

Inclusive Procurement and Contracting Board Meeting Minutes

Date: January 9th, 2024 | Time: 5:30 pm | Location: Microsoft Teams (Virtual) & TRC
1165 Franklin Street, Suite 100, South Bend, IN 46601

Link: <https://tinyurl.com/ipcboardmeeting>

❖ **Call to Order- The IPC Board Committee is now called to order on January 9th, 2024, @ 5:30 p.m.**

- COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Rachel Tomas-Morgan, Kara Boyles, Keana Baylis, Murray Miller
- COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT VIRTUALLY: Michael Morris, Breanna Allen, Jeff Rae
- - DIVERSITY & INCLUSION: Cynthia Simmons, Darius Lipsey, Bianca Jones
 - PURCHASING: Mickey Lovey
 - LEGAL: Michael Schmidt
 - PUBLIC WORKS: Kara Boyles

❖ COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

- ❖ Approval of Minutes: December 5th, 2023, Minutes were requested to be revised and will be reviewed for approval on February 6th, 2024.

Notes & Action Items

I. Diversity and Inclusion:

Board- Questions to the accuracy of the meeting minutes for 12.5.23 based on the transcription.

Bianca Jones- We will revise and clean up the minutes.

Keana Baylis- Request all documents be submitted a week before the meeting.

Jeff Rae- We are a public body, so we do have a responsibility to make sure the public understands what we're doing. Minutes were not posted for the public.

Jones- When submitting to the clerk's office it was the understanding that the clerk's office uploads these to Laserfiche for public access. Since this has not happened, we will identify where that responsibility lies and ensure that the records are made available.

Kara Boyles- Since there are some adjustments that need to be made, let's hold on to the end of the meeting or table it to the next meeting.

Cynthia Simmons- Taylor- Our efforts are continuing, and we have 84 MWBEs that are not certified that the city is currently doing business with. Our intent is to reach out to those businesses and suggest they become certified.

Wilbur Boggs- If you contact them and they indicate that they do not want to be Certified, what is your next step?

Simmons-Taylor- We can't force them to become certified.

Boggs- Right, but you can stop listing them as minority or women owned if they are not certified then you can't keep listing them on this report.

Simmons-Taylor- We can take that into consideration and under advisement.

Boggs: And that means what?

Simmons-Taylor- Either we continue listing them so that you know they are a women or minority owned business or we will stop listing them that way and just be non-certified spends. We want to understand what you (the board) want to see differently.

Baylis- I don't know if it's necessarily what we want to see change or what should have been done in the first place. You can list someone as certified if they are not certified so it should be an issue.

Simmons- Taylor- I can't speak to what happened before me. This was happening before I got here and if that a change, we want to see I will take it under advisement and look at how that can affect reporting.

Baylis- Why are you looking at it under advisement if they weren't supposed to list people that are not certified from the start? Are you guys worried that it will mess up the number, which is what we've been saying anyway.

Simmons-Taylor- I cannot speak to why they were listed as MWBEs, but we can go back, and we can look, and we can do our best to try to encourage people to become certified.

Boyles- I believe the reason they are listed, if I am correct, is because of a self-certification process that took place with the established info. DFO was established in 2020 vendors were asked to provide us with information if they did business with us. They filled out a form and that was a selection piece to identify if you were a women owned, or minority owned business.

Simmons-Taylor- So we basically took them at their word and what the board is saying is we need to verify.

Boyles- Well, it's still an aspect of the program, right to have minority and women owned businesses as well as certified.

Boggs- If they are not certified then they are not. It's either you are or you aren't as far as self-certification just like I told your predecessor it's not acceptable. There is no such thing as self-certification or self-identification in the business.

Boyles- where in the business to not penalize these entities but to assist them and get them into future stay that may entail certification like this.

Simmons-Taylor- If we can assist, and we will assist them in becoming certified, that hope is that we will get more yays than nays.

