

---

**Allegheny County MWDBE Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes  
(Virtual Teams Meeting)  
September 13, 2022  
1:00 p.m.**

---

**Advisory Committee Members in Attendance:**

M. Gayle Moss – Chair, MBE Advisory Committee  
Roxanne Sewell – President, The LJS Group  
Tori Shriver – Political Director, Eastern Atlantic States Regional Council of Carpenters  
Tim Stevens – Chairman, Black Political Empowerment Project (B-PEP)  
James Overton – President/Principal Advisor, Overton Financial Group

**Advisory Committee Members Absent:**

Alberto Benzaquen – Commissioner, Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations

**Also Present:**

Lisa Edmonds – Chief Officer, Allegheny County Department of Equity and Inclusion  
Damian Wiles – Deputy Director, Department of Equity and Inclusions

## **Agenda**

- I. Open Meeting**
- II. Introductions**
- III. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes (March 13, 2022)**
- IV. Chairperson Report**
  - a. **Committee Seats (9 of 15 vacant)**
    - i. **County Staff Members**
      1. **Melissa Wade (County Executive's Office)**
      2. **Others**
    - ii. **Recommendations**
      1. **(Concrete Rose)**
      2. **Others**
- V. DEI Chief Equity and Inclusion Officer Report**
  - a. **Staffing**
  - b. **American Contract Compliance Association (ACCA) – [National Training Institute \(NTI\)](#)**
    - i. **Executive Certified Master Compliance Administrator (ECMCA) Certification**
  - c. **Department of Economic Development [MWV Loan Program](#) via [Axiom Advancement Corporation](#)**
  - d. **2022 Annual Open House**
- VI. Miscellaneous**
- VII. Adjournment**

### **I. Open Meeting**

Gayle Moss opened the meeting and welcomed and thanked all members present.

### **II. Introductions**

Lisa Edmonds advised that with a new member on the committee, all members present should introduce themselves and their affiliation. M. Gayle Moss – chairperson of the Advisory Committee, has been around Pittsburgh a long time, is retired from the University of Pittsburgh and the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission, and is active in helping MWDBEs have access to contracts. Roxanne Sewell – President of The LJS Group, which publishes Talk Magazine and works in civic engagement around Pennsylvania. Tori Shriver – Political Director for the Carpenter's Union, is based in Pittsburgh, and as a young woman within the carpenters' union takes diversity, equity, and inclusion very seriously, and it is a goal of hers to make the union more accessible to all members of the community. Tim Stevens – B-PEP (Black Political Empowerment Project) Coalition Against Violence Corporate Equity and Inclusion Roundtable, Jim Overton – Overton Financial Group, native of Pittsburgh, and has been a committee member for 8/9 years, joining colleagues to make more opportunities available for the whole community. Damian Wiles – Deputy Director of Department of Equity and Inclusion. Lisa Edmonds – Chief Equity and Inclusion Officer.

### **III. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes (March 31, 2022)**

Gayle Moss asked for approval of previous meeting minutes from March 31, 2022. James Overton made a motion to approve, Roxanne Sewell seconded the motion. All members were in favor of approving the previous meeting minutes.

#### **IV. Chairperson Report**

##### **a. Committee Seats (9 of 15 vacant)**

##### **i. County Staff Members**

###### **1. Melissa Wade (County Executive's Office)**

Gayle Moss made note that Melissa Wade is no longer with the MWDBE Advisory Committee, as she left employment with the County, and that there would need to be a new representative from the County Executive's Office placed on the committee.

Roxanne Sewell was curious where Melissa left to. Gayle advised that after speaking with Jennifer Liptak, County Executive Chief of Staff, she was informed that Melissa was planning to leave then changed her mind, so there was no update sent to the committee, but did end up leaving employment with the County. Unsure where it stands moving forward as it is near the end of Rich Fitzgerald's term.

###### **2. Others**

Gayle Moss has discussed committee membership with James Overton and County Executive Rich Fitzgerald, regarding placing County employees on the committee. At the last committee meeting, Melissa Wade took on the task of contacting County department heads to nominate potential new committee members. When Gayle was informed that Melissa was no longer employed with the County, she spoke with Jennifer Liptak, and was advised that the process will move forward by collecting candidate recommendations from department heads. When today's meeting is over Gayle will contact Jennifer about Melissa's replacement.

##### **ii. Recommendations**

###### **1. (Concrete Rose)**

After being contacted by Gayle Moss, Tina Daniels, owner of Concrete Rose Construction LLC, is interested in becoming a committee member; Melissa Wade was supposed to reach out to her, and hopefully by the next meeting Gayle will have more of an update on nominations for committee members.

###### **2. Others**

#### **V. DEI Chief Equity and Inclusion Officer Report**

Gayle Moss brought the committee's attention to the Annual Open House happening later in the month, on September 29, from 2:30 – 4:30 pm, and asked everyone to try to attend and support Lisa Edmonds. As in previous years it will be held virtually. Last years was done well with a good attendance, so please attend and represent the committee.

