



Richland County Council  
Office of Small Business Ad Hoc Committee  
**MINUTES**  
July 25, 2023 - 3:00 PM  
Council Chambers  
2020 Hampton Street, Columbia, SC 29204

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COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Derrek Pugh, Chair; Jason Branham, Gretchen Barron, Jesica Mackey, and Chakisse Newton

OTHERS PRESENT: Paul Livingston, Angela Weathersby, Erica Wade, Ashiya Myers, Kyle Holsclaw, Anette Kirylo, Margaret Jones, Michelle Onley, Leonardo Brown, Patrick Wright, Chelsea Bennett, Geo Price, Thomas Gilbert, Tamar Black, Jennifer Wladischkin, Dale Welch, and Stacey Hamm

1. **CALL TO ORDER** – Chairman Derrek Pugh called the meeting to order at approximately 3:00 PM.
2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
  - a. April 24, 2023 – Ms. Mackey moved to approve the minutes as distributed, seconded by Ms. Newton.  
  
In Favor: Branham, Pugh, Barron, Mackey, and Newton  
  
The vote in favor was unanimous.
3. **ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA** – Ms. Barron moved to adopt the agenda as published, seconded by Ms. Mackey.  
  
In Favor: Branham, Pugh, Barron, Mackey, and Newton  
  
The vote in favor was unanimous.
4. **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**
  - a. Office of Small Business Opportunity – Status Update – Ms. Erica Wade, Division Manager, gave a brief update. The key accomplishments/milestones are as follows:
    - Richland County 911 Public Safety Center
    - Dirt Road Package O
    - Disparity Study – Phase I Completed
    - Disparity Study – Phase II is scheduled to begin in August 2023
    - Currently, there are 120 Certified SLBEs
    - Working on five new applications
    - September 7, 2023: OSBO staff will serve on the panel for SC Commerce’s “Navigating the Certification Maze” at Midlands Technical College
    - September 13, 2023: 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Engaged Richland Summit “Evolving, Exposure, Expansion” at R2i2 Conference Center

Ms. Newton noted it would be helpful if she had a clearer picture of how the Office of Small Business Opportunity interacts with other departments in the County.

Mr. Pugh stated he believes this is something that can be revisited later.

Mr. Livingston inquired what Phase II of the Disparity Study consists of.

Ms. Wade replied the consultant will be interviewing SLBEs and businesses the County works with. In addition, they will be launching a website letting the community know that Richland County is undergoing a disparity study.

## 5. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION/ACTION

### a. Review of OSBO Ordinances:

1. *Ordinance 049-13HR – “An Ordinance Amending the Richland County Code of Ordinances, Chapter 2, Administration, Article X, Purchasing; by adding a new division entitled 7, Small Local Business Enterprise Procurement Requirements; and amending Chapter 2, Administration; Article XI, Inquiries and Investigations, so as to renumber the paragraphs therein”*
2. *Ordinance 039-14HR – “An Ordinance amending the Richland County Code of Ordinances, Chapter 2, Administration; Article V, County Departments; by adding a new division entitled 5A, Office of Small Business Opportunity; so that a new department will be created”*
3. *Ordinance 064-14HR – “An Ordinance Amending the Richland County Code of Ordinances, Chapter 2, Administration; so as to abolish the department known as the Office of Small Business Opportunity and instead create it as a division of the office of Procurement”*
4. *Ordinance 058-16HR – “An Ordinance amending the Richland County Code of Ordinances, Chapter 2, Administration; so as to move the division known as the Office of Small Business Opportunity from Procurement so that this division directly reports to the County Administrator”*

Mr. Pugh stated at the last meeting we discussed creating an ordinance to have this office report to the Administrator. We requested feedback from our colleagues, but he does not believe the County Attorney’s Office received any feedback. He noted that in talking with the County Attorney, it was thought an ordinance was in place that just needed to be ratified.

The County Attorney, Patrick Wright, stated the committee needs to determine if they want the office to be a standalone office, reporting to the Administrator, or something else.

Mr. Pugh inquired if the committee moved to have the office report to the County Administrator at the last meeting.

Mr. Wright responded the committee members were requested to provide feedback. He noted he did not receive any feedback. We need to know what the will of the committee is.

Mr. Branham noted at the last meeting that he inquired about Ms. Wade’s preferred reporting structure, and she indicated she preferred to be a standalone department. He also inquired about the goals and services Ms. Wade would like to see added to the office, and she indicated everything she included in her presentation was what she would like to see included in a draft ordinance.

Mr. Wright inquired if the committee wishes to amend the current ordinance or if it would be the committee’s recommendation to ratify it. He indicated Administration wants to know the will of Council regarding the Office of Small Business Opportunity (i.e., standalone).

Mr. Branham inquired if the functions of the office are something the committee should be thinking about.

Mr. Wright responded if you want to change the functions, you can. Otherwise, if the desire is for the functions to remain the same, those functions are already enumerated in the ordinance.

Mr. Branham inquired as to the ordinance number.

Mr. Wright responded the current ordinance is Ordinance # 064-14HR.

Ms. Mackey stated, at the last meeting, she spoke about having the office be a standalone office. In addition, she spoke about having the office work more in conjunction with other departments. She does not feel like we need that in an ordinance but that there is a goal in the Strategic Plan that is tied to the diversity study we are doing.

Mr. Wright indicated Ordinance #058-16HR contains the reporting structure. If the committee wants that, then the motion should be “as enumerated in Ordinance #058-16HR.”

For clarification, Mr. Brown indicated there was information that was published and there was information that was not published. When people were looking at ordinances and the reporting structure, people were given different information. Affirming the ordinance currently in effect clears up any lingering questions.

Mr. Pugh moved that the Office of Small Business Opportunity report to the County Administrator, as enumerated in Ordinance #058-16HR, seconded by Ms. Barron.

Ms. Newton stated, for clarification, modifying the duties of the Office of Small Business Opportunity would not require amending the ordinance.

Mr. Wright responded if Council were to take action, it would have to be an ordinance, but the Administrator could do it without a vote of the body. Of course, Council can direct or recommend the Administrator.

Ms. Barron stated if the information on the County's website is incorrect, that is a huge problem. If we have misinterpretations of ordinances, externally or internally, that is also a huge problem. She believes Council has been placed in a position to clean up some internal confusion.

Mr. Wright stated his office and the Clerk's Office have been working to get the ordinances updated online through the American Legal website.

In Favor: Branham, Pugh, Barron, Mackey, and Newton

The vote in favor was unanimous.

6. **ADJOURNMENT** – Ms. Barron moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Ms. Newton.

In Favor: Branham, Pugh, Barron, Mackey, and Newton

The vote in favor was unanimous.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 3:26 PM.