
Allegheny County MBE Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
204 County Office Building, 542 Forbes Avenue
Monday, September 11, 2017
10:00 a.m.

Advisory Committee Members in Attendance:

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

Advisory Committee Members Absent:

Abass Kamara – Partner, Carey Group
Marc Little – CEO/President, Minority and Women Educational Labor Agency (MWELA)
Roxanne Sewell – President, LJS Publishing/Talk Magazine
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**
- II. Introductions**
- III. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes**
- IV. Directors Report**
- V. Demo of Compliance**
- VI. Open House**
- VII. Miscellaneous**
- VIII. Adjournment**

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

The minutes from previous meeting dating May 5TH were approved.

IV. Director's Report

Ruth Byrd-Smith discussed the Governor's Diversity Counsel to develop a Mentor Protégé Program (MPP) for minorities and women. The Mentor-Protégé program is designed to motivate and encourage large business prime contractor firms to provide mutually beneficial developmental assistance to small business, veteran-owned small business, service-disabled veteran-owned small business, HUB Zone small business, small disadvantaged business, and women-owned small business concerns. The program is also designed to improve the performance of contracts and subcontracts, foster establishment of long-term business relationships between larger prime contractors and small business subcontractors and strength subcontracting opportunities accomplishments through incentives. Ms. Byrd-Smith explained that the Pennsylvania Department of General Services (DGS) is an agency at the state level. Pennsylvania doesn't do any certifications. This is where the problem comes in because companies must be certified before they are verified at the state level. There is where the MPP comes in to help the minority businesses. The Chairman of Mentor Protege Program, Carl Cooper, is actively engaged in the development of the MPP program. The attributes to this program are equivalent to those of US DOT (United States Department of Transportation). Mentor-Protégé Programs exist in many federal agencies to help small businesses gain technical and business skills from large prime contractors, and to build networks and experience that will help them compete and succeed in the federal contracting landscape. This program can expand small businesses nationwide.

Her concerns about the current amendment are as follows:

1. Feedback from both MPP and companies needs to be the same but a lot of times the stories comeback differently. Joint feedback is a must and in the past through research feedback has shown to be nonbinding.
2. Concerns that companies will not get sensitivity they need from Protege Program representative that they are working with.
3. Larger businesses always have a bigger advantage over minority and smaller companies when dealing with MPP because of their success level.

Ms. Byrd-Smith expressed ways to get around these concerns such as keeping frequent engagement with MPP, allowing positive feedback on both ends of the business as well as keeping

measurements high to project milestones for the companies. A lot of companies can benefit from MPP. Since laws vary from state to state and there are different testing level laws the MPP can engage companies in out of state ventures for expanding their company. Industry cluster would look at companies who have a timeline provided by mentors who share positive feedback from companies.

V. Demo of Compliance Statistics

The B2Gnow System is a web-based, enterprise-class solution for managing organization-wide diversity programs.

VI. Vacant Seats of Committee Adjournment

In meeting the committee discussed that there were five vacant seats. However, they have potential candidates they are considering. Diversity and experience are playing a big role in the selection.

VII. Open House Discussion

Ms. Ruth Byrd-Smith gave details of the content of the M/W/DBE Department's Annual Open House which was scheduled to take place on Thursday, September 21 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. in Two Chatham Center.

VIII. Miscellaneous

Questions were asked on how the tracking software works to get information. Ms. Byrd-Smith that the software has an outreach component and contractors receive an automated notice to report their income. Data from start of contract to present is in system. Contractor payment summary for credit and even goal types are in this web based system. Ms. Byrd-Smith informed the Committee that the M/W/DBE Department staff participated in a civil rights webinar series. It touched on issues such as the challenges that LGBTQ and minority communities face.

IX. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned.