



Minutes

Date: January 23, 2025

Time: 3:00 pm

Members Present

Teira Farley

Marlena Reid-Joyner

Juandiego Wade

Staff Present

Madi Alvis

Matt Johnson

Keith Groomes

Vernice Grooms

Absent

Jamaala Hamilton

Nicole Hawker

Meeting was called to order by Keith Groomes at 3:06pm.

Introductions were made for the new committee member, Marlena Reid-Joyner. Ms. Reid-Joyner shared that she is a Charlottesville native currently working at Greenstone on Fifth as their Assistant Property Manager.

Mr. Groomes provided an update on the upcoming year's GO Start-Up schedule. The three 2025 sessions will be offered in March, June, and September. Mr. Groomes shared that the June course will be conducted virtually. Teira Farley shared that Community Invest Collaborative (CIC) will also be offering their Business Essentials course virtually in February as well.

Mr. Juandiego Wade arrived to the meeting at 3:13pm.

Mr. Groomes then shared the Business Survey that the Office of Economic Development (OED) has developed to better gauge the needs of all businesses in Charlottesville. Mr. Groomes presented an outline of the survey. Ms. Farley inquired about OED's target response goals for the survey, to which Matt Johnson described their desire to receive enough responses to establish a baseline to which future surveys can be compared. Mr. Groomes invited all Committee members to complete and review the Business Survey before it will be sent to the public. Per Mr. Johnson's request, Mr. Wade agreed to make an announcement promoting the survey during upcoming City Council meetings.

Mr. Groomes then shared that OED will be assisting with the small business conference that will occur in May 2025. This event will be conducted in conjunction with Piedmont Pitch, a competition that gives

local City of Charlottesville and Albemarle County entrepreneurs the opportunity to pitch their business plans and win a cash award to support their efforts.

Mr. Johnson shared that OED will be getting a part-time intern for the Spring. Helena Harris is a 4th year student at the University of Virginia. She will be working eight–to ten hours a week with OED staff. As a fluent Spanish-speaker, she will be working to help identify and fill the gaps in services that OED offers to Charlottesville’s Spanish-speaking communities.

Madi Alvis shared the two updated versions of the Minority Business Directory (MBD). The public version has been edited in response to a phishing attack targeting SWAM-O certified vendors in late November; at the advice of the City’s IT Department, business contact information, including emails and phone numbers, have been removed. Ms. Alvis also demonstrated the updated internal version of the MBD, that has been re-designed with the input of City end-users to enhance utility and promote use of this resource when soliciting quotes. Ms. Alvis requested input from the Committee on whether further changes should be made to the public version of the MBD to match the format used in the internal version. Links will be sent to Committee members for review of these documents following the meeting.

Ms. Alvis then updated the Committee on Procurement’s on-going efforts to update the City’s informational guides and presentations in preparation for Procurement’s annual spring training for City end-users, as well as 2025 vendor fairs and events. This includes “Selling to the City” guides and PowerPoints, the “Departmental Contact List”, and the “Vendor Resource Guide”. Ms. Alvis also shared that Procurement is in the process of developing several events targeting SWAM-O vendors interested in doing business with the City, including a Selling to the City course and a Reverse Trade Show. Both of these events have been offered historically but have not been run in recent years.

Mr. Johnson reminded the Committee that the next meeting will occur on April 17th and that meetings will take place on the 3rd Thursday of the month beginning each quarter.

Mr. Wade shared thoughts reminding those present that Charlottesville’s minority business community may be experiencing additional concerns during this time.

There were no public comments.

Meeting was adjourned by Mayor Wade at 3:50pm.