

# Southwest LRT DBE and Workforce Advisory Committee

Thursday, February 18, 2021

2:00 - 4:00 p.m.

## Meeting Minutes

[\[link to video of meeting\]](#)

### AGENDA [\[handouts\]](#) [\[presentation\]](#)

#### 1. Roll Call by Salima Khakoo:

- a. Jenny Winkelaar, Barry Davies, Gilbert Odonkor, Sheila Olson, Julie Brekke, Mel Reeves, Leslie Woyee, John O-Phalen, Mary Schmidt, Barb Lau, Jerry Sweeney, Dale Even, Christa Seaberg, Katy Maus, Chris Gannon, Mike Toney, Elaine Valadez, Brianne Lucio, Ashanti Payne, Jon Tao, Mahad Omar, Aaron Koski, Brian Leitch, Lykahnu Lysongtseng, Barb Pecks, Janelle Miller, Norma Miller.

#### 2. Building Strong Communities Update by Aaron Koski (Slides 3-12)

##### a. Aaron Koski and Barry share video and present on the BSC program:

- i. Aaron gives a brief overview/timeline of the Recruitment to Apprenticeship Placement process
- ii. Aaron goes over program requirements and expectations
- iii. **QUESTION** Barb Lau: *How many people got into the construction industry within BSC and got jobs now?*
  1. Aaron Koski: 13 placements currently. There are several participants who are not working currently because of the winter. 3-4 have not completed their first year. Once the construction season starts back up, we will get an accurate number of people who are working.
  2. Jenny Winkelaar: This program helps apprentices gauge their capabilities and position them in the appropriate placements as they enter the trades and gain experience through the program
- iv. **QUESTION** Mary Schmidt *What can project owners/public agencies do to impact change and support efforts like BSC?*
  1. Jenny Winkelaar: Women Building Success will be sponsoring a female cohort through the BSC program. Some of our female participants through the 2020 program have been rock-solid, so we're working very hard to make strides in the female participation in the industry.
- v. Ashanti Payne: Happy to see the video and was smiling through it. Let's continue working on retaining and recruiting folks in the industry, and I am proud of BSC for taking on this challenge through the program.

#### 3. SWLRT Project Update by Jon Tao (Slides 13-14)

##### a. Jon Tao shares Project Updates:

- i. Jon discusses upcoming Community Virtual Townhalls, more information on these townhalls can be found on [swlrt.org](http://swlrt.org)

**4. DBE Achievement Reporting by Jon Tao (Slides 15-16)**

- a. DBE Progress Reports
  - i. Jon shows DBE Achievement as of Dec 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020

**5. DBE Activities Updates (Slides 17-28)**

**a. Civil: LMJV DBE Activities by Dale Even and Christa Seaberg (Slides 17-20)**

- i. Dale provides update on Change Orders. He is not sure if the numbers provided are correct due to how the information is extracted from E-Builder.
- ii. Dale shows the list of Anticipated DBE's for their one-month look ahead.
- iii. Christa Seaberg shares their DBE Highlight, MBE Trucking.

**b. Systems: APJV DBE Activities by Chris Gannon (Slides 21-24)**

- i. Chris presents their Anticipated DBE's for their one-month look ahead
- ii. Chris shares APJV's Systems contract DBE update
- iii. Chris shares APJV's update on change orders

**c. Franklin O&M: LS Black DBE Activities by Brian Leitch (Slides 25-28)**

- i. Brian shares update on DBE activity, they are looking to increase DBE participation.
- ii. **QUESTION** Barb Lau: *What are you doing to address your timeline of payment to your subs? I have heard from some sources about the late payment times, up to 90 days.*
  - 1. Brian Leitch: There's room for improvement on our end and to get information in at a timely manner. We've already had discussions to address that. It's an issue that we've tried to get expedited.
  - 2. Ashanti Payne: The Council has done progress on cutting payment time down on Civil. This is not necessarily an issue on one side, but we will work collaboratively with LS Black to cut down time on payment.
  - 3. Gilbert Odonkor: You can also make sure you make a relationship with your small businesses so that they can reach out to you with issues on cashflow, you can pay them ahead and work with the Council closely when issues like these arise.
  - 4. **QUESTION** Brian Runzel: *What is the issue again? We have been making sure we pay LS Black 30-40 days.*
    - a. Brian Leitch: We were talking more so about Pay Apps 6 and 7, we can talk offline about them and double check.
    - b. Brian Runzel: Let's connect for sure then so we can address where issues may be

**6. Workforce Participation Reporting by MDHR and Primes (Slides 29-43)**

**a. Workforce Participation Reports by Elaine Valadez (Slides 29-34)**

- a. Elaine reports Civil Workforce participation hours, percentages and hours worked by racial categories. She also reported Trucking participation based on project to date.
  - b. Elaine reports Systems Workforce participation hours, percentages and hours worked by racial categories. She also reported Trucking participation based on project to date.
  - c. Elaine reports Franklin Workforce participation hours, percentages and hours worked by racial categories.
  - b. Civil: LMJV Workforce Activities by Christa Seaberg (Slides 35-38)**
    - a. Christa presents Workforce Activities updates as of January 2021. A lot of outreach initiatives are noted
    - b. Christa shares updates on new hires for LMJV, which currently is difficult due to the cold
  - c. Systems: APJV Workforce Activities by Mike Toney (Slides 39-40)**
    - a. Mike Toney goes over Systems Contract Workforce updates. A lot of outreach initiatives were noted, including their ACE mentoring program (volunteer mentors and summer internships for high school students).
  - d. Franklin O&M: LS Black Workforce Activities by Brian Leitch (Slides 41-43)**
    - a. Brian Leitch goes over Franklin O&M Contract Workforce Activities updates and plans to continue looking into increasing participation.
- 7. WOMEN IN THE TRADES PANEL DISCUSSION (Slides 43-45)**
- a. Panelists:**
    - i. Norma Miller (Former painter, Urban League Twin Cities as Job Developer)
    - ii. Janelle Miller (Former laborer in heavy highway, contract administrator and recruiting at Peterson Companies)
    - iii. Barb Pecks (Former carpenter, Carpenter and Business Rep at Carpenters Union)
    - iv. **QUESTION** Salima: *Janelle, can you please share your experiences with highway heavy industry and women working in it.*
      - 1. Janelle: The majority of whom I seen enter the industry are in the mid-30's. I haven't seen a lot of women enter highway heavy work. There are a lot I have also seen that tried the work but don't stick around.
      - 2. **QUESTION** Salima *Can you speak more on the age issue and how it's different from when men enter the field and how it plays out for women?*
        - a. Janelle: I think that people who come into the industry as a career change is a lot of times after people separate from their spouse. I usually see it as more of a career change situation rather than a rolling-out-of-high-school situation.

