



**FINAL**

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

**FEBRUARY 13, 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 1:07 p.m. on Tuesday, February 13, 2024, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor conference room, room W-202E in the Economic Development & Housing Department, 2200 Civic Center Place, Miramar, FL 33023.

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

The following board members were present:

Chairperson Dorothy Brown-Alfaro, Owner, Jador International Corp.  
Vice Chairperson Vernon Williams, VP, Bridgecon Construction Services  
Mac Alabre, CEO, Lien Library Inc.; Florida International University (FIU)  
Priscilla Diaz  
Garrie Harris, CEO, Alpha 1 Staffing  
Robert Washington, Jr., Instructor, Carpenters & Pile Drivers Union

The following board members were absent:

Denise Brown, President, DPX Construction Management (Excused)  
Vernon Dooling, Membership Coordinator, Minority Builders Coalition  
Colette Holt, City Diversity Consultant, Ex-officio

A quorum was declared.

Other persons present:

Jordan Gary, City Attorney  
Paul Njoroje, Business Analyst Manager  
Dr. Karen Hollis, B.I.D. Liaison

Chairperson Brown-Alfaro announced there would be a small business demonstration on February 15, 2024, at 1:00 p.m. at Stephen P. Clark Center,

the Miami-Dade County Government Center, 111 NW 1<sup>st</sup> Street on the sidewalk. She pulled a permit under her Small Business Advocate Corporation she started years ago; they were encouraging small businesses to stop whatever they were doing on any project and come out in record numbers with their employees and themselves. All her staff and she would be attending, and she encouraged the board members to do the same. If they got rid of the certified program in Miami-Dade County, 800 certified small businesses in construction, 1,200 small businesses in goods and services, and 400 small businesses in architect and engineering would be affected.

Ms. Garrie Harris asked if Ms. Brown-Alfaro sent the notice of the event to the black chambers; she was on the board of the Broward and Miami-Dade Chambers.

Chairperson Brown-Alfaro urged her to send out the information to as many small businesses as possible.

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

City Attorney Gary pointed out some of the red highlighted areas in minutes indicated the transcriber could not identify the speaker; thus, it was important for speakers to state their names every time they spoke, so they could be identified in the minutes.

Chairperson Brown-Alfaro and Vice Chairperson Williams requested a hard copy of the minutes; other board members said they were satisfied with having the minutes emailed to them.

- Meeting minutes of October 31, 2023

Vice Chairperson Williams made a motion to approve the minutes of October 31 2023, as presented; the motion was seconded by Ms. Harris. The motion passed unanimously.

- Meeting minutes of January 9, 2024

Ms. Garrie Harris stated Ms. Stefanescu first name was Fabiah, and Stefanescu was ended with a U not an O, and it should say City Attorney's Office, as Ms. Stefanescu was not a licensed attorney.

Mr. Njoroge, again, reminded everyone to state their name before speaking.

Chairperson Brown-Alfaro suggested tabling the minutes to the next meeting to

allow time for Dr. Hollis to email board members the minutes, so they could review them for the next board meeting.

- There was a board consensus to table the January 9, 2024, minutes to the next board meeting.

#### **4. PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS (PPP) DISCUSSION**

Vice Chairperson Williams stressed the importance of the board discussing the development of a PPP strategy plan, as he was very upset with a situation he was going through with a contractor he felt was using him in this capacity. He related the situation to the board, stating he did not expect to be awarded a contract just because he was a registered small business in Miramar, but the manner the contractor in question conducted business was wrong. Many contractors had their go-to vendors, and even where they were required to get three bids for a project, the contractor already knew which firm they planned to work with. His taxpayer's dollars were used to purchase the lot, and he was unable to participate in the contract work for the project slated for that site. Mr. Williams stated he joined the BID Advisory Board for a number of reasons, one being to help educate other small businesses like himself on how to deal with larger companies, as they needed knowledge, experience, and performance history to deal with what was a tough system. As a board members, he wished to work to make changes that leveled the playing field that allowed small businesses to have a legitimate shot at securing contracts. Dr. Hollis did a great job of getting small businesses and large contractors to the table, but after facilitating that connection, there was no oversight to see if the large contractors were doing as promised to give small businesses and opportunity to participate on large projects. He wished to know how many small businesses were actually hired for large projects.

