

Advisory Committee Meeting

July 16, 2025

Attendees:

Roxanne Sewell

Tim Stevens (Unexcused)

Alberto Benzaquen (Unexcused)

Holly Douglas

Barata Bey

Blayre I. Britton (Excused)

Guillermo Velasquez

Kanak Iyer, Ph.D. (Excused)

Melaine M. Boyer

Victoria Snyder, M.Ed., MSLPA (Unexcused)

Kevin Jenkins

Brain Oglesby

Cynthia Oliver

Brian Burley (Unexcused)

**Liaison Names**

Lisa Edmonds

Kevin B. Halaja

Loren Ganoë

Daman K. Wiles

Jason Molinero

Amber Owens

Prior to the meeting starting there was a discussion about Cynthia (Cindy's) last name. It was stated it was Oliver. Brian O said he attended June's meeting but had technical difficulties and could not communicate. Holly asked Lisa if she was a Liaison and she stated yes.

The meeting was called to order at 1:30 pm. Motion to approve the Minutes from the previous meeting were made by Brian O and second by Kevin Jenkins. Motion approved.

There was brief discussion about not taking attendance since it is already captured when people log in. Holly stated she would not be taking attendance. She stated at the last meeting it was discussed about revising the bylaws to eliminate taking attendance since it already done when they log in.

Holly reviewed changes to the bylaws under the attendance section.

Holly said, we had said that meeting calendars will be set at the beginning of each year.

Committee members must attend at least 75% of the meetings.

Excused absences are counted as present. Members who fail to meet this obligation will be referred to the County Executive for an appointment of an alternative or Alternate member. If appropriate. So those are really designated for the people that are just not showing up to the meetings.

We had a long conversation about the fact that we as committee members are appointed because of the value that we bring to the organization and so not having that representation is really doing a disservice to the people we're supposed to represent, the next edition was the officers because we had originally had a president and a secretary, but it always occurs that if I'm absent, so is the secretary. So, Holly felt like a vice president would be an appropriate addition to this.

Those are the only changes to the bylaws.

Lisa asks for clarification on the officers. There was discussion whether it should be chair or president. Holly decided to keep it as President since that is what was voted on. Brian O made a motion to approve the bylaws and Kevin Jenkins 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion. The change to the bylaws was approved. Holly stated she would finalize it and then send it out. It was noted that Camille Williams resigned.

The next business item was the MWDBE Utilization report to push forward to the County Executive. Holly stated she did not get any feedback and would wait until the end of the day for comments. Then she would move on to schedule something with the executive accounting to discuss those items with her.

A comment that came up in the last meeting was that people did not know what each other does. 22 members will discuss their services. One person would prefer to hold off for another day. So, we start with The Pittsburgh Metropolitan Area Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. Holly asks Melaine to tell what they do and how they can be supported. Melanie had some technical difficulties. So they moved onto Kevin Jenkins who is the President and CEO of Manchester Bidwell Corporation which is the governing and oversight entity over what we call our affiliate organizations, which there are three Bidwell Training center, Manchester Craftsman's Guild and the National Center for Arts and Technology. Under Bidwell Training Center, it's just, as the name implies, we are an adult career training

program with disciplines in several areas. Allied health institutional Pharmacy Technician program, which is a little bit different than your regular pharmacy tech programs. Whereas our students graduate from that program. Primarily get employment within the hospital setting doing compound formulas for chemotherapies and medications such as that. Our chemical laboratory technician program or horticulture slash Agriculture technician program which operates out of our 45,000 square foot greenhouse here on the Northside. Then the culinary arts program. All of those offerings are at no cost to our students. All of the programs take place here on the Northside, at our facility on Metropolitan St. and run in length a little bit around 9-11 months five days a week, all the our students are here all day long and in a typical year we graduate about 190 students from that program. The graduates do receive a diploma that is conferred by the Department of Education at the state level. Manchester Craftsman's Guild is the other arm of Manchester Bidwell Corporation. That houses MCG youth as well as MCG, jazz, the youth program is an out of school, took out of school program for youth primarily from 9th through 12th grade. But now, like in the summer months, we do some elementary school programming as well as kind of service. As a summer camp for the kids, the kids can sign up for experiences in a number of our studios. Things such as ceramic arts, photography, creative design and programming within our tech suite, which is a lot of 3D printing. So if I had, you know, to describe it with one word, it would be STEM. You know, all of us have heard about STEM programming, but since we are an arts organization on that end of the of the work of the organization. It's STEM programming for the kids.

