

**MINORITY, WOMEN, DISADVANTAGED & EVANSTON BUSINESS ENTERPRISE
(M/W/D/EBE)
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

Wednesday, December 18, 2024
6:00 P.M.
Meeting Minutes

MEMBERS PRESENT: CM Bobby Burns, CM Krissie Harris, Jared Davis, Tawana Johnson, Angela Pennisi, and Michael McLean

MEMBERS ABSENT: Bonaventure Fandohan, Ernest Noy, and Rachel Williams

STAFF PRESENT: Tammi Nunez, Purchasing Manager; Hitesh Desai, CFO/ Treasurer; Lara Biggs, Bureau Chief -CIP/City Engineer; Daniel Biss, Mayor; Steve Ruger, Deputy City Manager; CM Clarie Kelly, Liza Roberston-Young, Chief Legislative Policy Advisor; Joseph Fields, Workforce Development Manager

GUEST: Jeremy Esparza

PRESIDING MEMBER: Councilmember Bobby Burns

1. Declaration of a Quorum

With a quorum present, Councilmember (CM) Burns called the meeting to order at 6:08 PM.

2. New Member Introduction/ Public Comments

A. Tawana Johnson

B. Jody Frehley, support of RBO. Clarified that RBO compliance does not mandate union membership and highlighted the importance of skilled workers and safety.

C. Jeremy Esparza, support of RBO (virtual) Clarified that RBO compliance does not mandate union membership and highlighted the importance of skilled workers and safety.

3. Approval of Minutes

CM K. Harris motioned to approve the minutes for October 16, 2024. Seconded by A. Pennisi. Motion passed, and all voted in favor of approving the minutes.

4. Old Business

A. Responsive Bidder Ordinance

The discussion focused on the responsible bidding ordinance (RBO), defining what constitutes a responsible bidder and the implications of such an ordinance on local businesses and union vs. non-union contractors. The RBO aims to ensure fair contracting and responsible bidding but may impact local businesses and contract costs. The ordinance's goals must be balanced with the city's objectives for local employment and business opportunities. Further research and discussions are needed to refine the ordinance and address concerns raised during the meeting.

Concerns Raised:

CM B. Burns: Emphasized the need to ensure that the ordinance supports local contractors and employees and suggested exploring ways to simplify the procurement process.

L. Biggs, City Engineer, expressed concerns about the ordinance potentially increasing project costs and limiting bids to union contractors, which could exclude local businesses. The ordinance could conflict with the local employment program and minority/women-owned business goals. The need for clear criteria to avoid unnecessary burdens on staff and contractors was emphasized.

Committee Member M. McLean: Stressed the need to balance the goals of local employment and business opportunities with the requirements of the RBO.

Apprenticeship Program Discussion: Discussion on the requirement for contractors to have apprenticeship programs, with concerns about the impact on small, non-union businesses and the potential benefits for local employment.

Committee's Role and Responsibility Discussion: The committee's focus on supporting Evanston workers and businesses was highlighted, as well as the need to balance quality work and local employment opportunities.

Follow-up/Next Steps:

- Further research on the USDOL approval process for apprenticeship programs.
- Simplification of the procurement process to improve access for local contractors.
- Consideration of a threshold for the ordinance's application based on contract size.
- Potential exemption for Evanston businesses from certain ordinance requirements.
- Scheduling of future meetings to continue discussions and refine the ordinance.
- Consider changes to the LEP to include supervisory roles

B. MWDEBE Award Proposal

The award proposal (dated April 19, 2024) was placed on file.

The award subcommittee's charge is to draft an RFP (with staff support) for a vendor to propose eligibility criteria, a process for collecting nominations and vetting the nominees against eligibility criteria. A motion was made to form the subcommittee, which consists of Angela Pennisi, Jared, Laura Brown, the director of marketing from downtown Evanston, Brittany White, the executive director of the Evanston Chamber of Commerce, Catherine Gotsick, Main Dempster Mile, and a member of the board of Central Street Evanston to be named. The motion was made by A. Pennisi, 2nd by CM K. Harris. The vote was taken and unanimously approved.

C. MWDEBE Small Business Survey – Item held

5. New Business

A. 2025 MWDEBE Development Committee Meeting Dates

CM K. Harris moved to approve 2025 MWDEBE Committee Meeting Dates, second by J. Davis. Dates approved by Committee (0-Nays, 1-Abstain CM K. Harris). Further

discussion on the January meeting date, with a focus on ensuring quorum and accommodating members' availability.

6. Staff Reports – Items held

A. LEP Projects Tracking Updates

B. MWDEBE Tracking

7. Other Business

N/A

8. Adjournment

The meeting concluded with acknowledgments of the complexity of the issues and the importance of continued dialogue

Councilmember Burns ended the meeting at 7:52 PM.