

MINUTES

**SOLID WASTE AUTHORITY OF PALM BEACH COUNTY
SMALL BUSINESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 4, 2020
9:00 A.M.**

Present: Shellie Ransom-Jackson (Chair, At-Large)
Patricia Leonaggeo (Vice Chair, District 6)
Maria Antuna (At-Large)
Bruce Lewis (At-Large)
Selena Samios (At-Large)

ABSENT: Junaid Akther (District 2) – *Excused Absence*

STAFF: Colleen Robbs, Director, Equal Business Opportunity Office
Hattie Asberry, Outreach Specialist
Kendrick Jackson, Contract Compliance Specialist
Tim Thompson, Contract Compliance Specialist
Myra Piper, Administrative Assistant

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Ransom-Jackson called the Small Business Advisory Committee (SBAC) meeting to order at 9:03 a.m. in the Solid Waste Authority's Administration Building Auditorium located at 7501 North Jog Road, West Palm Beach, Florida.

ROLL CALL

Ms. Piper called the roll, and each member in attendance stated they were present.

PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

Ms. Ransom-Jackson led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Ms. Ransom-Jackson called for a motion for approval of the agenda. A motion was moved by Mr. Lewis and seconded by Ms. Samios. With no objections, the agenda was adopted.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Ransom-Jackson asked the Committee for a motion to approve the minutes of the December 3, 2019 meeting. A motion was moved by Mr. Lewis to accept the minutes, as presented, and seconded by Ms. Antuna. The minutes were adopted with no objections.

FOLLOW-UP RESPONSES

Ms. Robbs provided follow-up responses to two (2) questions brought forth at the December 3, 2019 SBAC Meeting:

Question #1: What ethnicities are listed as “Other Minority,” and which would fall under this category?

Response: This question derived from a discussion regarding a subcontractor that was listed in the October report, and the vendor (Bergowe, Inc.) held an SBE certification by Palm Beach County’s OEBO. In the SWA’s vendor registration system, Bergowe, Inc. identified himself as other minority and male. Within the EBO’s Economic Inclusion Policy, minority is defined as four basic groups (African American, Hispanic American, Asian American and Native American). When applying for certification with the county, this individual applied for an SBE certification and did not provide documentation on ethnicity. However, with SWA’s vendor registration process, businesses have the option to identify minority if they are an SBE and their gender. This individual chose to identify himself as other minority, unrelated to their certification but did provide their gender.

Question #2: What types of Professional Services contracts were included in the “Contract Type Summary” for FY 2018-19? Were any minority businesses recruited for subcontracting opportunities for this category?

Response: The types of Professional Services contracts indicated in the EBO October report included an award for Biomass Waste Processing (S/M/WBE subcontracting participation), and Operations and Maintenance of Recovered Materials Processing Facility (S/M/WBE subcontracting participation). As mentioned on December 3rd, seven (7) contracts were awarded to engineering firms (SBE Vendor Rotational API). These firms are SBE and minority (Asian and/or African American).

Comment: Mr. Lewis thanked Ms. Robbs for the information and clarification, and acknowledged the progress to date.

EBO PROGRAM UPDATE

Prior to Ms. Robbs updating the Committee on the information contained in the EBO November and December reports, she reminded members that EBO (entire agency by department) reports monthly to SWA’s Executive Director who reports to the Board. The reports distributed were generated since the last Committee meeting.

As of November 2019, **Vendor Registration** total was 667 registered vendors with almost 250 certified firms; 453 Vendors by Certification Type (number almost doubled as some vendors hold multiple certifications, MBE, WBE, M/WBE and SBE). There are more SBE certifications because it has been a while since the county agencies were certifying firms as minority. We all in a collective efforts are trying to get companies who have the designation of SBE or who are not certified at this time to get certified as M/WBE.

In the EBO November report on page 2, “ITBs/RFPs Reviewed/Pending Contract Award/Contract Execution with APIs,” a number of contracts in the pipeline were advertised

and in process with APIs (**Affirmative Procurement Initiatives**) that were certified SBE only (ensure smaller firms are competing with counterparts), SBE evaluation preferences, and subcontracting goals.

CONTRACT TYPE SUMMARY		
Contracts Awarded	Number of Contracts	Participation Percentage
10/01/2018 to 11/30/2019	68	33.7%
11/01/2019 to 11/30/2019	9	0%

Ms. Robbs noted a number of SBE certified firms, are minority but hold an SBE certification.

As of December 2019, **Vendor Registration** total was 676 registered vendors with 253 certified firms; 463 Vendors by Certification.

