

**ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES  
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2020 2:00 PM  
VIDEOCONFERENCE**

<b>Members Present:</b>	Councilmember Rebecca Viagran, <i>Chair, District 3</i> Councilmember Adriana Rocha Garcia, <i>District 4</i> Councilmember Shirley Gonzales, <i>District 5</i> Councilmember Melissa Cabello Havrda, <i>District 6</i>
<b>Members Absent:</b>	Councilmember Manny Pelaez, <i>District 8</i>
<b>Staff Present:</b>	Carlos J. Contreras, III, <i>Assistant City Manager</i> ; Katinka Howell, <i>Assistant City Attorney</i> ; Christina Ramirez, <i>Assistant City Attorney</i> ; Tina J. Flores, <i>City Clerk</i> ; Melinda Uriegas, <i>Assistant City Clerk</i> ; Debbie Racca-Sittre, <i>Director, Arts and Culture</i> ; Alejandra Lopez, <i>Director, Economic Development Department</i> ; John Jacks, <i>Director, Center City Development</i> ; Michael Sindon, <i>Assistant Director, Economic Development Department</i> ; Diana Hidalgo, <i>Cultural Affairs Administrator, Department of the Arts</i> ; Christopher Lazaro, <i>Redevelopment Officer, Center City Development Office</i> ; Nancy Cano, <i>Office of the City Clerk</i>
<b>Others Present:</b>	Dr. Mike Flores, <i>Chancellor, Alamo Colleges District</i> ; Dr. Veronica Garcia, <i>President, Northeast Lakeview College</i> ; Christina Ramirez, <i>Adjunct Professor, Mt. San Antonio</i> ; David Zammiello, <i>Executive Director, Project Quest</i> ; Adrian Lopez, <i>CEO, Workforce Solutions Alamo</i> ; Mark Milton, <i>Chief Operating Officer, Workforce Solutions Alamo</i> ; Lelani Mercado, <i>Director of Participant Services, Project Quest</i> ; Celina Peña, <i>Chief of Advancement, Lift Fund</i> ; Louis Escareno, John Hernden, Shawn McSherry, John Ray Canales, Tiffany Jenkins, Larissa Martinez, Richard Vasquez

**Call to Order**

Chairwoman Viagran called the meeting to order.

**1. Approval of the minutes from the Economic & Workforce Development Council Committee meeting on August 4, 2020.**

Councilmember Rocha Garcia moved to approve the minutes from the August 4, 2020 meeting of the Economic & Workforce Development Council Committee. Councilmember Gonzales seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously by those present.

**2. Approval of the minutes from the Economic & Workforce Development Council Committee meeting on September 2, 2020.**

Councilmember Rocha Garcia moved to approve the minutes from the September 2, 2020 meeting of the Economic & Workforce Development Council Committee. Councilmember Gonzales seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously by those present.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

### **WRITTEN TESTIMONY**

Public Comments have been submitted through the Comment system and are attached to the minutes.

### **LIVE TESTIMONY**

None.

#### **3. Update on the COVID-19 Community Recovery and Resiliency Plan regarding the Small Business Support and Workforce Development Pillars [Carlos J. Contreras, III, Assistant City Manager; Alejandra Lopez, Director, Economic Development]**

Alejandra Lopez reported that a total of 668 microbusiness grants were awarded, as follows:

- Funds disbursed: 301 grants, totaling \$6.6 million
- Grants to be funded: 115 grants, totaling \$3.3 million
- Grants pending amount approval: 252 grants, totaling approximately \$5.7 million
- Grants under review: 225-400, totaling \$9.1 million

Ms. Lopez presented an itemized breakdown of the microbusiness grants awarded by gender, race/ethnicity, and industry, as follows:

- Gender: 49.3% women-owned; 49.7% men-owned, 1.0% unknown
- Race/Ethnicity: 60.0% Hispanic, 7.3% African American, 11.5% Asian
- Industry: Service: 25.7%, Food Service: 13.5%, Retail: 11.7%

Ms. Lopez reported on the total of 668 microbusiness grants awarded by business size, as follows: Self-employed: 157 grants, 23.5% of awards; 1-5 Employees: 308 grants, 46.1% of awards; 6-10 Employees: 126 grants, 18.9% of awards; and 11-20 Employees: 77 grants, 11.5% of awards. She provided an itemized breakdown by Council District.