Boyles- We had this conversation before and historically it was important because of the transition in the software to keep as accurate of data as we could knowing certified numbers were low. So it was important to the members of previous boards, myself included that we continued to report how they identified as women or minority. It thinks it helps to give a baseline of what we could be seeing should everyone become certified.

Boggs- She should let them know that they are not and we are reporting with such that will change if they choose not to. They should come off the report.

Simmons-Taylor- I understand that's why I said I would take it under advisement and we're going to have more discussions about it because we need to weigh everything, and I don't think that always taking people's word for it is the best business practice, which is why I said that we're going to personally reach out to them.

Jones- Through the B-Suite intake we have identified several individuals who were interested in certification. We can use that to gather information needed to assist with certification efforts.

Baylis- I am an expert in certification so reach out to me if you need assistance.

Murray Miller- Isn't the purpose of the B-Suite is to get them certified?

Michael Morris- We had conversations with Antonius he was quite clear that the business suite was not The intent was not that it had anything to do with procurement and that it had anything to do necessarily with certification. He was quite clear that it's intention was to help minority and women entrepreneurs with their businesses. So I understand that that's your impression, but he told this board and he was very explicit because we asked

for numbers. We asked how many people received the vouchers for the services of the B suite, how many of them had a subcontracted or contracted or any way tried to get procurement contracts with the city and the answer was either none or one. It was a very low number and that's when explained that's not our purpose. With people from disadvantage who are trying to start businesses, 96% of them are people of color and 70% are women. So and there, are 85 of them starting the program in February. There are over 300 that have been through the 12-month program. I would encourage you to work with them and use them as pathway, but that leads to the bigger problem and the problem is not simply convincing them to get certified. The problem is showing them the pathway to getting a procurement contract and they can get certified. That's fine, but there's still a big gap and the gap is the need for regular, whether it's monthly or bimonthly sessions that are held for these entrepreneurs holding their hand and showing them the pathway to getting a procurement contract from the city and that there just isn't enough being done on that front.

Rachel Tomas- Morgan- Concur more with what Michael Morris said, but I also want to share that it was it was. It was difficult to know what the impact of the business suite was and also what kind of evaluation what's happening. These were things that the board was asking of previous leadership and staff and so didn't really seem that effective as a program, to be honest. So only to say it was not a perfect program and if it is coming back in here, I mean, I wouldn't. And I'm just surmising, this isn't a conversation I've had with DCI, but the fact that it may have moved over there and was could have been for you know, improvement reasons. I think there's a lot to evaluate and its current structure and what the goals and objectives really are.

Simmons-Taylor- Absolutely there was not much documentation. So we're kind of working backwards trying to make sure that those individuals that have applied and there's many individuals, I was told a lot 100 individuals that applied for grants as well. Nobody had followed up with them and they seem to be maybe one person making all the decisions on who got what and that might not be the most efficient way to run the program.

Jeff Rea- Cynthia, I would just maybe concur with what both Michael and Rachel said not to pile on there, but one thing that and I think Michael said it well the like I don't I think the previous team didn't have the reputation of wanting to work with others too much in this space. So there are some great programs in the community. And so we've had a lot of discussion this board level about trying to recreate the wheel a little bit when maybe in some cases a collaborative effort with other entities might could be a better thing than you know trying to create some competing, you know things. So I would just encourage you as you're developing some of that to be aware of what some others in the Community are doing and try to partner where appropriate and try to fill gaps where there are gaps and hopefully the end result is that through that collaborative effort we impact more businesses.

Simmons-Taylor- We have to continue to reach out and stay in relationship with these businesses that are incubating, if you will, and being able to offer them assistance is what I need to be able to do.

II. Public Works/ Procurement:

- Darius Lipsey presented the DPW report

III. Purchasing:

- Mickey Lovey presented the Procurement Report

IV. Old Business

-

V. New Business

- **NONE**

VI. Announcements

-

VII. Floor Open to the Public

- None

VIII. Adjournment- Vote

Notes & Action Items

Send out notices of appointment terms.