**Minority Business Initiative Advisory Board**

***March Meeting Minutes***

**Thursday, May 25, 2023**

10:00 AM – 11:30 AM

Remotely Held by Teams Meeting Software

Hartford CT, Connecticut

**Attendance**

* Board Members Present: Chairman Howard K. Hill, Roberta Hoskie, George Mathanool, Deputy Commissioner Paul O. Robertson
* Quorum: Yes
* DECD Staff Present: Maribel La Luz Alvetta Spencer, Kerron Vernon
* Guest: Tanisha Baptiste, SBA

**Welcome and Introductions:**

Chairman Howard K. Hill called the meeting to order at 10:05AM.

**Minutes:**

Chairman Hill asked for a motion to approve minutes. Motion passed unanimously.

**SBA Brief on Access to Federal Funding (Tanisha Baptiste, SBA):**

Tanisha Baptiste from the SBA discussed federal contracting, interest rates and opportunities available to minorities at the Federal level. The MBI board was grateful for the introduction and information and would like to review the information further to identify solutions to increase CT minority participation with federal contracting.

Tanisha shared the link to the 2023 Northeast Regional Matchmaker

[Business Matchmaker | Connecticut | 2023 Northeast Regional Matchmaker (neregionalbusinessmatchmaker.com)](https://www.neregionalbusinessmatchmaker.com/)

**Open Discussion:**

The MBI board would like to compare the SBA’s engagement with Connecticut versus the DMV (Delaware, Maryland, Virginia) area. The board suggested doing Market research to identify ways we can increase the SBA awards to minority businesses in Connecticut.

The MBI board would like to Identify the process the federal and state governments are using to communicate and award projects.

The MBI board is interested in partnering with entities to market and promote federal opportunities, members asked, are there any federal dollars available to assist with marketing to minority businesses across the state.

* Tanisha will follow up with the SBA and let us know if funds are available.

SBA/MBI potentially can partner to provide quarterly awareness counselling to minority businesses to communicate federal programs, processes, and any other changes.

Access to capital is another challenge for minority businesses, Sheila discussed potentially utilizing the CT Boost program.

Identifying a logo for the MBI board, minority business branding across the state.

**Directors Report Update (Maribel La Luz):**

**Meetings and Discussions:**

Maribel is networking with DAS and other procurement managers across the state and across industries. The goal is to identify and invite, the various resources to be introduced and to present their efforts with the minority communities to the MBI.

**Market Research**

Maribel is identifying and interviewing organization across the state to identify best practices, and additional opportunities for the MBI board to collaborate with partners.

* City of New Haven minority businesses and programs market research
* NEMSDC

Next Cities to interview and research.

* New London
* Waterbury
* Norwich
* Danbury

CT Disparity Study - Disparity study is going to examine whether Connecticut's procurement program achieves the stated goal of identifying and hiring small contractors and minority business enterprises. (ETC 2024)

[ConnecticutStudy@gspclaw.com](mailto:ConnecticutStudy@gspclaw.com).

Next meeting in person to encourage collaboration.

* Strategic Planning (lite)
  + Ideas, next steps, remaining funds.
* Minority Summit next steps:
  + Budget and next steps.

**Other Business: None**

**Adjourn**

Howard Hill asked for a motion to adjourn. Paul O. Robertson made the motion and Paul O. Robertson seconded. The meeting adjourned at 11:02pm.