Dr. Hollis thought this was an excellent scenario for the board to discuss, stating she, too, was present at the job fair hosted by the BID Program, only to be told by the current builders that no jobs were available. Leadership was brought into the meeting, and they listened to the concerns, and the outrage expressed by the local business owners in attendance. The latter mandated that the BID Program team review and allow inclusion for local businesses to be considered. Mr. Williams was one of the businesses included on that partnership. The Pinnacle project was the latest project Mr. Williams was speaking about having challenges with the contractor; she could secure report on if contractor was, in fact, meeting and monitoring if he would meet goals. The contractor signed a contract that included minority participation goals, and just before being made aware by Bridgecon Construction of the compliance issues they faced, she received a report from the contractor that included a list of the certified firms they would be using for the project. She noticed there was no local participation, and when she

immediately brought this to the contractor's attention, they informed her they were unable to find any local firms, though they received a list of local firms.

Bridgecon stated Prime challenges in finding local, qualified firms. Dr. Hollis contacted the owner to make them aware of the situation. She pulled and reviewed the contract which included a 15-percent CBE/SBE goal, and an additional five-percent local goal that must be met.

Chairperson Brown-Alfaro commented, working with the Miami-Dade County School Board, for local small businesses bidding on contracts, the competition was parallel, meaning they, too, had to submit a sealed bid to the prime contractor, and the prime had to open all the sealed bids at opening at which the owner and the small businesses that bid were present. If municipalities and counties mandated this procedure, it would eliminate small businesses going through what Mr. Williams experienced; it was the reason many small businesses failed to get contracts on large projects, as prime contractors were under no obligation to reveal information on bid responses. She said the City could set parameters going forward, stating on any public projects in Miramar, prime contractors should accept sealed bids only that would be opened in the presence of the businesses that bid on the contract, along with the property owner.

Vice Chairperson Williams said he just needed to know the bidding was being done on a level field, and the City needed to put systems in place to prevent what happened to him happening to small businesses coming in behind him. A project manager focused on price, reputation, and relationships, as apart from protecting their own salary, they assumed a lot of risk on large projects, so they did they felt they had to do to protect themselves, and sometimes working with a small business could more of a problem than a solution due to some small businesses lacking experience working on large projects. He recommended Dr. Hollis hold more contractor workshops; he was willing to sit with small business owners to educate them on how to approach prime contractors, and what was required to work on large projects.

Mr. Alabre questioned why the five percent requirement was not 100 percent when they were selecting the small businesses. He wished to know when Dr. Hollis will be doing the investigation, and how long would it be before the board could receive an update on those findings.

Mr. Washington questioned, when it came to the bidding process, how could the City prevent small businesses registered in the BID Program being overlooked, as despite the inclusion of language requiring local small business participation, there was no guarantee this was actually being fulfilled by contractors.

Vice Chairperson Williams said prime contractors had boilerplate responses to

not hiring local small businesses that indicated they were unsuccessful in finding qualified local small businesses, preventing them from achieving the local hire goal.

Chairperson Brown-Alfaro wished to know Mr. Williams' definition of a "qualified small business".

Dr. Hollis interjected to answer Mr. Washington's question on why the City's listed firms were not first included on bids, stating the City had two types of procurement; the first was those the City of Miramar released through the Procurement Department. When the latter was purchasing, and/or soliciting primes and subcontractors, all registered vendors with the City were reviewed and notified for city-procured projects; those projects were reviewed by her first for inclusion, and opportunities to add bids. She indicated when those solicitations were released from procurement, those firms were automatically notified. The second type procurement/purchasing was the public/private projects; those were not released in the City's procurement process, as they involved individuals who identified available projects and/or land in the City of Miramar, for which they developed a team; in such arrangements, registered vendors were not notified. She explained, to rectify this situation, the City mandated in its contracts that the developer had to hold contractor fairs before releasing bid solicitations to allow local businesses a chance to attend the fair and have access to inclusion on such projects.

Vice Chairperson Williams responded as to his definition of a qualified small business, noting GCs were developers, and when they explored working with small businesses with whom they had no prior working relationship with, they looked for numerous factors first, which they clearly communicated to the small businesses. For example, a small business could be licensed and certified, but they must have sufficient financing to handle large contract work; when working on a large capital project, it could take up to 90 days before a small business received their first payment, but during that time the small business still had to do the work, pay their workers, etc. The prime contractor sought, also, to know the small business's knowledge base in the industry or scope they would be required to perform, along with the type of working relationship they would have with the rest of the project team, the value they would bring to the team, and this was based on the individual culture they cultivated on their projects.

