

ADVISORY COUNCIL ON EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY (ACEEO)

Eric Maldonado, Chair
Kelli Collins, Vice Chair

Meeting Minutes

July 22, 2022
ZOOM Meeting

1. Introductions/Call to Order- 09:32 a.m.

Antoine Wilson (staff) called the meeting to order.

Eric Maldonado, Mark Pighin, Miguel Mauricio, Roosevelt Gipson Jr., Amrita Kaur, Lara DeLaney, Angela Malala, Fabiola Quintero, Leonard Ramirez, Karen Caoile, Risk Management Director, Anne Ortiz, Public Works, Buyer II, Purchasing & Procurement (visitor), Gene Clark, Santa Clara County, Chief Procurement Officer (speaker); Ingrid Merriwether, President and CEO, Merriwether & Williams Insurance Services (speaker); Bernida Reagan, Esq., Director of Community and Client Relations, Merriwether & Williams Insurance Services (speaker); Jennifer Quallick, District 2 Representative (visitor), and Bolston Jones (visitor) were present.

Absent: Allwyn Brown; Kelli Collins (resigned 7/21/22); Piedad Fracasso (staff)

Left Early: Mark Pighin; Leonard Ramirez (Left during Merriwether & Williams Insurance Services presentation)

2. Public Comment

No public comment

3. Approval of the Minutes

There was a motion to approve the June 24, 2022, minutes by Lara DeLaney and seconded by Roosevelt Gipson, Jr. The minutes were approved.

4. Gene Clark, Santa Clara County, Chief Procurement Officer

Gene Clark gave an overview of what steps the County of Santa Clara (Santa Clara County) is taking to increase their outreach and use of Small Business Enterprises (SBE's) for their Public Works construction projects and department procurements. Gene feels that diversity and inclusiveness are important and must be utilized. Santa Clara County is doing the following:

- They have contracted with a consulting firm, MGT, to conduct a disparity study. They will collect baseline data to identify disparities between the availability and utilization of diverse business enterprises and procurement activities.
- They conduct surveys and monthly one-on-one interviews with select diverse vendors from different areas and provide interpreters as needed. These vendors are given the opportunity to meet with Santa Clara County and MGT to get credible data and simplify the process.
- They conduct Outreach Supplier Days. This is a one-on-one opportunity for the vendor to meet for 15 minutes with the department to simplify the registration process. Many vendors are signing up for this service and interpreters are available, or referred as needed, as language can be a barrier. He said it is like a lottery because it has become so popular with the vendors.

- They market their opportunities, in various languages, and use community-based organizations, Chambers of Commerce, etc. to reach more SBEs. Their outreach is more so on Teams due to COVID, but the preference is to meet in person. Santa Clara County posts on their website about Outreach Supplier Days and other SBE related information and sends a blast out to the vendors. They also use word of mouth by staff.
- Gene Clark has agreed to send us a copy of the MGT contract and link to RFS or RFP.

5. Ingrid Merriwether, President and CEO, Merriwether & Williams Insurance Services and Bernida Reagan, Esq., Director of Community and Client Relations

Ingrid Merriwether and Bernida Reagan gave an overview of Merriwether & Williams Insurance Services. They work with cities, counties and the State of California who have an interest in working with SBEs. They are the largest minority, woman owned, insurance brokerage company on the West Coast. Their insurance brokerage company provides the following:

- They provide bonding for small, and minority owned companies throughout the state. They also provide bid-bonding that is a guarantee for a bond so that the SBE can participate in the bid process on a project.
- They extend capital and surety funding to SBEs so they will qualify to bid on construction projects. This can be a hardship for small contractors as the County can take a minimum of 60 days to pay, yet the employees and materials costs must be paid up front. They work with them from the assessment all the way through project completion.
- They help the SBEs understand not just the barriers they face, but barriers in accessing opportunities such as technology, back-office support, access to capital, staffing, or relationships with unions.
- They provide a wide range of services to both the contractors and to the entities and jurisdictions that are looking to expand their contracting with small, minority, women, and veteran owned business.

6. Roundtable/Public Comment

- Antoine Wilson gave a sub-committee update. They have scheduled a meeting with DOIT and EHSD, on July 29, to hear about their implementation of the program and what we can do to help them improve their processes. The sub-committee will meet on August 12, for the regularly scheduled sub-committee meeting, with Public Works (PW), Carrie Ricci, Samantha Fithian, and hopefully County of Alameda to discuss their Small Local Emergency Business Program (SLEB).
- Karen Caoile clarified that an SBE is a small business enterprise whereas a SLEB is a small local emerging business. There is a need to clarify if SBE Enterprise includes company headquarters. You can have an SBE that has their headquarters in another state or county, but resides in Contra Costa County (the County), and is paying business license and operating fees in the County. This will be taken up by the sub-committee when they meet with PW.
- Angela Malala inquired about the current open ACEEO seats. Currently we have Union Seat #2 and the Business Seat open. With the resignation of Kelli Collins, the Labor-Trade member seat will also be open. The seat will be declared open at the BOS meeting and then advertised to the public.
- There was some conversation about who would fill the now-vacant Vice Chair position due to the resignation of Kelli Collins. Whomever is nominated and accepts this position

will serve thru November 2022 when a new Chair/Vice Chair is elected. Angela Malala nominated Amrita Kaur and Lara DeLaney, and Lara DeLaney nominated Amrita Kaur. This item will be on the August 26, 2022, agenda.

- The next ACEEO meeting will be on August 26, 2022.

7. **Adjourn**: The meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.