

OFFICE OF EQUAL BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
Wednesday, August 19, 2020
Minutes

Members Present:

Scott Johnson, Chair
Javin Walker-Vice Chair
Denise Albritton
Juan Pagan
Seabron Smith
Courtney McKenzie Newell
Jerry Steinberg
Lillian Reyes
Aida Vidal-Napier
Carole Hart
Lorna Anderson
John Elliott
Amy Angelo
Doris Pastl

Staff Present:

Tonya Davis Johnson, Director
Chelsea Koester, Assistant County Attorney
Dorianna Kristensen, Contract Analyst
Antonia Smith, Public Info. and Outreach Coordinator
Michelle Han, Administrative Secretary

Guests:

None.

Members Absent: Robert Waite.

Vacant Seats: None.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order at 8:33 a.m. by Chair, Scott Johnson.

A. Roll Call

Roll called by Michelle Han. Quorum present.

B. Adoption of Agenda for August 19, 2020 Virtual Meeting

Motion by Javin Walker, seconded by Seabron Smith, motion passed unanimously.

C. Adoption of Minutes for June 17, 2020 Virtual Meeting

Motion by Javin Walker, seconded by Seabron Smith, motion passed unanimously.

D. Introduction of Guests

None.

II. COMMITTEE MEMBER UPDATE

Tonya Davis Johnson stated that Seat 15 is up for renewal and Ms. Anderson expressed interest in her reappointment. The request will go before the Board of County Commissioners on September 1.

III. OLD BUSINESS

A. OEBO Outreach Activity Report

Ms. Davis Johnson stated that, this week, OEBO is hosting a series of virtual workshops for small businesses. The first being “Ready, Set, Go!” which is directed at business preparedness and business readiness for small businesses. The workshop is tailored to individuals that want to start a business or who already have a business and need some information on forward movement and Financial Literacy. The Financial Literacy workshops will help with the operation and management as well as help with proper financing. Ms. Davis Johnson invited the Board to attend tonight or tomorrow’s event and thanked Mr. Pagan for attending the virtual Outreach events.

Ms. Davis Johnson noted that OEBO is holding a State of Black Business drive-in event on August 31 at John Prince Park off Congress Avenue from 6-8pm. The speakers are Marc Morial, President of the National Urban League, Senator Bobby Powell and Commissioner Mack Bernard.

Mr. Steinberg indicated he was impressed with the virtual events the office was hosting and asked how the attendance fared for the Financial Literacy and “Ready, Set, Go!” workshops. Ms. Davis Johnson noted we had an average of 30 registrants per event.

Ms. Davis Johnson also mentioned that OEBO held its inaugural Youth Entrepreneurship Virtual Forum and 84 participants attended it. The age group targeted was 9 to 19. The keynote and panel speakers were phenomenal and we will continue to host additional events that target young entrepreneurs.

B. Small Business Certification Status Report

Dorianna Kristensen stated that as of today we have 650 certifications. Comparing the trend through Covid, beginning in February, we started with 624 certified vendors and since then we have increased to 650. In June, there were 660 but there were 90 applications in process in our system. When the Specialists worked remotely, they were able to process those applications quickly because they were not tasked with additional duties. She noted an increase in new applications has begun since the Outreach events and Tuesday’s Tips have started.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Davis Johnson shared information regarding the PBC Cares for Business Grant. The County has awarded \$50 million threshold for grants awarded. The County has issued 2,942 grants to individuals totaling \$50,774,283.26. The average grant is approximately \$17,000, but again the basis for the grants was 6-months of expenses. We have 12 grant applications still in final review due to missing documents, i.e. business tax receipts. Business Tax Receipts will be one of the topics in our upcoming training sessions.

Ms. Anderson asked for clarification of the total grant amount being either \$60 million or \$50 million. Ms. Davis Johnson stated \$50 million for firms of 25 or less employees and \$10 million for 25 or more, but we have not seen much activity for businesses with 25 or more employees. Ms. Davis Johnson also stated Administrator Baker will review the information and will make a decision whether or not to reopen the grant period.

Ms. Newell asked if a company could resubmit their application because now the current year taxes are available, which were not when they applied. Ms. Davis Johnson said whatever documentation was available at the time of submission is what will determine eligibility.

Ms. Davis Johnson stated that the Governor has extended the Executive Order to continue virtual meetings. Ms. Davis Johnson asked the Committee if they would like to continue meeting virtually and asked Ms. Koester for clarification of the date. Ms. Koester indicated the Executive Order extension is 12:01 am on October 1; but believes another extension is possible. Since the conference room for OEBO is small, the Committee would have to utilize another room in the building if available. A motion to continue meeting virtually until the Executive Order is rescinded was made and unanimously passed.

V. COMMITTEE COMMENTS

Ms. Davis Johnson closed with “Safer Together - 6’ Apart”.

Ms. Davis Johnson thanked the Committee Members that have come onto the Outreach events and asked that if schedules allow, please come and listen to the presentations and reminded the Committee that there was a Goal Setting Meeting this afternoon.

Mr. Steinberg asked which individual won the Business Pitch Contest for the Youth Entrepreneurial Forum and Ms. Smith specified Jayden Morgan won first prize; Christian Franette won second and Jonathan Rabbath won third.

VI. DIRECTOR’S COMMENTS

None.

VII. COUNTY ATTORNEY’S COMMENTS

None.

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 a.m.