In the EBO December report on page 2, “ITBs/RFPs Reviewed/Pending Contract Award/Contract Execution with APIs,” a number of contracts listed with preferences to ensure that small businesses have a fair chance at working with us.

CONTRACT TYPE SUMMARY		
Contracts Awarded	Number of Contracts	Participation Percentage
10/01/2018 to 12/31/2019	86	22.1%
11/01/2019 to 12/31/2019	2	0%

Percentages change every day as firms work and get paid.

The Contract Type Summary report lists services (e.g. Professional Services, Trade Services, etc.), Contract Type/Title, Goal and Goal Type, etc. In December, of the two (2) contracts listed, one (1) was an SBE certified, Hispanic Female.

Mr. Lewis: With the various categories of certification (e.g. SBE, M/WBE, etc.) most recently the City of WPB enacted an MBE program which requires businesses to submit additional paperwork to obtain the designation (e.g. a company that is SBE can also be MBE). Is there a way we can address how to minimize the additional paperwork for certification reciprocity across the board?

Ms. Robbs: Commended the Governing Board and Executive Director for having the foresight and commitment to small and minority participation in procurement. SWA chose not to certify firms because there are three (3) major agencies in Palm Beach County that certify, therefore, SWA did not want to create additional barriers for small businesses. The Authority does not certify firms as small or minority but SWA accepts certification from our partnering agencies; we coordinate efforts to not create additional barriers for businesses. Our outreach efforts encourage businesses to register as a vendor; bring the County’s certification to SWA’s online portal at www.SWA.org/vendor to register to be a part of the Vendor Registration System where SWA staff can identify the services provided and certification type held so contact goals can be set. Our daily mission is to increase the number of registered firms, and also that they bid and are awarded. We also coordinate meetings with our Palm Beach partners because we understand how

important a vendor's time is, so we coordinate outreach events so that vendors can get the best value for the time.

Mr. Lewis: Continued to question the additional paperwork required by the certifying agencies.

Ms. Ranson: Does SWA offer an outside source to assist with the certification paperwork? Running a business and doing the paperwork can be extremely overwhelming. Ms. Ransom-Jackson mentioned CEI, a company that helps with capability statements, certification, etc. Can SWA identify outside non-profit organizations to assist small businesses?

Ms. Robbs: SWA partners with FDOT and CEI to hold trainings that involve everything from cost estimating to construction management to certification; August's business training sessions will be SWA's third time partnering with them to offer businesses technical assistance. We are recruiting businesses to PBC. Also, SWA partners with Florida Women Business Center who offers assistance with certification at no cost. Through partnerships, SWA provides such services as technical assistance, financing and certification at outreach events. We will continue to monitor this as we work with our partnering agencies.

Ms. Ranson: Are links to the agencies readily available on SWA/EBO's website?

Ms. Robbs: Yes.

Ms. Leonageo: Referenced a recent personal experience with applying for certification, stating the process was streamlined and at no cost.

Ms. Samios: How can we improve the vendor registration process and obtain vendor feedback whether accepted or not?

Ms. Robbs: Vendor registration process may take the vendor a matter of minutes to complete. SWA's vendor registration is a 2-step approval process: 1) EBO's initial review, and 2) Purchasing Services' final review to verify FEIN and W-9.

Mr. Lewis: Commended SWA for streamlining the Vendor Registration process and Palm Beach County's certifying agencies for streamlining their processes.

Ms. Robbs: Certification does not prevent a vendor from registering; vendors can register now, and certification can be added thereafter; vendors do not have to be certified to bid. There are opportunities at the SWA.

Ms. Leonageo: If a business is certified with the County, do they have to go in and register with every single city or government agency?

All: The general consensus responded with "yes."

OUTREACH CAMPAIGN

Ms. Asberry stated that the first Transformational Tuesday Business Development Training, "How to Become an Effective Leader," was a huge success. The vendors and participants were excited about the great business changing takeaways (e.g. effective leaders possess a clear vision

and they add value to their workers at their businesses, and how this vision helps the organization). The audience interaction was well-received by the 40 participants. Ms. Asberry asked the Committee members how could they help SWA reach out to vendors to encourage vendor registration. Members responded by saying each would reach out to their various businesses via different communication methods.

MEETING ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:44 a.m.

Announced Future Meeting Dates: 4/7/20, 6/2/20, 8/11/20, 10/6/20 and 12/1/20.

Attest:



Colleen Robbs, Director, EBO Office



Myra Piper, Administrative Assistant