



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

Wednesday, May 19, 2021  
5:00 P.M.  
Meeting Minutes

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Councilmember Peter Braithwaite, Kemone Hendrick Michael McLean, Nasutsa Mabwa, Jesus Vega, Jared Davis, Angela W. Pennisi, Bonaventure Fandohan, and Councilmember Bobby Burns

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** None

**STAFF PRESENT:** Admin. Services Director/CIO Luke Stowe, Purchasing Manager Tammi Nunez, Business Workforce Development Manager Sharon Johnson, and Management Analyst Tasheik Kerr, CFO / Treasurer Hitesh Desai

**PRESIDING MEMBER:** Councilmember Peter Braithwaite

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**1. Declaration of a Quorum**

Councilmember Braithwaite called the meeting to order at 5:06 pm. Councilmember Braithwaite motioned to suspend the rules to permit members to convene via a virtual meeting. Seconded by Michael McLean and approved 8-0 (roll call taken).

**2. Approval of Minutes**

Councilmember Braithwaite motioned to approve the Minutes as presented from March 17, 2021, seconded by Nasutsa Mabwa. Motion passed unanimously 7-0 (roll call taken).

**3. Guest Introduction:**

Newly elected Councilmember Bobby Burns, of the 5<sup>th</sup> Ward, announced he was looking forward to collaborating with everyone on the Committee.

Jared Davis, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ward resident and Relationship Banker with Wintrust, announced he is looking forward to strengthening relationships in Evanston.

Bonaventure Fandohan, Area Focus Manager at Economic and Community Development at Rotary International, shared that he works to support small and

large enterprises around the world including entrepreneurs and women businesses. Bonaventure also noted that he is looking to share his experience and to learn from the Committee.

Angela Pennisi, 4<sup>th</sup> Ward resident and small business owner, announced she is looking forward to utilizing her experience locally.

Current members, Nasutsa, Michael, Kemone and Jesus introduced themselves and welcomed the new members.

Clarence Weaver, President of the Black Business Consortium, shared he is attending the meeting on behalf of Evanston's Local Market Place.

#### **4. Old Business**

##### **A. Vlink Update Presentation**

Clarence Weaver noted he had met with a number of entities regarding challenges faced by minority and women owned businesses. Clarence shared that the goal of the Vlink platform is to enable companies to conduct business locally. Vlink is a local market platform similar to Amazon but driven toward institutional businesses and vendors. Feedback regarding the platform was sought from the City of Evanston, Northwestern University, Amita Health, Northshore Hospital, Districts 65 and 202, and the YMCA. Clarence also shared that the platform provides an avenue for local business to tie into larger institutions. The V-link tool has been vetted for its capabilities and work is taking place to tie into Northwestern's procurement system. The V-link tool also has features that allow institutions to monitor and measure their vendors.

Michael inquired whether local businesses could utilize the platform. Mr. Weaver responded that the platform provides access to local businesses. Those businesses would need to submit their vendor lists.

##### **B. Local Spend Analysis**

Hitesh provided an overview on the under 25k Local Spend Report. Hitesh also reviewed the overall purchases made by the City for 2018 and 2019.

Councilmember Braithwaite shared the 2016 Spend Report analysis with the Committee. Councilmember Braithwaite noted the previous Committee looked at ways to expand local spend in Evanston. Michael recommended extracting construction costs. Councilmember Braithwaite referred to staff the 2016 Spend Report that examines the purchases of the City.

Angela inquired about the City's payment terms for vendors.

Michael recommended deregulating the bureaucracy around doing businesses with the City particular for small and minority businesses.

Bonaventure inquired about the procurement/supply-side of doing business in Evanston. Bonaventure proposed informing the businesses what the needs of the City are at the beginning of the year.

Councilmember Braithwaite requested staff provide a list of the top twenty businesses that conduct business with the City.

Nasutsa noted the Chamber is looking to support and attract minority businesses. Nasutsa noted the challenges faced by service providers in contrast to businesses that provide goods for sale.

Kemone inquired about other programs apart from the LEP program.

**5. STAFF REPORTS**

**A. M/W/EBE and LEP Tracking Report**

Sharon provided an overview of the MWEBE goal compliant report.

**B. 2021 LEP Analysis**

Sharon provided an overview of the April 2021 LEP Analysis.

**6. New Business**

**A. Review Committee Mission Statement and Goals**

This topic was postponed to the July meeting.

**7. OTHER BUSINESS**

**A. Minority Business Incubator Update from Northwestern University**

This topic was postponed to the July meeting.

**8. Public Comment**

Tina Paden inquired about help for landlords and small black businesses.

**9. Adjournment**

Councilmember Braithwaite motioned the meeting be adorned, seconded by Nasutsa 7-0 (roll call taken). The meeting ended at 6:50 p.m.