
Allegheny County MBE Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
Facilities Management Conference Room, County Office Building
Tuesday, June 28, 2016
10:00 a.m.

Advisory Committee Members in Attendance:

M. Gayle Moss – Chair, MBE Advisory Committee
Toni Silva – Supplier Relations Director, UPMC
Austin Davis – Executive Assistant, Office of the Allegheny County Executive
Roxanne Sewell – President, LJS Publishing/Talk Magazine
Abass Kamara – Partner, Carey Group
Ola Jackson – Founder/CEO, Onyx Woman Network (OWN)
James Overton – President/Principal Advisor, Overton Financial Group
Barbara Parees – Deputy County Manager, Office of the Allegheny County Manager
Tim Stevens – Chairman, Black Political Empowerment Project (B-PEP)

Advisory Committee Members Absent:

Larry Brinker – President/CEO, Brinker Group
Victor Diaz – President, VideoTek Construction
Iftikhar Malik – President, Shawn Malik, Inc.
Gregory Spencer – President/CEO, Randall Industries, LLC
Marc Little – CEO/President, Minority and Women Educational Labor Agency (MWELA)

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
William McKain- Allegheny County, County Manager

Agenda:

- I. Open Meeting**
- II. Introductions**
- III. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes**
- IV. Review of AC MWDBE Evaluation Report
(Consultants via Skype)**
- V. New Business**
- VI. Miscellaneous**
- VII. Adjournment**

I. Open Meeting**II. Introductions**

Gayle Moss thanks everyone for coming out and that it's good to see everyone. Gayle, explains to Austin she sees him all the time and also, thanks Willie for being there and there's no introductions needed for Willie. Ruth introduces Dana Missouri as her new Administrative Assistant and explains Dana was once a Temp. Gayle Moss introduces Kyron Robinson- Consultant via Skype and thanks him. Kyron in advance apologized, because he would have liked to have had specific questions from everyone. Kyron states he could have had very pointed answers for everyone, because there's over 100 pages of content and there's a lot of information and if he's asked something that he doesn't have off hand, he will definitely get the committee the information. Next, everyone goes around the table to introduce themselves to Kyron.

III. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

The Approval of Previous Meeting was not discussed.

IV. Review of AC MWDBE Evaluation Report (Consultant via Skype)

Kyron, explains his idea is kind of an informal conversation and hopefully everyone had enough time to go through the report, because there's a lot of content. The overall premise of the report is that, they found that Allegheny County over all probably at a diversity stand point and definitely from a 49 CFR perspective and from a PA UCP certified DBE is the Hub of the Commonwealth as far diversity, as far as populace and population for DBE's. There are more DBE's in Allegheny County then the next four counties combined. Although Allegheny has interesting stats, Allegheny County as of 2007 census business survey Allegheny County has about 200,000 less people then Philadelphia. Looking at Philadelphia County which is the entire city of Philadelphia, Allegheny County has 200,000 less people. Philadelphia 75,000 more businesses. They have about 75 percent more certified DBE's in the PA UCP database in 2015 at the time of our review in Philadelphia which is a major finding. Part of what they did was to go back and look at Allegheny County and looked at their current practices, they interviewed internal and external stakeholders of both with surveys and interviews. They surveyed about 200 Allegheny County MWDBE's firms to get their feedback. They interviewed about 16 MWDBE's firms one-on-one and went to their place of business interviewed their staff and got feedback. What they wanted

to do was see what Allegheny County was already doing and where they felt they needed help as far as the external MWDBE's as well as the Allegheny County community felt they needed help. Then they compared best practices for Allegheny County MWDBE department to the 6 benchmark counties of the compact 21 report. There was a report done in the late 90's, it' was referenced in their report. Allegheny County used the report to restructure their current government structure, it was based on the economic development of 6 counties that were experiencing extreme growth and economic development in the early and late 90's and with this they came to the current County Executive system that the county implemented, since Allegheny County viewed those other counties, as benchmark counties the model of the actual government structure they figured those would be good places to start, to look for best practices as far as those counties are doing with their MWDBE programs and compare them to what Allegheny County is doing. They found 7 recommendations, they were tasked with a particular contract, to find ways to improve the current program and to increase participation. The only way to help a program improve or increase a participation is to point at things that need improved (areas of opportunity). They also, wanted to commend the County and the Committee with being proactive to do this kind of evaluation and report which let them work together. This report wasn't mandated by FHW Way or somebody who funds Allegheny County, this was something that was done internally by Allegheny County. The overall objective of this project is to point out areas of opportunity. Allegheny County is leading the way from a diversity standpoint and giving the other benchmark counties a run for their money. They looked at benchmark counties and looked at all the data that those 7 recommendations to help improve what they believed would be the counties programs and increase participation of Women and Minority businesses on county contracts. This is important to the economic development, the fastest growing businesses are Women and Minority small businesses. If the MWDBE department can continue to drive the growth and success of these businesses, they can continue to drive the success of Allegheny County.

