

Capital Projects Advisory Review Board
Education Connections Committee

Meeting Notes 11-29-2023

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Committee Members: (8 filled positions, 5 = Quorum)

- | | | | |
|---|----------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| X | Curt Gimmestad (GC & AGC) | X | Linneth Riley Hall (Transit) |
| X | Brian Aske (DBIA NW) | X | Robynne Thaxton (Private Industry) |
| X | Curtis Bennett (OMWBE) | X | Olivia Yang (Higher Ed) |
| | Janet Jansen (State - DES) | | Vacant (MWBE) |
| X | Josh Klika (MRSC) | | Vacant (Trades\Labor) |

Guests:

Talia Baker, CPARB Staff

Nicky, Budnuchit (OMWBE proxy)

Meeting started at 7:47 am

Chair Gimmestad started the meeting after obtaining a quorum.

Robynne Thaxton made the motion to approve the agenda; Olivia Yang seconded the motion. Motion approved via voice vote.

Brian Aske made the motion to approve the committee minutes from September 27, 2023; Linneth Riley Hall seconded the motion. Motion approved via voice vote.

Discussion Highlights:

Chair Gimmestad reviewed the Training Resources document and asked if there are any further updates.

He shared broad topics to be added to the AGC description.

Brian Aske offered to provide topics for DBIA and LCI.

Josh sent a link for the MRSC training page, but not general topics because trainings are only listed when they are available.

The Training Document is live and will be updated as new information is provided. Talia has put out a general request for additional resources through the PRC and CPARB for the Educational Connections Committee to consider to add.

Costs for memberships or training are difficult to identify and not the ECC's responsibility. If scholarships are available, then we can identify that to begin with.

Linneth suggested to add to the disclaimer that some agencies may provide small business assistance. Are there scholarship opportunities, yes but where do you find them?

Josh suggested identifying who the audience is for the agency. For example, MRSC is aimed at local government, where as APEX is aimed at small businesses.

Chair Gimmestad suggested an FAQs right after the Table of Contents to include questions such as, "Are there Scholarships?" and identify which agencies provide them. This might help direct users to which resources may provide more of what they are looking for.

Olivia shared that the WSU has experimented with asking community members where they are getting their training. If other owners were to do this too, there might be another more targeted arena of resources that might be helpful to include. Remove Barriers, add resources larger businesses use to educate small businesses.

Chair Gimmestad asked what the committee wants to focus on next. What is the committee hoping to solve now that the Training Resources has been developed?

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Linneth suggested an addition to the disclaimer, "*Small Businesses are encouraged to take advantage of the resources listed.*"

Chair Gimmestad suggested adding the minor edits suggested and publish the document. Olivia suggested adding a line for comments and suggestions to be sent to the CPARB inbox. As comments or recommendations come in, Talia can forward them to Curt for consideration.

Olivia shared the Project Feedback Process Workgroup has been discussing incident grievances. There has been considerable discussion about what happens before the incident\grievance and what are the options after the incident\grievance has been reported. Before the incident\grievance there are training opportunities, and improvements could be added to the application, training for the PRC panelists on how to get to the specifics to identify possible problems quickly, and possibly add a link to the Training Resources document.

When the GC/CM Best Practices Guidelines are completed, a similar paragraph as is on the Design-Build project application can be added. Linneth suggested editing the sentence to, "*...and attend any applicable available training.*" at the end of the paragraph.

Linneth, one issue she has is the firms going before the PRC don't always understand what small business and disadvantaged business utilization means. The PRC members have a tendency to latch onto that issue regardless of any other issues and starts to sound like that is the biggest hurdle to getting approval by the PRC. How can the ECC help the firms and contractors understand how to conduct outreach to small and disadvantaged businesses, and then how can the ECC help the PRC members on what they need to be focused on regarding the applications and approvals. The Business meetings are doing what they can to help, but the ECC could help too.

Robynne agreed with Linneth. She pointed out that owners are not able to set the percentages for inclusion. They can ask for inclusion plans, but it's the design-builder & GC/CM's responsibility. PRC members need to be reminded that owners are only required to meet RCW, not meet mentorship or inclusion numbers.

Feedback to the PRC may be needed to help remind panel Chairs to remind panels of the RCW parameters. Owners contract with a design-builder or GC/CM to do the hiring for the project, so they won't always have the stats at their fingertips. Brian agreed that some of the PRC reviews are difficult to attend when PRC members focus on non-scoreable criteria.

Two issues have been occurring not enough owner criteria training vs PRC reviewer training.