- v. **QUESTION** Salima: *Can you help us understand if there are any unique experiences that women of color face in the field? How can the workplace culture provide opportunities to help? Are there any barriers right now?*
1. Norma: I can speak for myself being in the field- before moving to MN there were a lot of people that looked like me. But after moving to MN, there were a lot of barriers that I was seeing, people were saying things that they shouldn't have said. I didn't know who to talk to or what to tell people after experiencing certain things, which can make it difficult for others that can experience the same
  2. **QUESTION** Salima: *How does the promotion of equity play out on the ground to potentially help us with our jobs?*
    - a. Norma: I believe if people were aware of certain things happening on the job site and agree that it shouldn't happen and approach those issues and vocalize that they do not approve of those issues, it would be a good step. I remember when I was working as the only person of color, it was break time and someone walked into the meeting and asked loudly "where is the KKK meeting happening". Thankfully, my coworkers around me stood up and mentioned that things like that wouldn't be tolerated. Things like this may be going on although it may not be blatant.
  3. **QUESTION** Salima: *Barb, in relation to what Norma was sharing, can you help us understand strategies that are in place that seem to be working to ensure that workplace culture is safe for people?*
    - a. Barb: The building trades has a program where they discuss how to work with people different from you. The building trades is in the process of developing/updating that program. We are in the process of creating a curriculum to help address this. If we can train individuals who consider retaliation or engage in inappropriate behavior, we can emphasize that everyone has a part to play in the prevention of creating a hostile or uncomfortable work environment.
    - b. **QUESTION** Salima: *What would you tell women interested in entering this field with this type of physicality around them?*
      - i. Barb: I would have a lot of parents tell me that they don't want their daughters to enter this type of field. I always tell people "If you are planning on entering the trade, there is a huge physical nature you need to keep in mind."

4. **QUESTION** Salima *Any other thoughts from the panelists before we open up the panel for questions from the meeting members?*
- a. Janelle: Along with the trades unions, I know there are a few GC's that are doing the "Be that guy" type of commitment as well. I've had female apprentices sent to me because I'm not shy and will stand up to anything inappropriate. The work is nothing harder than carrying heavy plates as a waitress. You just need to take care of yourself as you work!
  - b. Norma: I do sit on several committees and these are the topics we are discussing. MnDOT released a 1-pager which is the Respectful Workplace Guide, which would be good to pass around to different contractors, trades etc.
5. **QUESTION** Dale: *On the female participation, there is a deception of less inclination for women to enter the industry. How do we change that?*
- a. Janelle: Part of it is just getting females in front of individuals to see the representation. Females don't see construction as an option because they just don't see themselves in that role. It is an outreach thing. There are perceived barriers, but there are things that can be looked through.
  - b. Norma: I do have several women in different trades that come in and talk to participants to share their stories about what they like and don't like about the trade. This gives participants a chance to look at female representation.
6. **QUESTION** John O'Phelan: *In my experience with this is that I see a lot of females that do great work but still maintain that area of job project over career/employee. I know some women and POCI that get to that place where they have a career with their company over a project. Do you have tips with that?*
- a. Norma: When people come to me, I tell them it isn't just a job but it is a career and then I explain to them the difference. They should maintain these careers, pursue a pension and build on it to support their families.
  - b. Jenny Winkelaar: One of the things Local 49 is doing is to make the strategic decision to bring information out to students at an early age. This is important because we can provide females the info they need to supplement their career choice development at an earlier point in decision. There are also a lot of women facing events to get better information out there to women who are interested in working in the construction industry.

- c. Christa: Jenny hit it straight on! It has been a huge change over the last 10 years of the strength/growth of women in the industry. Having the representation to show the possibilities of construction career is important.
  - d. Barb: We can work proactively by connected women with relationships that can strengthen their experience and knowledge building of the industry. There are also awesome opportunities out there to help women see who they are and where they can see themselves within the trades.
7. **QUESTION** Mary Schmidt: *You've talked about what your colleagues/unions/employers can do. What about those of us who are owners of infrastructure that can hire out contractors? What can we be doing to help out?*
- a. Barb: I know that our contractors are instrumental, and we keep reaching out to them and community groups. Working with those contractors to build relationships is important.
8. Gilbert: I just want to commend the ladies on the panel. There are a lot of women that will look up to you and are going to look into the trades. Continuing to hold government agencies accountable to make sure contractors do right by your groups is going to be important.
9. Jenny Winkelaar: Please continue to share and highlight success stories! Put faces with numbers and show the stories of those who are on large projects.

8. **ADJOURNED at 3:50PM by Ashanti Payne**

**Next Scheduled Meeting: March 18, 2021 from 2:00 - 4:00 pm**