

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
MINORITY CONTRACTING AND SECTION 3 COMMITTEE MEETING  
RICHMOND REDEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING AUTHORITY  
HELD AT 600 EAST BROAD STREET, 5<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR  
IN RICHMOND, VIRGINIA  
ON MARCH 11, 2024, 5:30 p.m.

**Minority Contracting & Section 3 Members In Attendance**

Harold Parker, Jr. Committee Chair  
Eddie L. Jackson, Jr., Commissioner  
Barrett Hardiman, Commissioner  
Charlene Pitchford, Commissioner  
Veronica G. Blount, Commissioner

**RRHA Staff In Attendance**

Steven Nesmith, Chief Executive Officer  
Mike Kelly, Chief Operating Officer  
Precious Washington, Sr. Vice President, Chief Financial Officer  
Colene Orsini, Vice President, Procurement & Contract Administration  
Tonise Webb, Associate Lead Counsel & Chief Compliance Officer  
Ralph Stuckey, Vice President Resident Services  
Angela Fountain, Vice President, Communications & Public Relations  
Grace Washington, J&G President  
Beth Keman, The Community Builders

**In Attendance via GoTo**

Darrell Davis, Sr. Vice President, Real Estate & Community Development  
Joe Sarver, RRHA

**Call To Order, Harold Parker, Jr.**

Chair Harold Parker, Jr. called the meeting to order with Tonise Webb serving as General Counsel. A quorum was established.

**Citizens' Comment Period**

No citizens were signed up speak.

**Approval of Minutes**

The Minutes from the January 8, 2024, Minority Contracting and Section 3 Committee Meeting were approved.

***Motion: (Hardiman/Jackson) Move to adopt the Minutes from the January 8, 2024 Minority Contracting and Section 3 Committee Meeting.***

**Motion Carried Unanimously**

### **MBE/Section 3, Colen Orsini**

Colene Orsini gave the Procurement Report which was attached to the Agenda for minority businesses which are down by almost 4½%. Some contracts are not being recorded where there are large contracts, and this should be looked into and should be added. Women's businesses are up to 15% and Section 3 is at 16.3%. A small business report was included which showed that out of \$4,000,000 that has been paid out to date, 30% has gone to small businesses.

### **Discussion**

Commissioner Hardiman asked the question if we were doing cooperative RFP's so that folks are able to work with other jurisdictions and Ms. Orsini confirmed yes this is being done, however there are certain limitations in Virginia and can't be used for some professional services. Mr. Parker asked why suppliers were not being shown and Ms. Orsini wasn't sure why suppliers. She was informed it was just goods and services that are logged. Mr. Nesmith expressed that it was the software system that captures that information, and another look should be taken. Ms. Orsini will take a look at this and make sure that the number for all faces of Section 3, women owned and MP's are included on the next report.

CEO Nesmith discussed that the goal for MBE contractor payment is 30 and we are at 25.66 and we are not capturing all of the minority contractors who get work under majority firms, and this is a mistake that needs to be corrected. An example was discussed where Ms. Fountain showed photos from a vendor fair where a minority person had teamed up with a majority contractor to get that business.

### **February Breakfast Session at Hilton Hotel, Seven Nesmith**

Mr. Nesmith discussed that a lot of history is being made these days. The event at the Hilton was a historic event and was the first of its kind to have a round table discussion with minority, women owned and disadvantaged businesses in the City of Richmond as well as the MEB policy that was passed. The Procurement

Department did a wonderful job with this event. The CEO of Metropolitan Business League attended the event and stated he was going to make everyone that attended a member of the MBL for free. Mr. Nesmith stated that the next step after the event was to send an email out to all of the attendees stating they are going to walk them through the process holding their hand to get you registered, licensed and get any certifications needed. Follow-up post meetings will be made as well.

Commissioner Pitchford also commented that the event was very well planned, and the breakfast idea was great. Everyone was prepared to answer any and all questions. The location was awesome, and it all information was an in-depth and not shallow and she was thrilled to be there.

Commissioner Blount also expressed that it was a very well-planned event. The impact is going to be great. This gave everyone an opportunity to learn. She expressed that she had not received anything from the MBL about the free memberships and this should be prior to the next follow-up zoom meeting. Mr. Nesmith stated that there will be another zoom meeting and the CEO of MBL requested that all attendees email information be sent over and membership will be initiated.

Chair Parker brought up the question concerning once you are registered with RRHA how long does that last, does it have to be renewed every year. Mr. Orsini confirmed that once you're in the system it stays there. Insurance information must be updated yearly. Mr. Parker suggested that possibly an Affidavit of no change would be helpful.

Chair Parker also stated that the event at the Hilton was a very good event because it showed the black and brown community that RRHA is serious about doing things with them and the ball may have been dropped in the past, but is not any longer.

The event at the Hilton was proven to be a great and successful event.

### **Creighton Court Project, Darrell Davis**

Darrell Davis stated that a lot of questions have been brought up about the minority participation in this project. Grace Washington from J&G Work Force as well as Beth Kennan from Community Builders, the developers on the project are present and open to any questions from the committee.

Grace Washington gave some context about how long she has been working on this project which was since Armstrong. She stated it is her passion for low income residents to be able to participate in wealth building that is created by these developments which extends to small minority contractors. As part of her outreach information is sent out to 500+ minority contractors, MBL which has 200 minority contractors. Phone calls are then placed to everyone. She expressed that some minority contractors do not bid on projects due to a list of reasons, the primary one being payment. They cannot afford to wait 60 or 90 days to get payment. There are a lot of requirements to work on these projects.

Mr. Davis wanted to make clear that the 60-to-90-day payments is not RRHA's payments. It is the Virginia Housing signoff, the banks, and the construction lender. The Real Estate Department is looking to be at 99% of all payments being made in 30 days. He emphasized that the 60-to-90-day payments Ms. Washington is discussing is the development projects that have to go through approval process before they are paid.

Chair Parker discussed the fact that for minority businesses, small business that that is a long time to carry things on your books and can hamper their ability to get credit for materials, etc.

Ms. Kennan discussed the payment issue because that is her major job, tracking payments and she stated RRHA has been flipping payments very quickly and getting it back out to the contractor. It was also discussed that with the larger firms they should be able to pay them even before that time because they are large enough firms to carry this on their books. Ms. Kennan says that they are gearing up for Phase B vertical for there to be a round table having a sit-down talk about the opportunities that are coming with the developers. This will help facilitate what the challenges are ahead of time.

Chair Parker discussed that there is a problem of including the black and brown community and that is what is trying to be accomplished. Ms. Washington stated there are a lot of minority participants but not enough black participants which is due to not possessing the right certifications, licenses, history, etc.

Commissioner Pitchford brought up that partnering and building relationships with some of these contractors would be the way to go and Ms. Washington stated that is the direction they are trying to go in, getting everyone to work together. Discussion was had

that the “decisionmakers” should be at these meetings so that it gets the ball moving forward.

CEO Nesmith stated that they are being very intentional about getting everyone together and moving forward with this and getting in on the early end. Ms. Kennan stated that their goal is to set up one of these meetings and get the communication lines open so that this type of discussion can be had with everyone, KBS, TCB, J&G, RRHA, the City of Richmond so everyone is on the same page and Phase B is a good starting point for this.

Mr. Parker stated that partnering for all jobs in the future should be done, not just giving them one job, keeping the money right in our community is most important. Mr. Parker also stated that he would like to see some minority cleanup included on every project. Ms. Washington stated that this is being done and many opportunities were given on the Armstrong project and there were issues with people just showing up to work. The company did not have a lot of previous experience which was also an issue, but they wanted to give them a chance. They did not have a lot of commercial experience such as managing the labor, the schedule, etc. Commissioner Blount expressed possibly finding a way to help the minority businesses to be able to meet capacity and get them ready. Before SWAM came along there was a list of minority contractors that always worked with RRHA and whenever a project came along they were worked with first. However once SWAM came along that all changed.

CEO Nesmith discussed that they are being very intentional and have a stated approved job training program and Ms. Kenyatta Green will be discussing this at the next full board meeting. Folks are being trained. Mr. Nesmith also discussed that we are not just focused on the real estate department, we are focused on minority business that have other businesses and providing opportunities for them.

Mr. Davis brought up the fact that the numbers for Creighton need to be put on paper as it is a low number and should be put on paper before the next meeting.

Chair Parker brought up the fact that the whole industry is having problems, not just minority. Chair Parker requests that Mr. Davis come back to next month’s meeting and give a report on what’s happening at Creighton and hopefully the numbers will have increased.

**Presentation – Recruiting Public Housing Residents to do Landscaping at New Real Estate Developments, Ralph Stuckey**

Mr. Stuckey discussed the that giving the families and residents an opportunity to get involved in landscaping. They work with stem and technology with a lot of young people and are actually working with a landscaping program where they are actually doing plans and designs around landscaping with a lot of opportunities at different sites. The hope is that this partnering will lead to in the future developing a business where they will be involved in some of the landscaping and design of future projects. Ms. Kennan stated that this would be a great collaboration and it's a great idea and that the Timmons Company is very responsive and open to coming and talking to kids about plans, etc.

Commissioner Blount asked Mr. Stucky to clarify that he wanted to make sure that the plan is to have actual training in landscaping so that they will have something to show what they've done in their community and have an actual business that they could develop to become future contractors for RRHA. Mr. Stuckey confirmed that is the plan.

**Closing**

In closing Mr. Nesmith stated that communication is sent to HUD both locally and in DC giving them a report of the things that have been accomplished. Mr. Nesmith also passed along the policy that was passed for MB participation.

Ms. Fountain stated that there was great feedback on the event and will provide pictures from the event. Over 1,000 businesses were reached on the social media platform where pictures of the event were posted.

**Next Meeting Date**

April 8, 2024 – 5:30 p.m.

**Adjournment**

Chair Harold Parker, Jr., adjourned the meeting.