

**ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, JANUARY 12, 2021 2:00 PM
VIDEOCONFERENCE**

Members Present:	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> Councilmember Manny Pelaez, <i>District 8</i>
Staff Present:	Carlos J. Contreras, III, <i>Assistant City Manager</i> ; Christina Ramirez, <i>Assistant City Attorney</i> ; Alejandra Lopez, <i>Director, Economic Development Department</i> ; John Lefgren, <i>Director, Animal Care Services</i> ; Michael Sindon, <i>Assistant Director, Economic Development Department</i> ; Christina Reck-Guerra, <i>Assistant Director, PreK4SA</i> ; Justina Tate, <i>Budget Director, Economic Development Department</i> ; Ann Eaton, <i>Economic Development Manager, Economic Development Department</i> ; Nancy Cano, <i>Office of the City Clerk</i>
Others Present:	Heather Hanson, <i>President, BioMedSA</i>

Call to Order

Chair Viagran called the meeting to order.

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

Ann Eaton reported that 1,243 grants, including 1,120 micro business grants and 67 non-profit grants that totaled \$29.7 million were awarded as of January 6, 2021. She noted that 227 of the 1,120 microbusiness grants were for Food and Beverage businesses that accounted for \$8.7 million, and 56 of the 67 non-profit grants were for loan buydown forgiveness grants which would provide up to 10 months of loan payment forgiveness through 2020. She iterated that City Council approved additional actions to increase funding for Micro Business grants for restaurants and bars in the amount of \$3.5 million on November 4, 2020, and in the amount of \$1.5 million on December 2, 2020.

Ms. Eaton presented an itemized breakdown of the Micro Business grants awarded, as follows:

- Gender: 53.3% women-owned; 43.4% men-owned, .6% unknown
- Race/Ethnicity: 57.7% Hispanic, 18.2% White, 13.2% Asian, 7.7% African American, Other Minority: 2.9%, American Indian: 0.3%
- Industry: Service: 35.3%, Food Service: 13.2%, Retail: 14.5%

Ms. Eaton provided a grant awards breakdown by equity score and by Council District. She reported that all grand awards were completed and that grant awardees would be surveyed to provide employment and revenue outcomes.

Ms. Eaton provided an update on small business outreach and reported that partner organizations engaged with approximately 3,541 small businesses as of January 1, 2021. She reviewed the outreach distribution for each partner organization:

Outreach Organization	Businesses Contacted
Centro	959
SAGE	625
Southside First	576
WDC	1,381
TOTAL	3,541

Christina Reck-Guerra provided a workforce development update and reported that 4,443 residents completed the Phase 1 preliminary intake; 3,338 residents were referred to an agency to enroll in Phase 2 training; 1,574 residents were enrolled in Phase 3 training, with 1,425 pending enrollment. She added that 153 residents completed the program, of which 38 received a job; 110 residents enrolled but did not complete training; and 1,311 residents were actively enrolled in training. He noted that 174 participants were referred to the Department of Human Services for childcare; 24% (41 participants) enrolled; and the remaining referrals opted out due to COVID-19 concerns.

Ms. Reck-Guerra provided Equity Matrix Atlas Scores by Council District and an itemized demographic of enrolled workforce participants:

- Gender: 72% women; 28% men
- Race/Ethnicity: 62% Hispanic, 17% African American, 13% White, 6% Other Race/Ethnicity, and 2% Asian

Ms. Reck-Guerra provided additional participant demographics: 63% below poverty rate; 36% hardest hit industries; 6% disabled; 4% formerly incarcerated; 3% Veterans; 16% no high school degree; 35% high school degree; 41% vocational, Associates Degree or some college; College degree or above: 8%.

Ms. Reck-Guerra reported that 51 local small businesses signed agreements with Workforce Solutions Alamo (WSA) to provide on-the-job training (OJT) for 285 available slots. She reported that three residents were placed into OJT. She stated that amendments were added to the OJT Program which would allow all businesses within Bexar County, both small and large, to participate; and to allow program participants to complete “classroom” training prior to starting their OJT hands-on training.

Ms. Reck-Guerra reported on Workforce Partner contract renewals and stated that contracts would expire on December 31, 2020 and had renewal options through September 30, 2021. She stated that short-term renewals would be extended to all partners from January 1, 2021 through February 28, 2021 and would include minimal amendments: Update Participant Service Plans; update Budgetary Plans to match Participant Service Plans; and update OJT Programs. She added that a briefing on proposed long-term renewal contracts would be presented to the Committee in February 2021.