The Jazz program is probably one of the longest running. Jazz programs in our region, actually we're just launching the September 39th season of offering live jazz performances here at our 350 seat Music Hall here in the Northside. And as you can imagine, where in the process of gearing up and planning for our 40th year of offering live jazz music here in the city. And then the last arm of what we do, it's the National Center for Arts and Technology. I describe it as community convenings and conversations.

From time to time we get calls or have discussions with various community groups or community leaders on that are interested in workforce development.

School out of school time programming or youth programming for kids.

So you know, as a point of clarification, it's not that we're out replicating or building what we have here on the Northside because at the end of the day, all cities and needs are different. But we do engage in convening the right stakeholders, whether that's members of higher education, Local government. Corporations, businesses. We lead these conversations in terms of what are the identified needs of that community or that city and then what resources we can bring to bear to address those issues. Holly asked regarding that conversation specifically to an ASK or is this something that your kind of just facilitate for conversation in terms of are other people able to understand or hear those conversations or

be part of that collaboration, or is it? Kevin stated it is both. But it's primarily in response to an ASK. You might even describe it as a form of consultancy. Where we are, we are engaged with community groups or engage with community leaders who, you know, will hire us for lack of a better word, to convene these conversations to kind of get at a need or come up with a solution.

Then Holly asks for clarification on the 9–10-month certificate program. Whether it was equivalent to a high school or more like a pre-certification like an associate. Kevin said it is a diploma. It is credentialed through the Department of Education. So, they will receive a certificate or diploma at the end of their experience. Holly then asks if this is sufficient to allow them to work as a technician in those fields. Kevin said absolutely.

Melaine still had technical difficulties, so she was rescheduled for the next meeting. Holly asked if the economic person was able to attend the meeting but Lisa stated they were not because they had an appointment. Holly asks if anyone wants to volunteer to do a presentation now or at the next meeting. Guillermo Velazquez volunteered to do a presentation at the next meeting. Cynthia Oliver stated she could do something for SBA at the next meeting.

Holly asked if Cynthia could provide the liaison discussion. It's fairly new information that's coming out and actually we have an update with the SBA. To kind of clarify some of the terminology that's happening with changes in the SBA 8A. The lending and certification. Minority businesses. So there's some language changes that are happening that have eliminated. That I think that we need to be aware of what I had shared with Holly was that the definition of a minority business is changing a little bit.

For ownership requirements you only are allowed to have 100% ownership by an American citizen or someone or a person that has a green card and it doesn't allow for any other percentage of ownership at all. It has to be 100% by both.

So if you have like a 10% ownership or 20% ownership.

By someone that doesn't have a green card or isn't an American citizen.

Then it will make the entire business ineligible for these programs and certification.

So that's kind of a new thing and there's some procedural changes in the 8A certification, which is the minority certification. So, we're just getting clarification on these. What I sent to you yesterday, Holly, was from the SBA regional office. That was clarifying for us some of these definitions so. There's just a lot of changes happening, and so what?

I'll prepare to do if it's OK with you.

Cynthia stated she could talk about this when she talks about the SBDC services next month. She can prepare a presentation on all the changes. For the 8A program, whether it's for the lending and we can have conversation about that. Some people, some of my clients, feel that it is discriminatory specifically towards minority. Does not apply to veterans and

women. So, when I have these clarifications, we have a meeting next week with our regional office. They will be in to give a rundown on what's happening with that program, and this is all coming about as a result of the change in the new SBA Director Kelly Laughlin.

Roxanne asked a question regarding a line item that she did not understand.

It had termination for convenience, then it had audit rights, yes.

And then it had most favored nation, yes. What does that mean?

Most favorite nation and what she brought up reminded me of that. Holly asked Lisa if she had the answers. Lisa stated that it's our language that we use in our contracts and some things were revised to I guess the committee added somethings to put more teeth in it. So, I'm not sure. I need to see what section that is and just in case you didn't notice, Holly, Amber Owens are solicitor is on the line. Amber said she did not have anything to add at this time.

Then there was a discussion with Holly and other people trying to find the attachment. Holly said that this is something they need to have a conversation about. Lisa said it was a comment added on the side of the document which Holly followed up by saying that it where some folks weighed in. It was a discussion last month, but the other document is the final version. It was determined that this comment did not make it into the final version.

Holly asks the liaison if they had any other discussion items to bring forward. Jason Molinero said he would be willing to bring something at the next meeting.

Holly asks for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Kevin Jenkins made a motion and Cynthia 2<sup>nd</sup> it. The meeting was adjourned at 2:01 pm.