Ms. Lopez reported that 322 applications for microbusiness grants were identified for potential decline due to not meeting various elements of the eligibility criteria. She stated that 58 Buydown Loan Forgiveness Grants were awarded totaling \$261,679 with an average grant amount of \$4,512. She added that 23 awardees were female, 39.75% of grants; and 35 were male, 60.3% of grants. She provided an itemized breakdown by Council District.

Ms. Lopez reported that funds for all business grants, nonprofit grants, and loan forgiveness grants would be disbursed by October 30, 2020.

Debbie Racca-Sittre provided an update on the \$608,689 in SA Cares 4 Art grant funding allocated to individual artists. She reported that funds were disbursed to 130 qualified applicants that reported a heavy loss of \$5,000 or more. She provided an itemized breakdown by Council District.

Ms. Racca-Sittre presented an itemized breakdown of the individual Artists grants awarded by gender and race/ethnicity, as follows:

- Gender: 34% female; 60% male; 23% LGBTQIA+; 5% non-binary, and 1% blank
- Race/Ethnicity: 59% Hispanic, 8% African American, 2% Asian, Pacific Islander, or Middle Eastern; 23% White; and 3% Other

Ms. Racca-Sittre reported an \$8,689 budget overage was covered by using donated funds received by the Department of Arts and Culture through its website.

Ms. Racca-Sittre provided an update on the \$2 million in SA Cares 4 Art grant funding allocated to nonprofit arts small businesses. She stated that the initial target was to award 40 grants, and 47 grants were able to be funded after some proportionate reductions to scale. She noted that the 47 nonprofits reported staggering losses totaling \$24 million due to COVID-19. She thanked the City Auditor's Office, the Finance Department, and all of the volunteers who helped with the grant application process.

Ms. Lopez provided an update on the Workforce Development Program. She provided an overview of the enrollment process for the Train for Jobs SA program. She reported that a dynamic intake process allowed for residents to go to a Financial Housing Resource Recovery Center, or any of the primary workforce partners to enroll, or by calling 3-1-1. She reported that Workforce Solutions Alamo (WSA) purchased additional hardware and licenses to manage the unprecedented volume of calls through their newly updated phone system with a capacity to enroll up to 200 residents per day. She added that Alamo Community College District (ACCD) had a dedicated call center that could manage up to 300 intake calls per day. She noted that Project Quest (PQ) set up a new phone system to manage their flow of intake calls and additional delegate agencies managed up to 100 intake calls per day.

Ms. Lopez reported that all of the workforce partners had monthly enrollment targets with an overall goal of training up to 10,000 residents. She stated that there were very targeted strategies for specific geographies and specific populations that included creative marketing through convenience stores, laundromats and places of worship. She noted that Workforce Solutions Alamo (WSA) took the lead with creative strategies and had hosted a very successful in-person event with COVID-19 safety precautions in place that netted 70 enrollments. She made a request and challenge to the Committee to utilize its resources to spread the word on the Workforce Development Initiative.

Chairwoman Viagran asked Dr. Flores of the intake call capacity for ACCD. Dr. Flores reported that ACCD had bandwidth capacity to enroll up to 300 participants a day at their dedicated call center. He added that ACCD had a dedicated Train for Jobs SA webpage at [www.alamo.edu/sarecovery](http://www.alamo.edu/sarecovery).

Chairwoman Viagran asked Adrian Lopez of the intake process and turnaround for enrollment at WSA. Mr. Lopez reported that WSA performed outreach to approximately 6,000 residents through various activities over the last 30 days, was currently receiving 800-1,000 calls per day, and received over 900 pre-screened electronic referrals from the City's website and on the WSA website. He stated that WSA moved forward with on-site services for interested residents to circumvent virtual screening and enrollment challenges. He reported that 75 participants signed up yesterday and 50 participants signed up today through enrollment sessions held at WSA workforce centers.

David Zammiello reported that the virtual intake assessment at PQ was now transitioning from active recruiting over the past six weeks to a blended virtual and in-person assessment and enrollment. He stated that in-person events allowed for flexible, expanded capacity and expedited the process, in addition to handling approximately 100 intake calls per day through their expanded phone tools. He added that PQ held virtual information sessions during the evenings and on the weekends.

Chairwoman Viagran requested further data on registrants. She asked when stipends were distributed to participants. She requested that case management start right away to maintain frequent contact with participants during the gap period from enrollment to the start of training. Ms. Lopez stated that the partner reports provided the type of training participants were enrolled in. She reported that stipends were disbursed once training began. She added that training programs started every two weeks for medical billing and coding, medical technology, pathophysiology, and medical and insurance billing.

