



FINAL

**THE CITY OF MIRAMAR  
BUSINESS, INCLUSION & DIVERSITY  
CONSTRUCTION & PROFESSIONAL SERVICES  
ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

**APRIL 9, 2024**

**1:00 P.M.**

A meeting of the City of Miramar's Economic Development & Housing (EDH) Department's Business, Inclusion & Diversity (BID) Construction & Professional Services Advisory Board took place at 1:22 p.m. on Tuesday, April 9, 2024, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, Engineering Conference Room W-201L, Economic Development & Housing Department, 2200 Civic Center Place, Miramar, FL 33023.

**1 & 2 CALL TO ORDER/ATTENDANCE**

The following board members were present:

**Transcriber's not: Please confirm attendance; the sound was extremely bad, and the roll call was interrupted and never continued**

Chairperson Dorothy Brown-Alfaro, Owner, Jador International Corp.  
Mac Alabre, CEO, Lien Library Inc.; FIU (Remotely)  
Denise Brown, President, DPX Construction Management  
Garrie Harris, CEO, Alpha 1 Staffing  
Robert Washington, Jr., Instructor, Carpenters & Pile Drivers Union

The following board members were absent:

Vice Chairperson Vernon Williams, VP, Brigcon Construction Services  
Priscilla Diaz, Truist Bank  
Vernon Dooling, Membership Coordinator, Minority Builders Coalition  
Colette Holt, City Diversity Consultant, Ex-officio

A quorum was achieved.

Other persons present:

Jordan Gary, City Attorney  
Paul Njoroge, Business Analyst Manager  
Dr. Karen Hollis, BID. Liaison

**TRANSCRIBER'S NOTE: EVERYONE WHO SPEAKS IN THE MEETING MUST STATE THEIR NAME WHEN SPEAKING TO BE IDENTIFIED IN THE MINUTES!!! THE MINUTES ARE A LEGAL, PUBLIC RECORD!**

### **3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- Meeting Minutes of October 31, 2023
- Meeting Minutes of February 13, 2024
- Meeting Minutes of March 12, 2024

Mr. Washington made a motion to approve the October 31, 2023, February 13, 2024, and March 12, 2024, meeting minutes, as presented; the motion was seconded by Ms. Harris; the motion passed unanimously.

### **4. PROJECT AUTHORIZATION - WWTP Raw Water Main (\$6,400,000.00)**

Dr. Hollis stated she learned of a large project, with a cost of \$6,400,000 for the Utilities Department. She was unable to identify smaller businesses to perform the needed services, but there were other scopes of services, such as the maintenance of traffic, site work restoration, and concrete, with the help of the Utilities, Engineering, and Construction Departments, and local businesses able to provide those services. They were invited to attend the pre-bid meeting, and the procurement department sent the solicitation.

Chairperson Brown-Alfaro asked if Dr. Hollis was unable to find any local businesses with experience with lower-level water main services.

Dr. Hollis identified firms, included concrete, striping, curbs, traffic, sidewalks; that is, areas with a smaller scope, for local firm certified to provide the services.

Chairperson Brown-Alfaro asked what type of license and certifications the small businesses or large contractors needed to have.

Chairperson Brown-Alfaro sought confirmation it was a Broward underground license versus a State underground license.

Ms. Denise Brown said it required a State underground license.

### **5. CONTRACTOR PAYMENT CHALLENGES: Release of Retainage Language (Vernon Williams)**

Dr. Hollis informed that firm having difficulty being paid by a prime contractor after 90 days of completing the service reached out to her department, asked for help. After asking for help: she provided the City with the information Dr. Hollis requested regarding the work done; then she filed a notice to secure payment through the bond. Dr. Hollis contacted the City Attorney on how to proceed, and the City's risk management staff advised her the person's understanding was correct, and the City needed to notify the bonding agency of what was transpiring. The prime contractor, being notified of what was happening, became extremely instrumental in ensuring the person was paid expeditiously. When she asked the individual why she filled for payment through the bond, the person stated, as 90 days had passed, she did not wish to lose the opportunity. Dr. Hollis said the question was why the vendor waited 90 days to ask for help, because as soon as she contacted the City, staff responded immediately, and the prime contractor, when contacted, within 24 hours committed to sending her a check in a week or two. She asked the board what her department could do to help vendors working with primes to understand that they should not wait such a long time to ask the City for help, as staff understood it had to be a hardship for them. Again, once contacted, all parties involved responded immediately to resolve the situation.