7 Findings

Findings

1. The County should consider increasing resources that their currently providing to the MWDBW department based on an overview reviewing chapter of 435 county code and the objectives of the MWDBE department, to view all county contracts, bid leases and agreements for participation, where the county has discretion. Based on feedback on internal stakeholders about their work load, feedback on external stakeholders about the level of contact they had with the county. Also, findings on analysis of fiscal budget, and on average the amount of resources committed to the county over the year. And what the MWDBE is requesting analysis on how much it would cost the MWDBE.
2. The MWDBE should monitor more county bid documents, contracts and leases for MWDBE contracting opportunities. Minority contracts that are reporting to the MWDBE department of those MWDBE department have the resources, the opportunities and the 100 percent buy in from the purchasing department. Everything is coming from the purchasing department the contracts are 96 percent of the dollars spent. Ruth's department is doing what they can, with the staff they have.
3. Allegheny County should standardize MWDBE contracts language and reporting procedures for all departments of the county, whenever possible. Looking at the Annual Report MWDBE department the numbers are broken into major departments that are reporting to Ruth. The information gathered is not all the same information.

4. The MWDBE management department needs to consolidate its management systems and reduced paper process and enhance departmental efficiencies. Ruth's department is responsible for processing, managing and maintaining on a daily basics and a monthly basics their roll for PA UCP for all county MWDBE's. Also, Ruth's department have to continuously maintain their firms and reach out to their firms Annually and audited them and certified the new firms. There's no effective managing systems to preform multiple functions in one system. Ruth's department are using multiple spreadsheets in one system and logs to manually keep track of their systems. Ruth's department is understaffed and under resourced.
5. Some of Ruth's department staff feel they're not being compensated fairly and this is unfair with the MWDBE department structure. Ruth's staff have at least 10 years in the MWDBE office and some staff members with 26 years. Ruth's staff salaries are not in comparison the other Allegheny County employees with similar job titles in 2015.
6. The County should ensure effective web-based communications procedures for the MWDBE department. Ruth's department staff could reduce the amount of travel time if they had webinar communication procedures. Ruth's staff was asked questions about social networks. Ruth's staff have always managed their own social networks and post and it works for them. Ruth's staff's social network for MWDBE kind of got lost with the counties communication department. Twitter could also be a great source of communication for the MWDBE office.
7. The county MWDBE program should consider tracking DBE certifications graduation performances. There's two ways a certified DBE can leave the DBE program. They could have annual amount of gross receipts for NAICS codes, then the firm would have graduated. The other way is if a firms PNW exceeds their limit. Some firm's will shut down at the end of the year, because they don't want to graduate from program. When firms do graduate the program, we should do a press release. Ruth's department is federally regulated mandated by 49 CFR their apart of federally regulated program that is part of US DOT's program, US Department of Transportation to recognize Women and Minority for contractors for the award of US DOT dollars. Ruth's department is also doing certifications for Penndot, and certifications for Airports.

Addendum

The County could do what they want with all this information and it is documented and put on the record. Ruth's department should consider reporting directly to the County Executive.

Questions and Answers

County Manager, William McKain thanks Kyron, Wade and his team for doing a great job. Everyone applauds them as well. William McKain explains the county should challenge themselves and that Ruth and her team did a great job. William McKain also, explains Public Works is a dollar spending department. Debbie Lewis worked for Public Works and is now with the MWDBE Department as a Contract Compliance Specialist. William McKain believes that from day one Ruth had problems with Software Technology, he also believes software technology could enhance performance and helps staff.

Gayle Moss, – Chair, MBE Advisory Committee states since she's been around, she has seen great things happening. And there are a lot of things they still need to do, but at least they're on the right track. Gayle asks, how do you get the general public to know what's going on as far as Communications?

Kyron answers, Gayle answer: Communications is key to getting information out to the general public and communities. Another communication tool is Linked in to use for communicating and other social networks.

Supplier Relations Director, UPMC, Toni Silva has a question for the County, there's 7 recommendations, are we all in agreement that we will work on these recommendations?

Executive Assistant, Office of the Allegheny County Executive, Austin Davis says there's a lot of good recommendations, and they can't work on all of them. But, their committed to making MWDBE office better and strengthening it.

Director, Allegheny County Department of M/W/DBE, Ruth Byrd-Smith says some of the 7 Recommendations have been addressed.

Founder/CEO, Onyx Woman Network (OWN), Ola Jackson, asks a question about the County 96 contracts being monitored.

Kyron, states they are being monitored from Ruth's department is in contact and involved with the process from the beginning to the end. And know about the numbers from the purchasing department and they are accountable for those numbers.

William explains the process of bidding for Public Works and Ruth's department work hand in hand.

Kyron explains Philadelphia is huge and has a lot of moving parts. They have on liaison for each of their departments, that is responsible for information Ruth's department needs from them.

Chairman, Black Political Empowerment Project (B-PEP), Tim Stevens, Congratulates Kyron on his work. Number 2, the potential to have contracting work for minorities contractors. Talks about recommendations and where people come from and pouring money into minority communities. He also, asks if the County will get back to the committee about these recommendation?

William McKain, talks about responding to the recommendations and Public Works. Ruth says County handles contracts for Minority/Women. Some departments get funding from the federal government.

The rest of the meeting, the members talk about the 7 recommendations, county contracts, faith based agencies, workshops, non-profits, human services, high performers and participants.

Austin Davis gives an update on the legislation, it's finish they met with councilman Walton, their prepared to send it to council on Thursday. Councilman Walton wants to get the process started in July.

Ruth and the Committee thank Kyron Robinson and Wade's work was done Pro Bono.

Kyron thanks the committee for the opportunity.

The members discuss the 7 recommendations and agree to go through each recommendation. Members discuss new staff members in Ruth's office.

V. Old Business

Jail Medical and the Jail Phones.

VI. New Business

Authorities?

VII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned.