



Approved 1/23/2012

**WEATHERIZATION COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

**REGULAR MEETING
Tuesday December 20, 2011**

The Weatherization committee convened on Tuesday, December 20, 2011 at City Hall, 301 West 2nd Street in the Executive Session Room, # 1027 in Austin, Texas.

Chair, Andy Ramirez called the Board Meeting to order at 3:37 p.m.

**Board Members in Attendance:
Andy Ramirez and Barbra Boeta**

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes from the November 15, 2011 meeting were approved with correction to citizen communication on a motion by Ms. Boeta and second by Chair, Mr. Ramirez. Motion passed 2-0.

2. CITIZEN COMMUNICATION: GENERAL

Frank Fuentes, Chairman of US Hispanic Contractors Association (USHCA) expressed concerns regarding emails from environmental community regarding minority contractor associations regarding lose of recent federal funds. He is concerned about comments coming from Austin Energy and request that the Committee have the City Manager to look into this issue.

Carol Hadnot, Austin Black Contractors Association (ABCA) stated she conqurers with Mr. Fuentes statement. She also expressed concerns regarding phone calls and Facebook emails regarding accusations toward the minority trade association. She will be happy to share information should there be an audit by City.

Paul Saldana, USCHA requested status of the 15 recommendations submitted as part of the April 7th Council action should the City be in position to received future federal funds to include how and when recommendations were implemented by AE. He passed out backup and shared contents of Facebook postings and Austin Chronicle articles regarding lost of funds and subcontractor work performance. Mr. Saldana also asked the Committee to review the original goals, scope of work and certification requirements on the Weatherization project.

3. OLD BUSINESS

Discussion regarding the Austin Energy Weatherization project and potential recommendations to the Minority-Owned and Women-Owned Business Enterprise (MBE/WBE) & Small Business Procurement Program Advisory Committee regarding minority participation.

Mr. Ramirez reiterated Mr. Saldana's requests during citizen communications.

Ms. Boeta stated that she recalled that information regarding the 15 recommendations was addressed in a memo from Mr. Karl Rabago, Austin Energy. The memo stated that several recommendations could not be implemented due to existing contract.

Mr. Ramirez stated Mr. Rabago addressed which recommendations AE could implement to the Council. However, Council stated that all recommendations should be implemented on any new grant funds.

Therefore Mr. Saldana's request is to receive a follow up from AE on implementing recommendations on the \$200k funds recently received. He also asked AE to address comments regarding shoddy work performed by minority subcontractors.

Mr. Stephen Leinweber, Energy Efficiency Services Manager of Austin Energy stated he is now a representative for the Weatherization ARRA Program. He expressed his position and approaches to the project such as making sure work is distributed properly and the need for quality control from job quality to certification oversight.

Mr. Ramirez entertained a motion to accept Mr. Paul Saldana's recommendations be move forward to the full Advisory Committee regarding inquiries to Austin Energy on how (1) the Weatherization Committee Revised Recommendations adopted by the MBE/WBE & Small Business Advisory Committee on March 30, 2011 and approved by Council on April 7, 2011 were applied to the \$600,000 and \$200,000 ARRA funds subsequently received; (2) the original goals on the project were set for the Weatherization contracts, scopes of work and certification requirements; (3) handling of negative community comments toward the minority contractor associations regarding quality of workmanship and recent lose of \$400,000 in ARRA funds.

Motion 2nd by Ms. Barbra Boeta and passed 2-0.

Mr. Ramirez expressed concerns regarding the inconsistency of persons assigned to manage this project from AE and lack of knowledge of history of the program.

Ms. Boeta motioned that recommendations be presented to the Advisory Committee for the Council and City Managers Office to hold a meeting between the Larry Weiss, Karl Rabago both of Austin Energy, a representative of the MBE/WBE Council Subcommittee and the associations involved regarding an official statement to the community.

Motion 2nd by Mr. Ramirez and passed 2-0

Mr. Ramirez motioned recommendations to the Advisory Committee to request an audit of the Weatherization program to include implementation of the program, its operations and procedures, certification of prime contractors and when Austin Energy's Karl Rabago and Fred Yebra were notified that recent \$600,000 ARRA funds would be available.

Motion 2nd by Ms. Boeta and passed 2-0

Mr. Ramirez motioned recommendations to the Advisory Committee Ms. Carol Hadnot's request that the City explore moving the Weatherization program to Neighborhood Housing & Community Development in lieu of Austin Energy to better service the community and minority contractors.

Motion 2nd by Ms. Boeta and passed 2-0

Citizen Communication is summarized below;

Mr. Fuentes, USHCA concerned about the agitation of two groups and statements of minority subcontractors unacceptable workmanship by AE and asked that the Committee investigate to stop activity.

Ms. Carol Hadnot, ABCA recommends that the City explore the possibility of moving this program to the Housing Department.

Mr. Saldana, USHCA expressed concerns regarding there is always someone new from AE at the meetings.

4. STAFF REPORTS

Ms. Debra Dibble, Assistant Director, Small Minority Business Resources (SMBR) provided the Committee with a copy of the October 2011 ARRA Weatherization Subcontractor Monthly Assignment Summary. Ms. Jan Lawson, Austin Energy was unable to attend.

Mr. Leinweber, Austin Energy, briefed the Committee on the Weatherization Contractors Cumulative File Distribution report as of November 2011.

Ms. Dibble, SMBR briefed the ARRA Weatherization Services Participation report with the Committee.

Citizen Communication is summarized below;

Ms. Carol Hadnot, ABCA asked for a break out of project goals for subcontractors and expressed concerns that the 26 subcontractors that went through the training program were not being used and newly certified firms are getting the opportunity.

Mr. Saldana, USHCA expressed concerns about perception of subcontractors providing unacceptable work is the reason for lack of use. He also discussed the issue of firms subcontracting for each other.

The Committee requests that SMBR break out the project goals for each subcontractor and provide the overall goal and grant dollars on the ARRA Weatherization Participation Report

5. AGENDA ITEMS

No agenda items for the next meeting were discussed.

6. ADJOURNMENT

Chair, Andy Ramirez adjourned the meeting at 4:51 p.m.