Chairwoman Viagran requested further data for on the job training programs. She requested clarification on the category of Percent Losses Not Proven regarding microbusiness grants. Celina Peña stated that some microbusiness applicants were unable to show documentation for lost revenue during COVID-19. She added that an in-depth analysis of submitted bank statements and 2018 tax revenues in comparison to monthly potential revenue pre-COVID-19 and post COVID-19 was necessary.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia referenced the Customer Relationship Management Program (CRMP) in place for all 3-1-1 intake calls. She asked who was responsible for managing CRMP and who was the contact person that could provide a weekly status on intake enrollment data. She asked of the minimum starting wages, post-training. Ms. Lopez reported that Michael Sindon was the point of contact for CRMP data and worked closely with Paula Stallcup, Director, 3-1-1. Mr. Sindon reported that wages ranged from \$11.25 per hour to \$15 per hour, or the trained positions lead a pathway to quickly earning \$15 per hour.

Chairwoman Viagran requested that staff bring forward to the next meeting information and ideas to develop an on-the-job training program for contact tracing with UT Health. Assistant City Manager Carlos Contreras reported that staff was coordinating with ACCD and PQ for opportunities to incorporate contact tracing curriculum into their medical training courses.

**4. Briefing and possible action on Small Business Economic Development Advocacy (SBEDA) Significant Business Presence Criteria.** [Carlos J. Contreras, III, Assistant City Manager; Alejandra Lopez, Director, Economic Development]

Chairwoman Viagran stated that Item 4 would be addressed at the next Economic & Workforce Development Council Committee meeting.

**5. Consideration of Applicants to the Westside Development Corporation Board of Directors (6 seats).** [Tina J. Flores, City Clerk]

John Jacks reported that the Westside Development Corporation (WDC) was established in 2006 to support the City's community revitalization and economic development efforts within the near Westside of San Antonio. He stated WDC worked with small businesses for retention, attraction and provided technical assistance. He added that WDC offered a loan and grant program

targeting small businesses and established a Legacy Corridor Business Alliance Program last year.

Mr. Jacks reported that the WDC Board of Directors was comprised of 18 members that represented a wide range of industries. He noted that of the 12 sitting Directors, 7 identified as male, 5 identified as female, 6 identified as Hispanic, and 6 identified as non-Hispanic, White. He stated that WDC had 6 vacancies and the newly appointed board members would serve a two-year term of office upon approval by City Council. He added that the City received 9 qualified applications and noted one applicant withdrew just this morning. He announced the names of the applicants and the respective categories, as follows:

1. Louis Escareno, Small Business
2. John Hernden, Real Estate Developer
3. ~~Juan Valdez, Resident~~ (*Withdrew*)
4. Shawn “Rod” McSherry, UTSA Representative
5. John Ray Canales, Community-At-Large
6. Tiffany Jenkins, Community-At-Large
7. Larissa Martinez, Community-At-Large
8. Richard Vasquez, Community-At-Large
9. ~~Raquel Zapata, Community-At-Large~~ (*Not available for interview*)

Chairwoman Viagran announced a three-minute opening statement per candidate, followed by questions from the Committee. She stated that Raquel Zapata was unable to be interviewed today.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Chairwoman Viagran recessed the meeting into Executive Session at 4:13 pm to discuss the following:

- A. Deliberate the appointment, evaluation, and duties of public officers and discuss legal issues pursuant to Texas Government Code Section 551.074 (personnel matters) and Texas Government Code Section 551.071 (consultation with attorney).

**RECONVENED**

Chairwoman Viagran reconvened the meeting at 4:45 pm and announced that no action was taken in Executive Session.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia moved to nominate and forward the following nominees and categories to City Council for consideration: Louis Escareno, Small Business; John Hernden, Real Estate Developer; and Shawn “Rod” McSherry, UTSA Representative; and to re-advertise for the Resident Category; and to defer action on the Community-At-Large category for consideration at the October 22, 2020 meeting of the Economic & Workforce Development Council Committee. Councilmember Gonzales seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously by those present.

**Adjournment**

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 4:47 pm.

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*Rebecca Viagran, Chairwoman*

*Respectfully Submitted,*

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*Nancy Cano  
Office of the City Clerk*