

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

Wednesday, February 19, 2025
6:00 P.M.
Meeting Minutes

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: 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, Cynthia Granfield, Deputy City Attorney, Liza Roberston-Young, Chief Legislative Policy Advisor; Joseph Fields, Workforce Development Manager

GUEST: Jeremy Esparza, Marcus Jordan, Robert Piani

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. 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

M. McLean motioned to approve the December 18, 2024 minutes, seconded by J. Davis. The motion passed, and all voted in favor of approving the minutes.

4. Old Business

A. Responsive Bidder Ordinance:

- The meeting focused heavily on the Responsible Bidder Ordinance and its implications for local contractors, particularly concerning apprenticeship programs and the potential exclusion of non-union contractors.
- There was a strong emphasis on ensuring that any new requirements serve the interests of Evanston residents and businesses.
- The committee is considering how to streamline processes and reduce paperwork to encourage more local participation in city contracts.
- Future meetings will continue to address these issues, focusing on aligning the RBO with the LEP and ensuring compliance with legal standards.

Apprenticeship Program:

Council Member Burns shared insights from discussions with USDOL about alternative paths to compliance with the RBO, emphasizing creating a look-ahead requirement for apprenticeship programs rather than a retrospective one. Concerns about the requirement for bidders to have partnered with a program for the previous five years. Discussion on the potential for contractors to become their apprenticeship programs. It is essential to ensure that the RBO complements the Local Employment Program (LEP).

Concerns Raised:

Concerns about the apprenticeship program requirements potentially limiting non-union contractors. Discussion on the complexity and additional paperwork required by the RBO. Suggestions to set a threshold for when the RBO requirements apply, potentially at \$500,000. Discussion on the self-performing work requirement and its impact on local contractors. Staff and legal team will review the ordinance for consistency and compliance with procurement laws.

Follow-up:

- Staff to provide information on the quality of work and any issues with current contractors.
- Further meetings to discuss paperwork, process, and potential amendments to the RBO.
- Consider how the RBO and LEP can be aligned to serve local employment and contracting goals better.

B. MWDEBE Award Proposal

Discuss whether to include a monetary award or focus on non-monetary benefits like marketing packages. Rachel Williams submitted comments suggesting reconsideration of a monetary award. The subcommittee will meet on February 27th to discuss this further.

C. MWDEBE Small Business Survey – Item held

5. Staff Reports – Items held

A. LEP Projects Tracking Updates

B. MWDEBE Tracking

6. New Business

7. Other Business

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 8:05 PM.