Chairperson Brown-Alfaro asked if this was the first time the City worked with the subject prime contractor.

Dr. Hollis believed it was not the first time.

Chairperson Brown-Alfaro responded as to why a small business might wait such a long time to be paid, stating the reasons included: fear of repercussions, and fear of repeat business. She asked if the subject prime had already been paid in full by the City for the services the vendor did for the prime.

Dr. Hollis replied the prime was paid for a part of their services, but the invoice for the vendor was not a part of the work the City paid for, but the prime still agreed to pay the vendor.

Chairperson Brown-Alfaro asked how many days the vendor had remaining before the bond expired.

Dr. Hollis responded staff learned that when the vendor filled for payment through the bond she notified them of her requests made to us for help seeking payment and we were all copied on future notices. This was how she discovered the vendor was still awaiting payment after 90 days. Dr. Hollis understood the vendor's fear of retaliation. But desire information on how to educate firms to not allow the matter to reach a point of having to file the bond. It can also be seen

as her taking more of a risk of creating problems for a prime, increasing the probability of her fears that the prime will less likely hire her again. Dr. Hollis asked the board - Is there a point before the 90-day deadline was close that the vendor could contact city staff for help before involving risk management, the city attorney, and the bond agent?

Mr. Alabre remarked on speaking from personal experience, where for a job he did in Palm Beach County he was still owed \$100,000.00, and it was past 90 days, he definitely understands the vendor's fear. He had three other letters of intent for jobs that he feared losing. He tried to continue working with the company, because there were open deposits tied to it; this was since June 2023. They were currently in mediation, and they were scheduled to meet on April 25, as he had yet to be paid. He called the minority participation staff, and they told him that because he was not certified with Palm Beach County, but in Miami-Dade, they could not help him, which made little sense, as they offered reciprocal privileges, including recognizing certifications from Miami-Dade. He went through numerous people trying to get paid, added to which were his legal expenses, and time spent away from work trying to rectify the situation, as it was a tremendous hardship. The contractor offered to pay him only \$30,000.00 of the \$100,000.00 to cancel the debt.

Chairperson Alfaró-Brown commented vendors working with prime contractors that were not paying them for their work should not further add to the problem by allowing the situation to continue with a hope of securing future work with the same contractor; this she learned from personal experience, and whenever a vendor had to sue a prime contractor, no one won, as they had to pay for legal services, not getting the full amount owed, and the possibility of being cast as a high risk vendor for primes to work with. She said if a vendor completed their work, and they were not being paid, they should not wait long to contact the entity that hired the prime about getting paid; it was important to urge small businesses not to be complacent, as repeat business was important to the ability to thrive as a business. Primes, like small businesses, had to prequalify, have the proper certifications, and they ran out of money just as small businesses did; a small business had more to lose waiting 30 plus days to be paid, rather than demanding payment after two weeks of submitting their invoice.

Dr. Hollis asked Ms. Brown-Alfaró to send her the details of the payment process she spoke about with regard to State law and Miami-Dade County's payment procedures for small business vendors working on construction projects. She would examine them, so the City could consider how to add them to the BID manual, and how to notify local small businesses and prime contractors.

## **6. NEW BUSINESS:**

1. Turner School Project Management - March 27, 2023

Dr. Hollis remarked on Vice Mayor Davis hosting the subject workshop “Government Contracting for Dummies”; some 300 businesses registered, of which 200 attended. Turner Construction is a new business now located in the Miramar Park of Commerce, and they had the ribbon cutting. Turner and the City has strong collaboration since the business was local, and when they sought to launch their first project management cohort, they contacted her to help with identifying firms. She identified about 35 small businesses and individuals, and they responded, and about 20 to 25 from the City of Miramar, and all of them graduated, and they received a certificate to that end.

**Mr. Washington** asked if the workshop would be offered again.

Dr. Hollis answered yes; the workshop would be conducted once a year; she would send board members an email of the exact date.