Lisa Edmonds made note that the Minority, Women and Disadvantaged Business Enterprise 2021 Report was in the process of being corrected to reflect the accurate Advisory Committee members. Tori Shriver had been listed as a member. With her term beginning in 2022, her

name is being removed. Once the edits have been made and the report printed, hard copies will be sent to all Advisory Committee members.

**a. Staffing**

The staff has done well despite turn over since 2020. Aside from Lisa, the longest standing staff member has been with the department since March 2021. Damian came on board October 2021; December 2021 – receptionist (moved to clerk); March 2022 – clerk (moved to Office Manager). Three positions remain open: Certification Analyst (made an offer, which has been accepted); Contract Compliance Specialist; and office clerk. Once those are on board there will still be two project manager positions to fill. It has been difficult over the last couple years through the pandemic trying to hire people. We are working on filling all vacancies, but current staff are working on the open house and doing a good job getting things together.

**b. American Contract Compliance Association (ACCA) – [National Training Institute \(NTI\)](#)**

Lisa discussed the American Contract Compliance Association, which is a one of a kind association in the country. They run the National Training Institute on an annual basis which gives continuing education credits from Morgan State University. Lisa has attended a number of years and has completed their highest certification, the ECMCA.

**i. Executive Certified Master Compliance Administrator (ECMCA) Certification**

Lisa completed this training in August and hopes to receive her certificate soon. It is a great association with entities from across the country that attend, from compliance officers and certification staff to government and private industry workers and contractors.

**c. Department of Economic Development [MWV Loan Program](#) via [Axiom Advancement Corporation](#)**

There was previously an M/W/DBE Working Capital Loan that Allegheny County had through the Department of Economic Development. It is now back as the MWV Loan Program and is being managed for Allegheny County by a minority business, Axiom Advancement Corporation. Michelle Chen, Founder & CEO of Axiom, will be presenting at our Annual Open House, giving information about the loan program and other services available to minority businesses. The program is presented through the Allegheny County Department of Economic Development, but since it is valuable to DBEs, we are excited to offer the presentation as part of our Open House.

**d. 2022 Annual Open House**

Several presenters are already lined up for the Annual Department of Equity and Inclusion Open House: Axiom Advancement Corporation will discuss programs and services they offer; Holly Douglas, the wife of a DBE firm owner, will discuss the PennDOT mentor/protégé program she is a part of and what is available to M/W/DBEs that obtain DOT or PennDOT work; ProRank, which is a supportive services center for DBEs in PA; Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC) will present on what they have available for MBEs and WBEs. Additionally, we are trying to bring on someone from B2GNow, which is the software we utilize to monitor contracts from beginning to end and also manages the certification database, to present and give best practices in reference to navigating that online system. We will be sending out the agenda to committee members and we hope all can attend and be introduced to the business owners. Will also send reminders with the link for the Open House the day of to committee members.

Lisa discussed a meeting she had at the Diversity Business Resource Center (within the

Riverside Center for Innovation) in reference to businesses that are signatory to the unions. She would like to set up a webinar or similar session with Tori Shriver to speak with various unions and DBEs to understand the benefits of being signatory to the unions, and how DBEs could work with the unions on projects that have labor agreements. Lisa brought attention to a recent contract for renovations to the courtrooms in which the prime vendor was non-DBE and noted they could not use MBEs/WBEs as there were none signatory to the unions. Gayle Moss noted how important it would be to have committee members from various County departments to bring more knowledge and a stronger understanding of this process.

## **VI. Miscellaneous**

Roxanne Sewell discussed an upcoming event in Harrisburg that she will be attending on October 5 regarding MWDBE participation in unions and was reviewing information about the AFL-CIO. She was excited about changes within and surprised by how many labor unions were encompassed under their designation. Committee discussion on local chapters of AFL-CIO ensued. Gayle Moss asked Roxanne what the event was for. It is a conference for African, Latino, and Asian Americans to discuss healthcare, jobs, and housing for minorities. This year Ivan Watson will be presenting on encouraging MWDBE membership in unions.

Lisa Edmonds covered navigating the County website to be able to find the Department of Equity and Inclusion, as well as look up other departments. She showed the committee where to find information regarding reports, legislation on MWDBEs, resources for DBEs, events, the Advisory Committee, along with the Administrative Code and previous committee minutes.

Tim Stevens brought the committee's attention to the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Corporate Equity and Inclusion Roundtable Conference on November 16, opening at 8:00 with something to eat, going from 9:00 – 1:00 at the Duquesne Power Center Ballroom.

Gayle Moss mentioned Amachi Pittsburgh, of which she is the chairperson. Amachi Pittsburgh works with children whose parents are incarcerated. Hatchi Patchi, an event that occurs every two years, is taking place November 2 at the Energy Innovation Center. It is a wonderful event that will also honor Franco, as he has been a great supporter of the work Amachi does.

## **VII. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned.