make the recommendation, specifically because the minority population may have fallen since 1981.

Ms. Byrd-Smith would like to see more human service providers seek certification because of the amount of contract funds going through the Department of Human Services, and she asks the Committee to encourage providers they know to do so. Also, the M/W/DBE Department would like to host a meet-and-greet with providers in the fall.

## **VI. New Business**

M. Gayle Moss believes the County Executive will be able to deal with the legislation after elections.

Ms. Jackson asks what happens to members of the Advisory Committee who do not participate. Ms. Byrd-Smith says that all members are appointed at the County Executive's discretion; he does not know who is or is not participating unless the Committee notifies him. Currently, there is one vacancy on the Committee as Joyce Query's place was never replaced. Ms. Moss suggests that they all think of replacements for discussion to bring to the County Executive for an appointment.

### **A. Ideas for Future Projects**

After a discussion about markets that need certified businesses (e.g. catering, medical staffing, concessionaires), Ms. Silva suggests compiling a list and circulating this information for businesses. Ms. Moss has a list of ideas for future projects and believes this would be a good idea to add. Marc Little asks if there is a list of contracts that the County is looking to utilize and Ms. Byrd-Smith points to the Commodities section on the Purchasing & Supplies area of the County website. Mr. Little also asks if this information is being sent to small businesses in the area; it is not, but it is accessible to them through the Commodities section referenced above. Ms. Byrd-Smith explains that the report from ProRank Business Solutions, LLC will identify any gaps where businesses can be utilized on contracts. Speaking of the report, it should be ready by the end of June to mid-July of this year, then it will be passed to the County Manager and a meeting will be scheduled to move forward with it.

Ms. Byrd-Smith also proposes a forum to teach business owners how to conduct business.

## **VII. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned.