

# RICHLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

## SOUTH CAROLINA

### OFFICE OF SMALL BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY AD HOC COMMITTEE MEETING

July 15, 2015  
10:45 AM  
Administration Conference Room

*In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act, a copy of the agenda was sent to radio and TV stations, newspapers, persons requesting notification, and was posted on the bulletin board located in the lobby of the County Administration Building*

#### CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Washington called the meeting to order at approximately 10:51 AM

#### ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Mr. Livingston moved, seconded by Mr. Jackson, to adopt the agenda as published. The vote in favor was unanimous.

#### OSBO STATUS REPORT/ADMINISTRATOR PROGRESS:

**Quick Pay Program** – Ms. Tanner stated the office communicated with agencies identified by Mr. Franklin Lee. The take away from those conversations is that Richland County would need to have an electronic payment process in place.

- Through the assistance of the South Carolina Minority Contractors' Association, a program was identified entitled "Now Account Network Corporation."
- This program is administered through MARTA, which is the transit system in Atlanta.
- Now Account Network Corporation has subcontracted with EquiFax.
- It is a merchant service that allows a vendor to get paid immediately, but does not require businesses to utilize credit cards.
- The contractor contracts with the agency and the vendor provide names for particular clients or merchant owners. When they do so, the NOW Account company would buy invoices from the vendor.
- The NOW Account company can selectively buy or reject invoices.
- NOW Account would not contract with Richland County, but directly with the vendor.



#### Council Members Present

Kelvin E. Washington, Sr., Chair  
District Ten

Paul Livingston  
District Four

Norman Jackson  
District Eleven

#### Others Present:

Tony McDonald  
Rob Perry  
Gloria Tanner  
Cheryl Patrick  
Daniel Driggers  
Brenda Parnell

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- Flat, merchant fee of 2.5% to Net 30 Invoice; 2.75% up to Net 60 Invoice; and 3.0% up to Net 90 Invoice
- Prime and subcontractors may apply to the NOW Account
- Ms. Tanner does not feel this is advantageous to smaller firms due to the fees associated with the program
- Ms. Tanner suggests to start from scratch and develop a quick pay process where there is no costs associated
- It could take several months to develop and implement the program
- The Finance Department and the inspectors in the field would need to coordinate to process the payments in a timely manner
- There will likely be a cost to the County to implement the quick pay program (i.e. additional staff, electronic payment infrastructure, etc.)

**Mentor Protégé Program** – Ms. Tanner stated they are proceeding with the program.

- Boilerplate approximately 60-70% complete
- Eligibility requirements will be developed next
- Moving forward with development of application, instructions and how the process would work
- Identifying incentives for the program (Council input requested)
- Program will require additional mentors

**Sheltered Market Program** – Ms. Tanner stated Procurement, Transportation and the OSBO Office have worked to identify projects that qualify for the sheltered market program outlined in the ordinance.

- Held several informational/fact finding meetings with the SLBE community
- Bundling projects instead of individual projects to maximize benefit to SLBEs
- Mandatory pre-bid conferences were suggested by the SLBE firms
- Mr. Perry stated the first sheltered market sidewalk project will be going forward in the next few weeks. Additionally, there is a dirt road project that is eligible for the sheltered market program.
- Identified the major hurdle with the OSBO/SLBE division in regards to the language or specifications to insure the firms understand how the sheltered market program works
- Ms. Tanner has proposed language to clarify the process

**Bonding Program** – Ms. Tanner stated bonding has, and always will be, a hurdle for firms.

- Identified various types of programs that exist
- Attended informational meetings hosted by the Mid-Atlantic Small Business Transportation Resource Center (MASBTRC)
- MASBTRC provides participants education on bonding, financial statements, etc.
- Prerequisite for bonding for a company is to have a financial statement in place
- Procurement and the OSBO Office communicated and interviewed bonding agencies to identify the services they could provide
- Adams Eaddy & Associates; McCartha-Cobb & Associates and Catalyst Surety Partners were the firms interviewed
- Ms. Tanner recommended McCartha-Cobb & Associates as a bonding agent.
- McCartha-Cobb will bond as low as \$400, majority of client base exceeds 50% SLBE firms and they have an extensive record since the 1970s
- No cost for training seminars as long as the County hosts the sessions

Mr. Livingston moved, seconded by Mr. Jackson, to move forward with staff's recommendation of McCartha-Cobb & Associates as a recommended bonding agent.

#### **GOAL SETTING PROCESS AND STATUS:**

**Status of SLBE and DBE tracking and reporting systems** – Ms. Tanner stated the process has been finalized and the written procedures was provided to the committee for review.

- Transportation will identify the particular projects and submit the information to the committee
- Procurement Director would take the project and submit it to the OSBO Division
- OSBO Division would develop the SLBE goal
- The SLBE goal would be submitted back to the Transportation and Procurement Departments
- Any concerns with the goal would be vetted
- When the goal is accepted it is forwarded back to the Transportation Department and the goal would be inserted into the solicitation for the advertisement
- Once bids are received the committee will evaluate the bidders to determine if they meet the goal

- If the bidder does not meet the goal, the committee will examine their good faith efforts and determine if their efforts were acceptable
- If the bidder does not meet the goal or the good faith effort, the Procurement Director would submit direction to the committee to move forward in evaluating the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> bidders
- Once the contract has been determined to have meet the goal of SLBE participation, the Transportation submits the information to the OSBO Division
- Once the contract is received by the OSBO Division, it will be posted into the B2G Program

**SLBE and DBE goals to date on current and future contracts** – Ms. Parnell stated there are currently five (5) contracts [(2) Professional Development Teams, (1) On-Call Engineering Team and (2) Dirt Road Paving Teams]

**Confirmation process of goals on current contracts and future contracts** – Green Street (11% SLBE), Riverbanks Zoo (21% SLBE Goal) and the Lincoln Tunnel (Federal Funding/No local preference/DBE Goal)

### **INTERDEPARTMENTAL COOPERATION, COORDINATION AND REPORTING:**

**Authority of OSBO county-wide and accountability** – Ms. Tanner stated OSBO has worked with the Business Service Center extensively to develop the licensing application to determine if firms are required to have a business license if they are doing business in Richland County.

- OSBO has ongoing coordination and cooperation with the Transportation Department.

Mr. McDonald stated the long-term goal is to expand the program county-wide so that any solicitations/projects would fall into the same categories. OSBO Division and Procurement Department will have full authority to implement and initiate the program throughout the County.

### **OSBO RECOMMENDATIONS, NEEDS AND BENCHMARKS**

Mr. Washington requested the recommendations, needs, and benchmarks be sent to committee for review. Additionally, add the SLBE and DBE percentages to the bi-weekly report.

*Committee went into Executive Session to discuss a contractual matter.*

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at approximately 11:48 AM