**Minority Business Initiative Advisory Board**

***May Meeting Minutes***

**Thursday, May 19, 2022**

1:00 PM – 2:30 PM

Remotely Held by Teams Meeting Software

Hartford CT, Connecticut

**Attendance**

* Board Members Present: Howard Hill, Avery Gaddis, Roberta Hoskie and Doug McCrory, Leticia Colon de Mejias, George Mathanool, Pedro Soto.
* Members Absent: David Lehman
* Quorum: Yes
* DECD Staff Present: Alvetta Spencer, Sheila Hummel, Deputy Commissioner Paul O. Robertson, George Norfleet and Kerron Vernon

**Welcome and Introductions:**

Howard Hill welcomed the group and opened the meeting at 1:09 p.m.

**Minutes:**

Howard Hill passed a motion to approve April minutes and minutes were approved.

Abstentions: George Mathanool and Leticia Colon de Mejias

**Discussion on the direction of the MBI Board.**

**Leticia Colon de Mejias**: We need to be sure that we're really representing the mission and vision of the work, which is to change economic disparities and increase prosperity in minority communities.

**George Mathanool** requested clarification on meeting minutes versus special meeting minutes.

It was confirmed the minutes reviewed was from the April Board meeting in which George did not attend.

**Paul O. Robertson:** Announced on May 27th Jerry Garcia will be joining the DECD as MBI point of contact.

**Sheila Hummel:** Recounted several MBI successes and wished the MBI successful and healthy future with the direction of Jerry Garcia.

**Sen. Doug McCrory:** Thanked Sheila for her assistance and support through out the years.

Howard Hill: Letecia and I had some discussions off line that we would like to bring to the board in regards to MBI 2.0 versus the prosperity foundation.

**Leticia Colon de Mejias:** I have been bringing forward ideas, solutions, written documents, taking minutes and pushing forward the initiative to ensure that black and brown communities get a seat at the table and have equal access to allocations of funding and resources that will allow us to change that in dynamics of our communities and suddenly the proposal on the table looks to be an all black proposal. Which is very concerning because had that been the trajectory going forward, had I not seen it as a black and brown proposal that I would have done something differently and felt the need to be more defensive or to be clear on what, what percentage this and what percentage of that I was under the understanding that we were all moving forward with the initiative of ensuring we lifted to the communities who are most disparaged, which do include Latino communities alongside black communities. And now I'm a little concerned that that's not what I'm reading in the document.

**Leticia Colon de Mejias:** Was not present at the last board meeting and can not vote on this item as is.

**Pedro Soto**: Just to be clear, the Prosperity Foundation is the spin off organization

**Howard Hill**: Correct

**Pedro Soto**: Agrees, we do need to make sure goals are aligned with representation of the boards goals.

**Roberta Hoskie**: To date the Prosperity Foundation proposal is in draft form

**George Mathanool**: Who are going to be the board members for the Prosperity Foundation? Who will be picking those board members? It’s important that we outline this now to avoid problems in the future. Maybe to avoid any issues and bias, we can utilize CWCSEO non bias fiduciary pass through

**Howard Hill**: There are a lot of boards & agreements made to support minority development, that do not have any minority representation. This effort is to be extremely intentional to create a new path to assist minority communities. With the addition of Jerry Garcia, we will ensure the equity in perpetuity

**Sen. Doug McCrory:** I would like to reiterate what Pedro Said, as long as we create the direction of the Prosperity Foundation, and ensure that they do what we want done, per our direction we will be successful. We need to utilize this time to identify solutions and direction for what we want in the community.

**Avery Gaddis:** To George’s point, I believe someone is going to give us a presentation on the Prosperity Foundation. I align my sentiments and comments with Sen. Doug McCrory. Speed is important and maybe we don’t need to know how the sausage is made. I think we are all saying the same thing. We need someone to provide us an overview.

**Discussion on the Non-Profit- Prosperity Foundation.**

Howard Hill presents on the Prosperity Foundation based on the document shared during the meeting.

Since a prosperity foundation has been a legal entity in 2015, they've awarded well over $500,000 to over 90 nonprofits throughout Connecticut. Our focus area right now has been in the Fairfield County, Hartford County and also New Haven County. We've done some work and also in the New London County.

**George Mathanool:** I cannot support this item. I’d rather the pass through was the Hartford Foundation itself.An organization with the reputation in the marketplace.The Prosperity Foundation may not have the required resources immediately available to hit the ground running.

**Avery Gaddis:** We need the Prosperity Foundation to be prosperous and this is killing tow birds with one stone.

**Sen. Doug McCrory:** At this point, I think everyone has expressed their opinions. What are the next steps?

**Paul O. Robertson:** Let’s give everyone some time to review and discuss these items in more detail before a vote.

**Sen. Doug McCrory:** I agree, we can regroup, discuss, and potentially have an electronic vote.

**Financial Report:** - Sheila Hummel

Sheila Hummel presented the MBI Financial Report. The report was accepted.

* **Use $3M from the balance of the MBRLF – Forgivable Loans**
* **Balance available for future commitments: $88,825**

**Program Update:** - Sheila Hummel

* Total Approved: 117
* Pipeline: 15
* HEDCO LOC: 486
* Jobs Created: 355
* Jobs Retained: 636

**Adjourn:**

Howard Hill: Asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed and meeting was adjourned at 2:35 p.m.