

Draft

**Minutes
Minority Business Ad-Hoc Committee
February 10, 2015**

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mary Ardapple-Mike Phelan; Board Members, Denise Moore; City Council, Don Gorman, Stephanie Brock, Marty Clinch, Marty Helpers, Charles Randle; Business Financial Services-Small Business Administration

MEMBERS ABSENT: Rachael Parker; Committee Chairman, Diane Russell,

OTHERS PRESENT:

Larry Ivory; Illinois Black Chamber, Mark Rothert; Assistant County Administrator, Jim Smith; Purchasing Agent

Teleconference: Liz Duncan;The Cayemitte Group (TCG) and Hayward Willis

In the absent of Chairman Parker, the meeting was called to order by Ms. Ardapple at 4:06pm. Minutes of November 11, 2014, and January 13, 2015, were approved on motion by Ms. Moore and second by Mr. Clinch.

Overview presentations were moved to the bottom of the agenda. Mr. Rothert mentioned that Mr. David Cayemitte would not be joining the meeting because of travel delays due to bad weather. Mr. Rothert called attention to the Cayemitte Group reports included in the agenda packet.

Ms. Ardapple asked for comments on the MCI program and if it is moving in the direction the members anticipated. There were comments noting that the program is very beneficial to the community although initially some folks were concerned due to it being a new approach. Mr. Helpers mentioned the need for some of the smaller contractors to get experience so they can get work. He said it appears the same contractors are getting the jobs. Mr. Rothert agreed that it is important to get the MCI program contractors connected with Mr. Helpers to get them involved in the trades.

Ms. Duncan and Mr. Willis gave an update on what TCG has been working on. It was noted that an *Estimating Class* and a *Work-in-Progress (WIP) Class* were held in Peoria in January. Mr. Willis met with a number of participants to assist them with such things as

- Getting QuickBooks up and running
- Completing a website
- Mapping out a marketing strategy
- Reviewing estimates for bids
- Addressing issues related to bonding
- Focusing on obtaining information and creating a pipeline on potential job opportunities
- Discussing company structure (union vs non-union)
- Discussing WIP schedule and issues surrounding the production and contents of the report

Mr. Willis said one of the big things is to help participants determine if they are making a profit on the job. Another area of focus was helping/showing the participants how to understand a financial statement and how to report income. He said he discussed with them how to identify construction CPA firms and construction law firms.

Mr. Ivory reported as follows:

- He had a series of conversations with prime contracts to discuss projects that MCI program participants could be involved in.
- Mr. Mike George, past EEO Officer of IDOT, has taken part in the meetings to offer his expertise.
- He discussed the County's nursing home demolition project with the contractors.
- Met with the President of CORE Construction Company, and he has agreed to do some creative financing to help these contractors get opportunities. CORE President has given good feedback about the clients and; therefore, a good relationship has been developed with CORE.
- Discussions continue with Williams Brothers. William Brothers appears to be interested but has not given as much feedback.

Additional comments were provided by the committee members. It was suggested that testimonies of success stories of contractors be used to market the program. The Cayemitte team, Mr. Ivory and Mr. Rothert were complimented on the effort they are putting forth because the program is a pilot that is working. Comments were made that the program needs to continue but there is the issue of keeping it thriving from year to year. It was recommended there be an open house where perhaps connections could be made with contractors about upcoming jobs. Also, it was suggested that marketing be increased.

Mr. Phelan said it is a good program. He mentioned there is only one person in the County's Economic Development area; therefore, it is critical that board members make sure resources are committed to economic development as well as minority business development. Mr. Phelan asked Mr. Rothert to report back and advise if in the bidding process (all things being equal) we could show preference to local contractors that are participating in the MCI program on projects. In reply to Mr. Phelan's question about who is mowing the Hanna City property, he was advised that Peoria Park District is doing so as a part of the entire mowing contract. Mr. Phelan requested that Finance/Purchasing Department look at breaking out Hanna City mowing so it can be a smaller contract that perhaps would be more practical for minority contractors to bid.

The Committee consensus was that the MCI program is going in the right direction. Ms. Ardapple said it is good to know there is a consensus because, currently, the program is funded for one year. She said the consensus shows the members feel it is viable, important and needs to move forward.

Mr. Rothert gave his thoughts on the way to proceed with funding. He mentioned the following:

- The program is valuable not only to the County but to other stakeholders.
- To make it sustainable, he recommends starting discussions with our partners to share the burden. Partners are the City, Sanitary District, School District, local prime contractors, State of IL, private sectors, etc.
- To consider the possibility of applying for grants although they are not 100% guaranteed. Mr. Ivory mentioned that he had spoken to IDOT and DCEO and there is opportunity to receive funding because the County can make the case there has been tangible results with this program. He mentioned a meeting he is scheduling with the new Governor and will discuss the issue with him.

Ms. Ardapple said moving forward, it is essential that a private business representative be at the table. Additionally, Mr. Clinch recommended including a representative from Greater Peoria Contractors Association. Mr. Rothert said presentations have been made to the CEO Council. It was recommended that the CEO Council continue to be updated.

Overview of Black Business Alliance

Ms. Moore briefly defined the origin of the group and explained its mission. She handed out a folder of detailed information and asked if anyone had questions to direct them to her.

The Overview of the Illinois Black Chamber and the miscellaneous items were postponed until the March meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:10pm.