Chairwoman Viagran asked if workforce partners had reported any progress on low OJT enrollment since the OJT Amendment went into effect last week. She asked if the participants that

did not complete training were still receiving a stipend and if they were receiving job placement assistance. She asked if additional industries or communities had been identified for future funding opportunities. Alejandra Lopez reported that the San Antonio Economic Development Foundation had several businesses that were interested and eligible to participate in the program once OJT Amendments were in effect. Ms. Reck-Guerra stated that the job placement process post-training took time as participants prepared, posted resumes and worked on interview skills. She indicated she would provide further information on the types of jobs that were filled and the stipends disbursed. She reported that future Federal funding sources could support the retail and hospitality industries which were heavily impacted by COVID-19.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia asked why there was a decrease in total grants and grant awards for Council District 4 from October 2021 through December 2021. Ms. Eaton explained that two businesses had reported addresses in Council District 4 but were actually located in Council District 6.

Chairwoman Viagran requested outreach to Council District 4 Staff to collaborate on focused marketing efforts.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda asked of outreach improvements achieved since the inception of the Workforce Development Program. Ms. Eaton reported that outreach for grants began in areas with combined equity scores of eight through 10 to engage vulnerable residents that were the most difficult to reach; thereafter, outreach was pivoted and expanded to areas with lower equity scores and digital platforms, mailers, and doorhangers were distributed widely. She added that expanded databases, successful marketing efforts, and expanded partnerships would identify areas of opportunity and available resources for the next round of stimulus funding.

Councilmember Pelaez noted that the City could guarantee and offer a Workforce Training Program to assist residents with job training and employment opportunities during the COVID-19 Pandemic, but could not realistically guarantee employment. He stated that recovery program expectations would have to be adjusted accordingly. Assistant City Manager Carlos Contreras added that the COVID-19 Pandemic created many obstacles that job seekers had to navigate through, including the reliance on digital technology to attend job interviews. He reported that the Workforce Development Program would ramp up to its goal of 10,000 participants on a monthly basis.

2. Briefing by BioMedSA on the organization's progress and plans for FY 2021.

[Carlos J. Contreras, III, Assistant City Manager; Alejandra Lopez, Director, Economic Development]

Heather Hanson reported that BioMedSA's mission was to accelerate growth, create economic benefit and contribute to the health of the City by establishing San Antonio as a leader in Healthcare and Bioscience. She stated that BioMedSA was the hub of the life science industry in San Antonio and consisted of 28 Board Members and community partners that represented all pillars of the Life Science Industry. She indicated that BioMedSA was funded by members, including the City. She noted that BioMedSA was comprised of four pillars: Clinical, research, education, and industry, and included military medicine which spanned across all pillars.

Ms. Hanson reported that the Life Science Sector was the biggest economic sector in San Antonio and surpassed the military by contributing over \$42 billion to the economy. She added that the

Life Science Industry served as a innovation hub with 175 patents published in 2019, a large number of clinical trials in progress, and generated over \$500 million in Federal research funding in the local community.

Ms. Hanson reported that BioMedSA provided information for the industry that included news releases, calendar events, monthly newsletters, a military medicine page, and the posting of funding opportunities. She added that BioMedSA hosted events to introduce local companies to manufacturers of medical device components, and hosted innovative targeted disease collaborative events. She noted that BioMedSA partnered with the San Antonio Economic Development Foundation to proactively target medical device companies to relocate and manufacture their products in the City. She stated that BioMedSA established a Clinical Trial Task Force in 2020 to focus marketing efforts that highlighted the City's strong foundation for clinical trials and its large potential for growth. She noted that BioMedSA supported the City's Workforce Development Program and advertised OJT opportunities and submitted job openings to the program.

Ms. Hanson reported that BioMedSA would establish a Workforce Committee (Q3/Q4 2021) to promote economic development, and life science education and industry. She stated that the Workforce Committee would brainstorm issues and solutions to promote life science career awareness and interest for grades K-12, scholarship/internship programs and other support. She added that an Advocacy Board would be established (Q1 2021) to identify collaborative opportunities and facilitate mutual support to promote industry awareness and advocate to local, State and Federal lawmakers.

Chairwoman Viagran asked if BioMedSA and its partners had seen an increased interest and growth in the Life Science Industry. Ms. Hanson stated that the Life Science Industry experienced slowdowns and layoffs due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, and most businesses were able to retain their workforce. She noted that productivity increased when moratoriums on elective surgeries and procedures were lifted and that the industry was now in a growth mode. She reported that the Texas BioMedical Research Institute developed the first diverse animal COVID-19 testing, had tested all of the vaccines that were currently on the market, and tested all the vaccines that were coming to market, and stated that this highlighted the level of involvement that San Antonio and the local Life Science Industry had on combatting the COVID-19 Pandemic from a worldwide perspective.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Chairwoman Viagran recessed the meeting into Executive Session at 3:16 pm to discuss the following:

A. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT NEGOTIATIONS PURSUANT TO TEXAS GOVERNMENT CODE SECTION 551.087 (ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT).

Chairwoman Viagran reconvened the meeting at 3:33 pm and announced that no action was taken in Executive Session.

Adjournment

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 3:34 pm.

Rebecca Viagran, Chairwoman

Respectfully Submitted,

Nancy Cano, Office of the City Clerk