



Richland County Council
Office of Small Business Opportunity Ad Hoc Committee
December 12, 2017 – 3:30 PM
4th Floor Conference Room
2020 Hampton Street, Columbia 29204

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Norman Jackson, Chair; Bill Malinowski, Yvonne McBride, Paul Livingston, and Jim Manning

OTHERS PRESENT: Michelle Onley, Angela McCallum, Jamelle Ellis, and Beverly Harris

1. **CALL TO ORDER** – Mr. N. Jackson called the meeting to order at approximately 3:30 PM
2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
 - a. October 24, 2017 – Mr. Malinowski moved, seconded by Mr. N. Jackson, to approve the minutes as distributed. The vote in favor was unanimous.
 - b. November 16, 2017 – Mr. Malinowski moved, seconded by Mr. N. Jackson, to approve the minutes as distributed. The vote in favor was unanimous.
3. **ADOPTION OF AGENDA** – Mr. Manning moved, seconded by Mr. Malinowski, to approve the agenda as published. The vote in favor was unanimous.
4. **ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**
 - a. Staff Recommendation on Sheltered Market to expedite the dirt road OSBO obligation, provide a plan for 2018 – Dr. Ellis stated staff’s recommendation is to proceed as outlined in a memo from Mr. Edwards drafted in late June. In the memo, he outlined the dirt road paving program and they how planned to proceed in providing opportunities to SLBEs under OETs. The Administrator followed up with an approval of Mr. Edwards’ outline in late July. The plan is to support the outline provided by Transportation. The OETs receive service orders to design the dirt roads. Based on those service orders, it outlines the scope of work. From that point, Transportation allocates 10 – 15 roads to the OETs to give their SLBEs. The problem is OSBO does not receive the service orders. They receive the invoices.

Mr. Manning inquired if that was by law, ordinance or procurement policy.

Dr. Ellis inquired in terms of the program Mr. Edwards outlined.

Mr. Manning responded for clarification that Dr. Ellis stated OSBO does not receive service orders, only

Office of Small Business Opportunity Ad Hoc Committee
December 12, 2017

invoices.

Dr. Ellis stated it is not according to the ordinance.

Mr. Manning stated so that is internal operations.

Dr. Ellis stated they have been talking to the Transportation Department regarding this matter. It is just the way it has been happening, but it is not a good process. They have been working with them to try to figure out what the scope of work is on the front end. By the time OSBO finds out about it, it is in the form of an invoice. That is a lot of the complaint you hear from the small business community, they are not at the table on the front end of the process.

Mr. Malinowski inquired as to why the OETs allot a certain amount to the SLBEs. It would appear if the SLBEs can handle the project then it should be handled by them. If there is something left then go out and look for someone else.

Dr. Ellis stated for clarification that for each of the OETs they receive a group of 10 – 15 roads. Then that OET will distribute to those SLBEs that fall under the contract to those OETs.

Ms. Myers stated then the OETs have the discretion.

Dr. Ellis stated they do and that has been one of the questions they have had as it related to transportation, as well as, procurement. It is one of the things that she has spoken to Ms. Diane Sumpter about. Who makes the determination if a goal is set at 20% for SLBEs and that is the responsibility of the OET to ensure that percent of the work goes to the SLBEs? How do you build into the system or the process equity? As it stands right now, that is not built into the system.

Mr. N. Jackson stated that is why he asked about who was checking to make sure in agreement with OET that they hold up to the percentage they have agreed to in regards to the SLBEs.

Dr. Ellis stated they have not been privy to that information on the front end of the process.

Ms. Myers stated this is how it works with SCDOT and the City, when the contract gets let you must give a certain percentage to this party and the party must sign. So it is not just they get the contract, the money and run and we hope they do the right thing. SCDOT and the City both know who the 3rd party small business is and that party is an intended 3rd party beneficiary under the contract. They have lists of who those people are. Those people can call and say they are not getting our work. We are not getting paid or whatever is going on. They have a direct line into the City and SCDOT. She does not think the County has that in their process and may be why we feel like we are trying to do this wonderful thing, but we have no way of following up.

Ms. Sumpter stated there were 5 OET contractors. Four of the 5 OETs are SLBEs. When those 5 OETs presented qualifications, each of them included in their proposal they submitted so many other smaller SLBEs. The contract is in the County. What may not have happened is the County follow-up to see that that is there, but it is identical to the City's contract.

Mr. N. Jackson stated he inquired at the Dirt Road Ad Hoc Committee to see who was doing the checking, the OSBO Office or the Transportation Department.

Dr. Ellis stated that is one of the reasons Ms. McCallum put into place the cross functional team that meets every week on Tuesday. There is simply a breakdown between the Transportation Department and OSBO and the small businesses have suffered.

Mr. N. Jackson stated the Transportation said they have a lot of dirt roads to move forward and that is why he inquired about the sheltered market to get the roads designed. At the rate we are going we are not getting the work done.

Dr. Ellis stated for one they have to know what is out there. We have to know which service orders are being sent out. The next time the cross functional team meets that will be the topic that is discussed. Unless OSBO sits down with Transportation on the front end...they have had discussions about the design side versus the construction side.

