
Allegheny County MBE Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
204 County Office Building, 542 Forbes Avenue
Friday, May 5, 2017
10:00 a.m.

Advisory Committee Members in Attendance:

Austin Davis – Executive Assistant, Office of the Allegheny County Executive
Victor Diaz – President, VideoTek Construction-**Conference Call**
M. Gayle Moss – Chair, MBE Advisory Committee
James Overton – President/Principal Advisor, Overton Financial Group-**Conference Call**
Barbara Parees – Deputy County Manager, Office of the Allegheny County Manager
Toni Silva – Supplier Relations Director, UPMC

Advisory Committee Members Absent:

Abass Kamara – Partner, Carey Group
Marc Little – CEO/President, Minority and Women Educational Labor Agency (MWELA)
Roxanne Sewell – President, The LJS Group
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
William McKain – Allegheny County, County Manager

Agenda:

- I. Open Meeting**
- II. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes**
- III. Conversation with the County Manager**
- IV. Old Business**
- V. New Business**
- VI. Miscellaneous**
- VII. Adjournment**

I. Open Meeting

Gayle opens the meeting and thanks everyone for being there. Victor Diaz and James Overton are both attending via conference call.

II. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

Minutes are approved.

III. Conversation with the County Manager

William McKain starts by referring to the MWDBE 2016 Annual Report. He thinks it's a nice effort and reflection on Ruth Byrd-Smith, her department and the County. He says the County always strives to do better. Willy thinks Ruth and Lisa would agree that it's a nice collaboration with the new County Stats department to help put the report together. County Stats is a new division that gathers data, analysis and analytics that challenges them to do things better. He explains when you read the report it will create some discussion which is good. He thinks you will come away with the opinion that the County is doing well, but they always want to do better.

Mr. McKain talks about why he was invited to the meeting. He explains that since Rich Fitzgerald became the County Executive, one of the things he's great at is making sure we are competitive. Also attracting talented people to work for the County as public servants isn't for everybody. Mr. McKain says he would argue that the salaries aren't commiserate, but that he would stack our benefits up to anybody. He says if you are with the County, you have an option of great benefits including UPMC and Allegheny Health. He says our benefit plans are unbelievable. Mr. McKain says this is a modest contribution to contribute that to our employees who bargain with our unions and non-represented staff. We also have fine pension benefits.

Mr. McKain continued by saying as far as MWDBE, Rich Fitzgerald came into office in 2012 the County has increased the budget, with the adopted budget in 2017. It was increased by 54%. He thinks this is reflective of Mr. Fitzgerald's and the County's recognition that they need more resources. This means it's about 11% a year and about a quarter million dollars. This is the overall budget. Mr. McKain references the salaries of the MWDBE department. He says we are competitive and there are rewards for high performers. He mentions that Ruth does have high performers in her department, and they are rewarded within the confines of their budget constraints. He says they tried to say thank you and recognizing them, everyone in this department has received an annual raise with Mr. Fitzgerald's direction. Ruth along with other directors have the opportunity to document and make recommendations for high performers. Not everyone who makes a recommendation gets one. This is done through the budget process, during the calendar year of January to December. Mr. McKain said that there was not a tax increase this year, and he doesn't see one in the foreseeable future. Some of the

percentages of high performers actually received a 22% increase over a period of time. Someone else got a 14% and someone got an 12% raise. Willy says he's not naming names because it's not appropriate but Ruth has a lot of high performers. And when Ruth is able to demonstrate, document and recommend some people that are adding value and taking more responsibilities and being competitive in the County market and also in the workforce at large they try to give people that are helping her department and the mission that's reflective in the report. Mr. McKain went on to explain that giving the M/W/DBE Department over a quarter of a million of dollars more and adding one new staff member and transferring a staff member from Public Works will provided additional resources. He hopes this gives the Advisory Committee some data that helps them understand that they are investing in and recognizing Ruth's efforts.

Toni Silva questioned the salaries relative to the market. Mr. McKain responds overall under the new Fitzgerald administration, everyone got a raise across the board. It is case by case based, and with Ruth's recommendation he says we try to match that up as much as possible. He says it's performance based while acknowledging that they do look at salaries County wide and they know where they are in the market. Also to be considered are the benefits package, including the pension which employees receive if they get in 20 years. He further explains that if employees work for the County for 20 years and reach the age 60, they get 50% of their salary for the rest of their life. He added that the County does everything they can to be competitive. M. Gayle Moss talks about people's salaries according to their education level. Mr. McKain answers not everyone gets a raise, there's a lot of conversation and they have to justify why someone wants a raise. Gayle says Ruth's office has done very well, and the annual report shows it. Everyone agreed.

Mr. Overton states that he commends the leadership of the County in terms of the spirit of orientation to compensation, wages and salaries. His question is, in terms of marketplace do they also look at similar situated governmental entities as far as what Ruth's staff is earning, and how our resources apply to similar situated operations within other governmental entities. Mr. McKain answers that he stacked up all the County salaries to regional some were very competitive and some were not about benefits and salaries. Mr. Diaz says he wants them to take care of Ruth. Ms. Moss and Mr. McKain did answer their questions and everyone thanked him. Mr. McKain said the Annual Report was great and he thinks it's a great reflection on the work the department does.

Ms. Byrd-Smith says she gets questions with regard to the report are the numbers that are reported on the authorities. She also says people think she responsible for all the authorities that show up in her Annual Report. Ms. Moss asks who the Annual Report goes to. Ms. Byrd-Smith answers, the report goes out to all the County Directors, County Council members, the County Executive's office, the foundations with which her department works, the City of Pittsburgh. It is available on the County's website. Also, PA UCP certified firms receive it electronically, while the firms that are highlighted received a print copy. Mr. McKain thanks everyone for their service and exits the meeting.

IV. Old Business

Ms. Moss asks what will be the Committee's next project. She also says they need to recruit some new people. Austin Davis says the County Executive has two names from Councilman DeWitt Walton that they have to discuss. Mr. Davis said send any suggestions his way as they're going through the process of recruiting new committee members. He says now and until the next meeting they should take a minute and come back with some new ideas.

V. New Business

Ms. Byrd-Smith explains in September 2017 the PAU CP will be convening in Pittsburgh as well as the Appeals Committee and Oversight Committee. She explains that after she took over as Chair they hosted the Appeals and the Oversight Committee during the same time. It will cut down on travel for everybody. This is the same week the M/W/DBE Department's Open House is held. The Committee would like to be there for the Open House. It's grown over the years and is a good way for business owners to network. The Open House will be held on Thursday, September 21, 2017 at the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission who partners with the M/W/DBE Department. Ms. Byrd-Smith mentions that if they have too many appeals, they will meet on the Wednesday, September 20, 2017 too. She met with Dr. Rodney McClendon from CMU who is the COO of CMU. Ruth mentions that she is a co-sponsor of a program event called DyNet Pittsburgh that will be held at the end of May 2017. It is a federal contracting opportunity and it's a trade show setting. The speakers include County Executive Rich Fitzgerald, who is the keynote speaker for lunch. She explains that the M/W/DBE Department is a part of this because PA UCP certification is federal.

VI. Miscellaneous

General conversation about Pittsburgh other cities and states ensues. Discussion occurs regarding the need to have younger people on the Committee.

VII. Adjournment

The Committee thanks Mr. Diaz and Mr. Overton for being on the conference call line. The meeting is adjourned.