Chairperson Brown-Alfaro said the factors Mr. Williams was citing as important were not so, as prime contractors could change the qualifications for small businesses as they chose; it was a barrier, as they were allowed to choose the qualifications from project to project. The bottom line was that the developers, whether big or small, public or private, they wanted to do business with people they felt they could control and develop relationships along those lines. She felt

it was basically a process of exclusion, as they ask for years of experience, ignoring the fact that a small business could not accumulate years of experience if they were never given a chance to do the work that would give them that experience. On the issue of waiting three to six months to get paid, this was the reason she moved her work from state level to local level, whether it was private or government, as businesses were to be paid within 14 calendar days upon the proper submission of one's invoice. When the owner paid the prime contractor, the latter had two days to pay their subcontractors.

Mr. Washington asked if the PPP was broken down in the BID Program, how it was set up.

Dr. Hollis answered no, it was not. She sought confirmation that Mr. Washington was suggesting BID staff include language in the manual for PPPs, adding Mr. Williams was supposed to present the board with a proposed strategy plan.

Vice Chairperson Williams indicated he had not yet drafted a PPP strategy plan, as he wanted to have a discussion on PPPs with the board first; it had to be a collective, not an individual effort. In response to Ms. Brown-Alfaro's response to his comments on qualified small businesses, he reiterated that he worked in the construction industry for over 30 years, and he lived it, so he was not speaking from a point of a laborer or foreman, as he worked at the highest level he could get to as a black person in the construction industry, and he saw what he spoke of many times, and he believed he knew what prime contractors were looking for in a subcontractor. Small businesses that failed to fit into the three aforementioned categories were often overlooked by primes, as they did not want the problems that could materialize.

Dr. Hollis asked if Mr. Williams wished to reduce his observations to a strategy plan that could be added to the BID Manual; she asked if she could get them down on paper, as she understood he had no wish to create a strategy by himself.

Chairperson Brown-Alfaro suggested Mr. Williams just jot down his thoughts on PPPs, including the experiences he stated earlier, which other board members could do as well, as they each had their own experiences.

Vice Chairperson Williams agreed to speak with Dr. Hollis after the meeting to put his views on paper, so they could be drafted into a proposed PPP strategy for the board to consider.

Mr. Alabre believed it was important to remain as objective as possible, and the only way to do this was to have a system and processes in place. He asked if a prime contractor failed to adhere to the five-percent requirement in their contract,

were penalties enforced by the City.

Dr. Hollis affirmed there were remedies detailed in the BID Manual in the event of a contract violation. In the instance cited by Mr. Williams, the prime contractor was still in the process of selecting subcontractors, and he would be submitting his choices to her that she would later share with the board at their next meeting. She noted aspects of the site plan still that had to go before the City Commission for approval, so those things would be resolved before February 21.

Ms. Harris observed the PPP strategy plan the board would be working on should include small businesses like hers that involved in providing goods and services, and not just focus on the construction industry; this would provide a good perspective on all forms of solicitation, rather than only focusing on certain industries.

Chairperson Brown-Alfaro pointed out that all the matters being discussed by the board regarding contract bidding, if the bills she spoke of earlier passed, the systems in place would become irrelevant, and it would set small businesses back to the environment of the 1980s when small businesses were shut out of getting work on large projects, regardless of race, gender, etc. She added that other board members should submit their suggestions to Dr. Hollis regarding a PPP strategy plan, so she could include them in the draft plan.

**5. PROPOSED PPP STRATEGY PLAN (Vernon Williams)**

Deferred.

**6. MIAMI-DADE COUNTY'S PPP SOLICITATION LANGUAGE**

No discussion.

**7. NEW BUSINESS:**

BID Utilization Plan

No discussion.

BID Policies & Procedural Manual

No discussion.

Dr. Hollis wished to provide the board with an up-close review of a solicitation project; the review with the board was the most current project authorization she was working on. The project authorization shown in the handout was for

\$60,000.00, but since last week Thursday, she was notified that the project authorization was for \$2.5 million; it was in the area of construction, and it was currently being reviewed. She noted the document provided to the board was typical of what was forwarded to her from any city department, and the Procurement Department developed a system in which all department projects, prior to being released by the City, had to submit the subject form to her. Upon receipt, she would review the available ready, willing, and able firms, not just in the City of Miramar, but in the tri-county areas of Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach. Dr. Hollis indicated they were using the B2Gnow system to do this, but they were not able to work as efficiently as desired, so they consulted with another software and team, using the subject project authorization as a pilot; doing it manually, as they currently did it, they averaged about 15 percent inclusion. The results thus far showed a much higher percentage than city staff anticipated; with the number of firms they added just the previous day, they were able to recommend up to 25 percent of firms. She said in another meeting, she asked them to include in their overall search noncertified firms, as they, too, had an opportunity to respond to bids; to date they identified nearly 500 businesses, and they were still searching, and at the end of the search, they would give the City a recommendation on what they should do with regard to participation goals.

