



Richland County Council
Office of Small Business Ad Hoc Committee
MINUTES
July 16, 2024 - 4:00 PM
Council Chambers
2020 Hampton Street, Columbia, SC 29204

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Derrek Pugh, Chair; Gretchen Barron, and Chakisse Newton

OTHERS PRESENT: Paul Livingston, Cheryl English, Jesica Mackey, Don Weaver, Anette Kirylo, Jackie Hancock, Leonardo Brown, Lori Thomas, Angela Weathersby, Ashiya Myers, Jennifer Wladischkin, Tamar Black, Margaret Jones, Pamela Green, Robert Squirewell, Susan O’Cain, Patrick Wright, and Dale Welch

1. **CALL TO ORDER** – Chairman Derrek Pugh called the meeting to order at approximately 4:00 PM.
2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
 - a. April 23, 2024 – Ms. Newton moved to approve the minutes as distributed, seconded by Ms. Barron.
In Favor: Pugh, Barron, and Newton
The vote in favor was unanimous.
3. **ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA** – Ms. Barron moved to adopt the agenda as published, seconded by Mr. Pugh.
In Favor: Pugh, Barron, and Newton
The vote in favor was unanimous.
4. **ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION/ACTION**
 - a. Office of Small Business Opportunity Update – Ms. Pamela Green, Interim Director – Office of Small Business Opportunity, provided the committee with several key updates and upcoming events. She announced that the office has recently hired Robert Squirewell as the new Program Coordinator, bringing fresh energy and expertise to the team. However, the office will see some changes as the Assistant Director position will be vacant starting in August. The search for a suitable candidate will begin soon. Additionally, the Certification and Compliance Specialist position will be open due to the upcoming retirement of Ms. Margaret Jones, who has been a valuable member of the team.

Ms. Green also shared information about recent and upcoming events designed to support and educate small business owners.

Business Cashflow Workshop: On April 24th, the office hosted a workshop focused on the critical role of cashflow in the success and sustainability of businesses. The workshop was well-received, and participants gained valuable insights into managing their finances more effectively. Due to its success, there are plans to continue offering similar workshops in the future.

Size Up SC Workshop: Held on June 6, 2024, this workshop garnered significant interest from local businesses. Participants had the opportunity to connect with the Size Up representative, fostering valuable relationships and gaining access to important resources.

Lastly, Ms. Green shared about the Annual Engage Richland event scheduled for September 18, 2024. This event is being organized in collaboration with the City of Columbia’s Office of Small Business Opportunities. The event will feature a series of workshops that will provide attendees with updates and insights on regional developments at the state, county, and city levels.

Councilwoman Barron asked if businesses have the opportunity to learn how to do business with the City, the County, and the State. How to qualify for contracts, etc.

Ms. Green stated that the OSBO Office is planning on hosting more workshops to address this need.

Councilman Livingston shared the importance and the need for small businesses to work in collaboration with other entities and the importance of business owners to learn how to engage with other businesses, organizations, and entities.

- b. Current Funding Opportunities for Small Businesses – Mr. Pugh inquired about what funding opportunities exist for OSBO to present to constituents.

Ms. Green informed the Committee that there isn't currently a funding platform, but there is a need for it. And, shared information concerning the Funding workshop from the perspective of mobilization, fronting payroll, contract-based lending, SC Community Loan Fund, Community Works, and Climb Funding.

Ms. Barron requested that OSBO and Administration research and present possible opportunities for business owners to learn how to do business in Richland County via procurement opportunities.

Ms. Green stated that there is a lunch panel that meets to discuss how to do business at the state, city, county, and federal level.

Ms. Barron stated that she appreciated OSBO's collaboration with the city and thanked Ms. Green for her forward thinking.

Councilman Pugh made a motion to direct the Administrator to find opportunities and create ways to find revolving loan funds for small businesses in Richland County, seconded by Ms. Barron.

In Favor: Pugh, Barron, and Newton

The vote in favor was unanimous.

Ms. Newton asked for clarification purposes if this item would come back to the committee for review.

Councilman Pugh thanked Ms. Green and Administration for sharing these updates which reflects the County's ongoing commitment to supporting small businesses through valuable resources, educational opportunities, and strategic collaborations.

5. ADJOURNMENT – Ms. Barron moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Ms. Newton.

In Favor: Pugh, Barron, and Newton

The vote in favor was unanimous.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 4:40 PM.