Mr. N. Jackson stated the construction side is not the problem. Once we get the design out first, we can worry about the construction later.

Mr. Manning stated maybe we need an outcome from the discussions.

Dr. Ellis stated they get new information that they were not aware of. Sometimes it is indirectly through other sources, sometimes it is in these meetings, and sometimes it is just random emails that help them understand to better understand what the gaps are.

Mr. N. Jackson stated the request is for a recommendation.

Dr. Ellis stated the response they have gotten from Transportation is they are currently awaiting estimates from the PDT on the design side to confirm what projects qualify for the sheltered markets. She further stated the Transportation Department have said the PDT has a list of those anticipated projects that fall at, or below, the sheltered market threshold.

Mr. N. Jackson stated the Transportation Department should have that list also, not just the PDT.

- b. Develop plan to increase number of businesses in the transportation trade – Dr. Ellis stated she is not sure she understands what transportation trade is.

Mr. N. Jackson stated what is the OSBO Office and SLBE doing to increase the participation of businesses in the trade of design and constructing roads, sidewalks, etc.

Dr. Ellis stated they have outlined quarterly outreach training to identify specialists in the areas where training is needed. The OSBO Office held an outreach meeting recently to receive buy-in from the small business community to try to prioritize what they need the most. There was not a high percentage of participation, but from that participation the OSBO team has begun working on training sessions. They are trying to put into place by March what is been loosely named “Richland County Small Business University.” The training ideas have been based upon feedback Dr. Ellis has received from different representatives from the community.

Recommendation on development of a capacity building program – Mr. N. Jackson stated if we have a limited amount of contractors and they max out at \$500,000. Once they graduate who does the County have. He inquired if the OSBO Office had made a recommendation on the maximum.

Dr. Ellis stated the recommendation has not gone to full Council for approval.

Mr. N. Jackson stated the program was designed to build capacity for small and local businesses in Richland County; therefore, the ceiling needs to be raised. He requested a recommendation by next week.

Dr. Ellis stated the recommendation has already been made. The recommendation is \$7.5 million.

Mr. N. Jackson inquired how the OSBO Office is focusing on getting these other businesses on board.

Dr. Ellis stated they have deadlines and work plan. The needs of the small businesses, or operations within the OSBO, should be addressed in the work plan outline.

Mr. N. Jackson inquired if the businesses are ready if the Transportation Department puts the dirt road contracts out in January 2018.

Dr. Ellis stated there are two things as she sees it, they have an office to run. According to the ordinance and what everyone knows their job are, they are doing that job to build the office so they can provide the services. The other side of that is they have to improve their communications with Transportation. At this point, they are at the mercy of Transportation to provide them the information they need.

Mr. Manning inquired about the staffing structure of the office.

Dr. Ellis stated she provided the organizational chart at the September OSBO Ad Hoc Committee. Essentially the structure is the OSBO Manager, Assistant Manager, and the 3 function positions: Business Development Coordinator, Financial Resources Coordinator and the Certification/Compliance Specialist.

Mr. Manning inquired if all of the positions are filled at this time.

Dr. Ellis stated they are not all filled at this time. The Certification/Compliance Specialist and the Financial Resources Coordinator will be filled in the near future, which only leaves the Business Development Coordinator position to be filled.

Mr. Manning inquired if any of his colleagues knew where the County stands on hiring a Transportation Director.

Mr. N. Jackson responded that he did not.

Mr. Malinowski stated after looking over the 5 OET Teams, but each of them has 2 or 3 of the same SLBEs. He further stated he is not sure if that is not a part of the problem with getting the work done.

Ms. Sumpter stated some of the trades that are need in the road industry: concrete, haulers, clearing/grubbing, and paving. Training in on those areas is what is needed right now. Then the businesses will be ready when the next roads come out. Right now the businesses are not here and they scared to come here. Her suggestion was to take a step back and look at the businesses at the table. What businesses are certified? How do you get more businesses certified? And how do you bring them in and coalesce them to prepare them to work on the County's projects?

Mr. Manning inquired if there was an advisory committee for the OSBO, similar to the Blue Ribbon Ad Hoc Committee, to discuss the matters Ms. Sumpter just raised.

Mr. N. Jackson stated there is not and that is why he has allowed the community to speak during the committee meetings.

Mr. Manning stated the only member of the community that still comes to the committee meeting is Ms. Sumpter. The others have given up on the County. He stated he recommended putting together a Blue Ribbon Advisory Committee for the Transportation Trade to expedite the process. In addition, we need someone from Administration that is at a level that when the OSBO and Transportation are meeting that can say if you have this and they need this then give it to them.

Mr. N. Jackson stated the Planning Department does that with the industry to see how they can improve what they are doing.

Mr. Manning moved, seconded by Mr. N. Jackson, to form an advisory committee to the OSBO from the transportation trade to expedite the process. The vote in favor was unanimous.

1. Recommendation on increasing licensing
2. Providing bonding capacity
3. Improving Project Management corporation
4. How to respond to and improve opportunities: estimating, scheduling, teaming/joint ventures, mentor protégé and other opportunities

5. **ADJOURN** – The meeting adjourned at approximately 4:00 PM