

OFFICE OF EQUAL BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
Wednesday, September 20, 2023
Minutes

Members Present:

Javin Walker, Chair
Denise Albritton
Amy Angelo
Clementine Fleuranvil
Robert Lesko
Juan Pagan
Doris Pastl
Christine Roberts-Kelly
Bob Schafer

Staff Present:

Tonya Davis Johnson, Director
Richard Sena, Assistant County Attorney
Nicole Davis, SBDS I
Theresa Lawrence, SBDS I
Antonia Smith, Public Info. and Outreach Coordinator
Yamel Vasquez, Contract Analyst

Members Virtual:

Lorna Anderson, Vice Chair
Carole Hart
Courtney Newell Mckenzie

Guest:

Melody Thelwell, Purchasing Director

Members Absent: Kati Cassiani, Alan Gerwig, Seabron Smith

Vacant Seats: None

I. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order at 8:35 a.m. by Chairman, Javin Walker.

A. Roll Call

Roll called by Megan Harp. Quorum present.

B. Adoption of Agenda for September 20, 2023 Meeting

Motion by Juan Pagan, seconded by Denise Albritton. Motion passed unanimously.

C. Approval of Minutes for July 15, 2023 Meeting

Motion by Denise Albritton, seconded by Juan Pagan. Motion passed unanimously.

D. Introduction of Guests

Melody Thelwell, Palm Beach County Purchasing Director

II. COMMITTEE MEMBER UPDATE

Director Tonya Davis Johnson reported that the committee is at full complement with the formal appointment of Christine Roberts-Kelly to Seat 1; Certified Black Business.

Director Davis Johnson also took a moment to introduce OEBO's new staff member Theresa Lawrence, Small Business Development Specialist I. The committee welcomed Christine Roberts-Kelly and Theresa Lawrence.

III. OLD BUSINESS

A. OEBO Outreach Activity Report

Antonia Smith discussed the past outreach/training events. Ms. Smith reported on the targeted outreach conducted for the Belle Glade Small Business Community and shared the ongoing challenges with engaging with the business community.

The committee gave feedback and offered their assistance to enhance the outreach efforts in the Belle Glade community. Director Davis Johnson expressed the importance of the engagement of the Glades community and welcomed the committee's suggestions for upcoming outreach events.

Ms. Smith also shared the successes of the 4th Annual Mind Your Business Youth Entrepreneur Forum and provided the committee with the upcoming events. Robert Lesko shared with the committee that he was able to assist a participant of the event in their business endeavors by connecting them with the proper resource partners for their business.

Mr. Walker thanked the committee and staff for their attendance at the event and encouraged the committee to continue in their efforts to assist small businesses in order to produce more success stories.

B. Small Business Certification Status Report

Yamel Vasquez presented the Certification Report and discussed the different class indicators. Ms. Vasquez reported that there are currently 19 new certified vendors and 36 recertified vendors.

Robert Lesko requested a breakdown of all businesses in Palm Beach County by their geographical location to aid in SCORE's outreach. Director Davis Johnson advised that Mr. Lesko can reach out to Ms. Vasquez to guide him to the appropriate departments to assist him in the requested data collection.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. Recertification Sub-Committee Update

Doris Pastl gave a report on the calls that were made. She stated that one business was not aware of its certification expiration. Director Davis Johnson requested that the committee inquire with the businesses to ensure that they are receiving 30, 60, and 90-day notice of expiration. Ms. Pastl concluded by expressing the importance of making follow-up calls.

Mr. Walker gave a brief overview of the importance of the Recertification Sub-Committee and invited additional committee members to join.

V. COMMITTEE COMMENTS

Robert Lesko announced that SCORE has been presented with the opportunity to have a desk at the Riviera Beach Library to service walk-in clients. Mr. Lesko offered to display OEBO's certification resource guides. Mr. Lesko also shared with the committee that there are currently financial resources available for small businesses through the Palm Beach County Department of Housing and Economic Development as well as the City of Boynton Beach Community Revitalization Agency (CRA).

Christine Roberts-Kelly shared with the committee that she was a speaker at the City of Boynton Beach CRA September meeting and that she shared information about the Office of Equal Business Opportunity. Mrs. Roberts-Kelly also stated that she utilizes her social media platform to get information out to small businesses.

Amy Angelo stated that the Mind Your Business Youth Entrepreneur Forum had a good turnout and was an overall successful event. Ms. Angelo stated that it was great for the speakers to present information on financial literacy to the youth and that she was happy her daughter attended.

Doris Pastl stated that she supports having a retreat and would like the opportunity to network with representatives of the Water Management District and Solid Waste Authority so that small businesses can learn how to do business with these agencies. Javin Walker reminded Ms. Pastl of the potential networking opportunities at the upcoming Palm Beach Partners Business Matchmaker Conference & Expo on Friday, September 22, 2023, from 8 am to 6 pm at the Palm Beach County Convention Center.

Juan Pagan offered to use his database to disseminate information on loans and grants to the small business community in both English and Spanish.

Carol Hart offered her assistance for the upcoming Palm Beach Partners Business Matchmaker Conference & Expo.

Lorna Anderson stated that she is excited about the Palm Beach Partners Business Matchmaker Conference & Expo. Mrs. Anderson shared with the committee that they can sign up for the conference's Power Talks session to speak with the various participating Palm Beach County Agencies. Ms. Anderson also stated that she is looking forward to the Advisory Committee Retreat.

Javin Walker stated that he is looking forward to seeing the committee at the Palm Beach Partners Business Matchmaker Conference & Expo. Mr. Walker expressed his excitement about the Advisory Committee Retreat and the collaboration with the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce for the Hispanic Heritage Month Business Networking Event. Mr. Walker thanked the committee and staff and encouraged their continued efforts to assist the small business community.

VI. DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS

Tonya Davis Johnson announced that the 17th Annual Palm Beach Partners Business Matchmaker Conference and Expo will take place on September 22, 2023, at the Palm Beach County Convention from 8:00 am to 6:00 pm. Director Davis Johnson gave an overview of the conference workshops.

Director Davis Johnson also asked for the committee's feedback on hosting a retreat or a networking event to allow the committee to meet and network with other Palm Beach County Departments.

Director Davis Johnson announced that during National Black Business Month, The Office of Equal Business Opportunity recognized some of its small businesses and presented Javin Walker, 2SBW & Associates with an award of recognition.

VII. COUNTY ATTORNEY'S COMMENTS

None.

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Juan Pagan gave an overview Hispanic Heritage Month.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 9:42 a.m.