2. Apprenticeship Fair - April 4, 2024 (Robert Washington)

Mr. Washington commented Vice Mayor Davis and he are planning to go to schools to educate students on trades and other career opportunity choices other than going to college that were available to them, such as a career in law enforcement. In order for businesses to succeed, they needed skilled people trained in a variety of professions. In his business, they offered training to people, so they could earn an income, and provide for their family, take care of their children, etc.; he spoke at Broward and Palm Beach schools, bringing information to the principals, so they could disseminate it among their students. It was a good event, and they hoped to do more, and he felt money was being put in the right place when career fairs, and apprenticeship fairs, and career choice information was communicated to the schools to widen students’ choices as to a viable career and helping them connect to the resources that would facilitate their career choices. It was healthier for people to make a living doing work they enjoyed, rather than feeling trapped in a job they hated because they needed to make money to pay their bills.

Chairperson Brown-Alfaro asked if Mr. Washington’s training program a State-approved apprenticeship program.

Mr. Washington answered yes; it was a registered apprenticeship program.

Chairperson Brown-Alfaro mentioned knowing someone with a registered electrical apprenticeship program; she agreed there was a need for such programs, as the need for skilled labor was vital across all professions, and the State’s move to remove the responsible wage would be a challenge for people

engaged in such careers. It made a difference to a young person moving into a trade that had a high-earning wage, since the State of Florida's minimum wage was \$12.00 an hour, and the living wage was \$20.34 an hour, both of which it would be difficult to live on.

Dr. Hollis agreed the subject fair was well attended; there were hundreds of individuals of varying ages, from 18 years of age to seniors; representatives from outside organizations, as well as all city departments were present to interact with the attendees, informing them as to the training and/or certifications they needed to get hired. She sat at Mr. Washington's table, so she the persons interested in learning a trade, and she was pleased to observe the amount of time he took to speak with each person expressing an interest, including 18-year-olds, some of whom registered with his program at the fair.

Mr. Washington mentioned his business services included referrals, in that if a particular service was needed, he could provide a contact for any type of work.

Chairperson Brown-Alfaro mentioned hiring first-time offenders, as they deserved an opportunity to make a living like anyone else.

Mr. Washington concurred, stating his business did not discriminate against offenders seeking to learn a trade, so they could become gainfully employed; wherever possible, they helped such individuals get trained, and/or find work.

### 3. Volunteer Awards Appreciation Dinner - April 9, 2024

Dr. Hollis distributed registration information for the subject event, urging board members to attend, as it was a great opportunity to learn about types of business owners, city boards, organizations, people, and resources. It began at 7:00 p.m.

### 4. BID M/WBE Certification Workshop - April 25, 2024

Dr. Hollis mentioned the City's hosting a certification workshop hosted by her department, to which they invited the Tri-county school boards, as well as representatives from the City of West Palm Beach; they wished firms to know how important it was for them to be certified with these agencies, as with certification came benefits. Many business owners did not understand what that reciprocal meant, and she wanted to educate the businesses on what it meant to build equity. The workshop would be held in Miramar's Police Headquarters building; the room had a capacity to hold 50 persons; but by the end of March, we already had 169 individuals registered; they ended up having 230 people when walk-ins were added. She asked board members to use the QR code on the flyer she provided to register, and attend. When a business had the proper certifications, it empowered them to approach bidding on contracts with more

confidence, as they understood the value of the certification they worked hard to secure.

Chairperson Brown-Alfaro mentioned House Bill (HB) 705 that had already gone to the Governor's desk, though he had yet to sign it; she urged board members to email the Governor, asking him to veto that bill, and encourage others to do the same. If the bill took effect, no county in the State of Florida would be able to give preference to small businesses of any form in construction.

Dr. Hollis added the programs would still be in place, but they would not be able to do those initiatives that become forbidden by the law.

## **7. ANNOUNCEMENTS & INFORMATION**

1. List of Local Construction Firms (Vernon Williams)

Deferred.

## **8. ADJOURNMENT:**

Next meeting: Tuesday, May 14, 2024, @ 1:00 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:08 p.m.

  
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Dorothy Brown-Alfaro, Chairperson  
DB/cp