Chairperson Brown-Alfaro asked if the scope included lighting and roadway.

Dr. Hollis answered yes.

Chairperson Brown-Alfaro wondered if contractors would be working with Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), etc.

Dr. Hollis answered no; working with FDOT meant it was a federal project, in which the City did not participate; FDOT had their own 3.8 percent they applied to all their projects; the City's BID Program only did reviews of goals for non-federal projects, even if only \$1.00 was federally funded. This, too, applied to surtax funded projects, which only Broward County reviewed, and applied their own goals. Miramar's Procurement staff only reviewed City of Miramar projects, showing what the City was doing with city dollars, and the systems in place to ensure more inclusion, and how those firms were being engaged. She would invite someone from the Procurement Department to thoroughly review the City's system to enable the board to have a better understanding, and to provide feedback. She mentioned prior board discussion included questions on data collection, and the type of data the board wished BID staff to review, consider, and make available to the board on a quarterly basis. Mr. Njoroge reviewed the information provided by Miami-Dade County; it was more detailed. Staff wished the board to see that they would be provided with data on a monthly basis, but it would be in a graphic format; the document she provided the board should be reviewed by the members to prepare for discussion at the next meeting. The

hope was for board members to provide more definitive ideas to ensure that if the City adopted what was being done by some of the City's community stakeholders, would this be sufficient as to the type of data the board required staff to provide.

Chairperson Brown-Alfaro suggested changing the dark blue color, as it made the document difficult to read.

Dr. Hollis said she would email the board members the document. The document was an example of the data, (the numbers were not real,) that staff would provide the board on a quarterly basis, and each report would have a start and ending date to show the quarter being covered. If the board preferred, the report would include a data comparison from quarter to quarter. Mr. Njoroge preferred to give the board a more visual, charted format of the data.

Chairperson Brown-Alfaro commented the positive with the Dade County layout was it stratified out if a business worked directly with the county, actually listing the business, whether it was black, woman-owned, small, company name, awarded or not awarded a contract, the size of the contract, etc. Prime contractors, such as Pinnacle, had to present a report every two months to show how they were meeting their goals.

Chairperson Brown-Alfaro mentioned Landscaping Inclusion item, and IT MCC Audio items under New Business as items one and two.

Dr. Hollis said she is proposing as the City's Prompt Payment Policy the expansion of the (City of Miramar's "Accounts Payable Policy and Procedures – adding a section of instructions to direct "Contractors." The prompt payment document was given for board members to review and send comments to her.

Chairperson Brown-Alfaro asked if where the language said 15 days, was that calendar or business days.

Dr. Hollis answered calendar days; these were the suggestions she wished the board to forward to her after their review of the document.

Chairperson Brown-Alfaro thought this should be clearly stated; she recommended making it 14 rather than 15 calendar days to be consistent with Broward County's practices.

Dr. Hollis reiterated each board member should review the document, and email her their comments, so she could revise the document for the next board meeting.

Mr. Washington asked if once the document was finalized by city staff, how would it be shared businesses in the City's database.

Dr. Hollis responded, with the new software Procurement staff would be working with, they would be doing training with all the prime contractors currently contracting with the City, training and notifying them of the changes being implemented for monitoring and compliance. Once staff secured available, ready, willing, and able contractors for any project authorization form, they would hold contractor webinars, notifying vendors and firms in the tri-county area identifies as qualified, and who might, potentially, respond to the solicitation.

Vice Chairperson Williams asked if the BID Manual only applied to certified, minority contractors, or all subcontractors on a project.

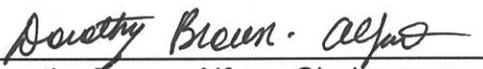
Dr. Hollis replied that the BID Manual applied to all the City's construction and professional services; it covered any and all activities that fall under the BID Act, and the BID Program, including departmental spends. Thus, the Manual included all purchasing that took place within the City of Miramar, though it did not include the PPP, so staff wished to work with the board for the PPP inclusion portion in the Manual. She said when board members submit their feedback to her, she would not be responding to them individually; she would compile their responses into a document that the board would review collectively at the next board meeting.

**8. ANNOUNCEMENTS & INFORMATION: NONE**

**9. ADJOURNMENT:**

Next meeting: Tuesday, April 9, 2024, @ 1:00 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:39 p.m.

  
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Dorothy Brown-Alfaro, Chairperson  
DB/cp