Olivia has a pet peeve that while firms may focus on the statistics of utilization of small diverse businesses, if those contracted small diverse businesses do not have any training on how to do public works, then they are set up for failure. The fixation on achieving a utilization percentage is too one-dimensional. Are these small diverse businesses getting funding, what's their bonding like, are they getting training, are they developing relationships?

She shared that CPARB needs to be careful with appointments, because one DBE individual was appointed who has inadvertently skewed the PRC focus to achieving those stats. She doesn't feel the focus shift is systemic, but the result of a few very vocal individuals. It is likely more a mentorship issue.

As an education committee, Linneth feels there is the perception of responsibility to provide something to help and supplement the PRC with available training. What if the committee were to develop a PowerPoint on small business utilization as part of the resources? She agrees the current problem is focused on a few people and keeping it from spreading too widely will be important. She feels the Education Connections Committee can identify where there is a lack of resources and training is needed, and then figure out how to create connectivity to fill that gap.

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The industry is all over the board regarding utilization and outreach right now. So, it will be difficult to channel these into a single point of reference as a resource. Regardless of the delivery method, each project is unique with it's own needs. How can this committee approach these issues from a resource perspective? There's not currently a best practice reference for directing the players to. Education should follow the path of the BE/DBI Committee and their recommendations.

Olivia noted that during AGC trainings on DB and GC/CM, there is a hour dedicated to OMWBE sharing a roadmap to success. She suggested making that piece more pervasive. An alternative or addition would be to work with the BE/DBI Committee to develop a class on current practices. Then make the PRC members required to review it. Some PRC members seem to think that PRC is a powerbase. Olivia is willing to reach out to the co-chairs to discuss the possibility of an open forum to discuss. This training audience would include public owners, generals, and major sub trade partners and reiterate that utilization is important but overall support is the true focus when using small businesses with a focus on owners and contractors. Have this training be shared with the PRC so they have context to which they are supposed to be evaluating projects.

Robynne suggested a similar opportunity that talks about what an inclusion plan should have. Inclusion is more than meetings and advertising.

Linneth inquired if it would be appropriate to share examples of what a good inclusion plan looks like? Robynne cautioned being careful of proprietary documents, but identifying what the elements of a good plan looks like would be helpful, and what contractors should be doing.

Olivia noted that she had proposed the definition of 'Inclusion Plan' include capitol, opportunity and training. This was removed and put into the preface, but it would be good to imagine that an inclusion plan deal with barriers to capitol, training and opportunity. Then hear what owners and contractors are doing via a forum.

LRH suggested developing a PPT with bullet points on what should be included for inclusion & outreach plans. It would be better to have something than continue without. Chair Gimmestad asked who the target audience would be. Olivia suggested considering owners coming to the PRC as future applicants and the evaluators, so everyone is on the same agenda.

Chair Gimmestad suggested they start with some bullet points to continue the dialogue. Brian agreed but cautioned being too specific since each project is different. The real challenge is identifying how to provide continuity and support to a business so they can be successful long term. There needs to be a central theme that stitches together the owners' responsibility and the contractors' responsibility. Also, outreach for GC/CM is different than outreach for DB, so those nuances need to be considered.

Olivia volunteered to reach out to Lekha, Santosh and Irene from the BE/DBI Committee to discuss this training possibility if the audience is owners and contractors with the beneficiaries being small businesses. Other ECC members are welcome to join. What are those practices and how do we get people together to get them to talk about their practices, and which practices work best in which situations.

Chair Gimmestad summarized the meeting and action items.

Next Meeting: 1/31/2024 – (Keep schedule into 2024)

- Agena
- Minutes from 11/29/2023
- Update on possible webinar training
- Review Training Resources Directory
- Consider how to identify what is missing from current content
- Identify Next Steps
- Establish Next meeting Agenda

Parking Lot:

- Lessons Learned

Action items:

1. Talia will work on developing the Best Practices documentation.
2. Agency representatives have offered to provide primary education opportunities category topics (Brian for DBIA, Josh for MRSC) and will send to Talia within 2 weeks. They should be generic enough that they won't need to be updated often.
3. Robynne will let the EC committee know if DBIA is willing to host webinar and host it for free.
4. Robynne will connect with Lekha Fernandes regarding identifying individuals who may be willing to work with DBIA to put together some content for a webinar. (*Inclusion Plans*)
5. Chair Gimmestad has a community member who may be interested in filling the MBE position. He will reach out to them.
6. Olivia volunteers to reach out to Lekha, Santosh and Irene from the BE/DBI Committee to discuss this training possibility if the audience is owners and contractors with the beneficiaries being small businesses.

Meeting adjourned at 8:53 am