

EQUAL BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION

April 07, 2020 Meeting Minutes

ITEM	DISCUSSION	ACTION
	Meeting held through conference call. Nancy Briguglio called the meeting to order.	Meeting called to order at 9:03 a.m.
Minutes: February 04, 2020	Nancy Briguglio called for approval of the Minutes. Roger Barnes mentioned that he had brought up a conversation surrounding disparity studies that might be missing in the minutes up for vote. Mahesh mentioned that he will make that addition. Constance mentioned that the minutes can be approved subject to the new addition being made. Roger Barnes moved that the Minutes be approved accordingly, the motion was seconded by Margaret Kim. Mahesh will send a revised minutes document to the commissioners.	Unanimously approved
Certifications: February 04, 2020 through April 07, 2020	Roger Barnes moved that the applications be approved; the motion was seconded by Nathaniel Alston.	Unanimously approved
Purchasing Reports	<p>Mahesh presented the FY 2020 3rd Quarter waiver report.</p> <p>Discussions:</p> <p>In reference to the waiver report, some of the discussions included contracts that did not have any subcontracting opportunities since they were commodity purchases. Additionally, there were five partial waivers, wherein there were limited opportunities for meeting the full EBO goal.</p> <p>Office of Purchasing Outreach Events:</p> <p>Information about the Office of Purchasing outreach events was shared. Mahesh gave an overview of the Information Technology Local Business Event that was held on March 5, 2020.</p> <p>The Construction & Paving Local Business Outreach Event which was scheduled for March 19, 2020 and the Meet the Primes Local Business Outreach Event scheduled for April 16, 2020 have been postponed due to the pandemic.</p>	

	<p>Cynthia Gula asked if the County had any plans to do a collaborative event online. Dean mentioned that it was a good suggestion, but he was not sure if we are at a point where we can do this yet, but this is something that can be looked at in the future.</p>
<p>Member Comments</p>	<p>Nancy Briguglio mentioned that it is especially important given the current pandemic situation for the EBOC to continue to do what we do for the ongoing support of local and EBO businesses.</p> <p>Discussions: Disparity Study</p> <p>Roger Barnes mentioned that the County has never done a disparity study. He added that a disparity study will provide historical data and information whether or not adequate underutilization of minority firms exists. He mentioned that a disparity study would have to be done to look at the historical data which may determine if the EBO goals can be increased.</p> <p>He added that a significant amount of economic activity within the County, in terms of expenditures happen other than the County's Office of Purchasing. There are opportunities for minority participation at the Howard County School System and Downtown Columbia Development, wherein there are opportunities in construction as well as post construction opportunities for local minority firms. He would like to see more participation of local minority firms within these entities.</p> <p>He added that other surrounding jurisdictions have conducted a disparity study, he had read through some of those studies, some of which were very thorough and had some good data and some very bad data as well. He added that Prince Georges County provides more preference to their local businesses in their procurements. He would like to see more preferences for Howard County local firms, rather than spending with out of State and other local jurisdictions. A study may give a basis for keeping more tax payer dollars in the County.</p> <p>He added that the cost factor has been a hurdle in conducting a study. The County can conduct a bid process to see what the cost will be for a full study. Roger Barnes suggested to the commissioners that they have a discussion and subsequently make a formal recommendation to the County Council to conduct a disparity study. Nancy Briguglio mentioned that she supports the idea. Roger Barnes will take a lead on that. Constance will look at the procedure to follow for the EBOC to make a recommendation to the County Council.</p>

	<p>Other Discussions:</p> <p>Cynthia Gula suggested that the County could accelerate their payments to businesses, which would be another way to assist businesses out there, Dean mentioned that the County was making payments to vendors on schedule as of now and this was a good idea and he would mention it to the Director of Finance.</p> <p>Nancy asked if the contracts being awarded have slowed down or if the County was putting off some purchases. Dean mentioned that there has not been any significant impact on contracts being awarded though there has been some slowdown.</p>
<p>Howard County Economic Development Authority (HCEDA)</p>	<p>Howard County Economic Development Authority (HCEDA):</p> <p>Vernon provided information on the Howard County Economic Development Authority work towards assisting small local businesses during the pandemic. Their office is working in assisting businesses in accessing the loans available through the US Small Business Administration. Their office has made over 400 calls out to local businesses to point them in the right direction.</p>
<p>Adjournment of Meeting at 9:44 am</p>	<p>Motion to adjourn by Nancy Briguglio.</p> <p>Next regular EBOC Meeting scheduled for June 02, 2020 at 9:00 a.m.</p>

EBOC MEMBER ATTENDEES:

1. Roger Barnes (conference call)
2. Nathaniel Alston (conference call)
3. Nancy Briguglio (conference call)
4. Cynthia Gula (conference call)
5. Margaret Kim (conference call)
6. Neil Madan (conference call)

ABSENT:

1. Shahan Rizvi
2. Jason Peay
3. Sharon Pinder

NON-MEMBER ATTENDEES:

1. Dean Hof (conference call)
2. Mahesh Sabnani (conference call)
3. Constance Tucker (conference call)
4. Vernon Thompson (conference call)