Minority Business Initiative Advisory Board

December Meeting Minutes

Thursday, December 15, 2022

1:00 PM – 2:30 PM

Remotely Held by Teams Meeting Software

Hartford CT, Connecticut Attendance

* Board Members Present: Chairman Howard K. Hill, Senator Doug McCrory, Avery Gaddis, Roberta Hoskie, George Mathanool
* Members Absent: Commissioner David Lehman
* Quorum: Yes
* DECD Staff Present: Deputy Commissioner Paul O. Robertson, George Norfleet, Alvetta Spencer, Kerron Vernon and Gerry Garcia

Welcome and Introductions:

Howard K. Hill called the meeting to order at 1:05PM

Minutes:

Chairman Hill asked for a motion to approve minutes. Motion was moved by Pedro Soto and seconded by Avery Garris. Motion passed unanimously.

# Discussion on Transition from David Lehman to Alexandra Daum

Paul O. Robertson indicated Alexandra Daum is nominated to serve as the next DECD Commissioner. David Lehman remains commissioner through the end of the term. We will look to introduce her at the next meeting

The Chairman wished David Lehman well and shared his appreciation for his collaboration.

# Meeting with New DECD Leadership

Howard Hill indicated that he met with David Lehman, Alexandra Daum and Paul O. Robertson privately, that the meeting went well, and that he expected MBI to have direct access to the new Commissioner moving forward.

# Wins

Howard Hill went over some of the successes that MBI has had over the course of the year. They included hiring a lead person, adopting Mission and Vision Statements, creation of a framework to move forward and successful steering of resources to important service organizations that serve the community.

# Presentation on MBI Summit

BBA Executive Director Anne-Marie Knight and Yvonne Davis of Davis World Training joined to present on the Summit. Yvonne and Anne-Marie presented on the Summit, sharing in-depth statistical, qualitative and quantitative data on the success of the Summit. Yvonne and Anne-Marie collected demographic data on the Summit. Looking at best practices in the future, distribution of participants came from all parts of Connecticut and beyond. Most businesses represented at the Summit were early stage and startups (0-5 years), which could be an opportunity to tailor to at a future Summit.

Senator McCrory thanked Yvonne Davis and BBA for organizing. He indicated how impressed he was by the event and its execution, and how disappointed he was in the hesitation and concerns about it leading up to the event. He indicated he looks forward to the next event MBI organizes for the minority community, that this event exceeded his high expectations, and that MBI should build upon the structure and organization of the event for a future Summit.

Paul O. Robertson thanked Yvonne for the thoroughness of the data, and that it sets the bar for future events like this using data as the backbone. He offered kudos to the organizing team.

Howard Hill attended both the New Haven Chamber of Commerce event and the MBI Summit, which were held simultaneously. He indicated that many people attended both, and that there was excitement at the New Haven event to attend the MBI event. Roberta Hoskie concurred and said she can see this event growing further, that people “ran out of business cards” as an indication of the contacts they made.

Anne-Marie Knight thanked the members for their kind words and support, and thanked Yvonne Davis for her effort, time and expertise for setting the foundation for MBI’s future Summit successes.

Anne-Marie went over the history that led to the Summit, from its contemplation in 2020 to planning that began in Summer, 2022 and resulting in the November, 2022 event. She went over the racially and ethnically diverse team that organized and planned the event.

Anne-Marie went over preliminary insights: participants valued the opportunity to come together, for communication and connection, and that they saw this as having positive business impact.

Anne-Marie discussed the intentionality of engaging community stakeholders and partners such as HEDCO, SAMA, WBDC, and others who helped market the event.

Survey results showed that participants highly valued their experience, would be willing to pay to attend a subsequent Summit.

# Overview of Programming with MBI

Gerry Garcia proposed that MBI provide a centralized location (online and phone line) where minority entrepreneurs can be connected to the resources they require, and which will be promoted by MBLive. Hotline will be a way to connect entrepreneurs to organizations that support entrepreneurs.

Gerry Garcia indicated that the MBI programs will require a budget and that MBI should also clarify how we want to measure our successes and standards.

# CTBoost Fund

Paul O. Robertson indicated that there are 104 loans, over $16M in loans in process, average loan of about $150K. 18 black loans (7 women, 11 men), 11 Latinos (5 men, 6 women), increasing marketing.

Paul O. Robertson also mentioned a desire to provide more information to the state on what events are happening across the state.

# Other Business

Howard Hill reiterated his thanks to David Lehman and his contributions.

Howard Hill stated that MBI wants to have a more in-depth look at DECD and receive education on how different DECD departments create community and economic development around the state. This could be an opportunity for MBI can assist them while also learning what metrics they use to determine their success.

Howard raised that MBI needs to come up with a budget to move forward, MBI needs money, need to identify advocates and sources for the funds. MBI needs to have resources to advance its aims and goals.

Adjourn:

Avery Gaddis moved to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 2:33.