SR 259 DBE Taskforce

Minutes from January 24, 2020

Members Present:

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Mr. Aaron Ozinga, [aaronozinga@ozinga.com](mailto:aaronozinga@ozinga.com)

Ms. Mary Person, [mperson@fhpaschen.com](mailto:mperson@fhpaschen.com)

Ms. Leslie Sawyer, [lsawyer@envdesigni.com](mailto:lsawyer@envdesigni.com)

Ms. Harvind Singh, [hkaur@singhinc.com](mailto:hkaur@singhinc.com)

Mr. John Trotta, [john.trotta@wsp.com](mailto:john.trotta@wsp.com)

Absent:

Sen. Chuck Weaver (Vice Chair), [chuck@chuckweaver.us](mailto:chuck@chuckweaver.us)

Mr. John Kapovich, [Jkapovich@sjconst.com](mailto:Jkapovich@sjconst.com)

**Senator Koehler*:*** Open the meeting with the approval of minutes for November and December. Approved by Ms. Harvind Singh and second by Mr. Guillermo Garcia. Minutes approved with correction of Dr. Amir Al-Khafaji changes; the word shade to shed in two places in the minutes.

**Senator Koehler:** Welcomed the Cook County representatives;

**Jennifer “Sis” Killen, Assistant Superintendent,**

**Department of Transportation and Highways.**

**Edward Olivieri, Esq., Director**

**Office of Contract Compliance**

**Raffi Saraffian, Chief Procurement Officer**

**Office of the Chief Procurement Officer**

Opening statements attached for each individual.

**Senator Koehler**: Thanks President Preckwinkle for making this a priority of her administration because this doesn’t happen unless leadership at the top really makes it happen. Thanks to all of you as well. Let’s turn this over to questions or comments from the task force committee.

**Jennifer McNaughton**: Retention policy you spoke of at 10% in the beginning at 50% completion it goes down to 5 and upon substantial completion it goes down even further. Is there a definition of substantial completion?

**Jennifer (Sis) Killen**: When we get to the majority of completion of the project and there are few remaining punch list items is when we perform our first inspection.

**Jennifer McNaughton**: There is no list to define substantial?

**Jennifer (Sis) Killen**: It will be based on the project scope and complexity. If we get to the road and it’s open to traffic or the bridge and it’s open to traffic if we have minor ancillary items that remain on the contract that is how we define substantial completion but it is going to vary from project to project.

**Jennifer McNaughton**: Are your close outs which you refer to as a maximum of two years for locally funded and maximum three years for federal. Are you guys meeting those goals?

**Jennifer (Sis) Killen:** For the majority of projects we are. These standards were put into place with the development of the chief procurement office. We used to have a different purchasing department, so we now introduce new standards into our contract language in the last few years to put an end cap on when we need to close everything out. The contract expiration is also guiding our limitation for payment, so this encourages everything to be done in that time frame. There may be some legal challenges that causes us to go outside of it, but we have been working diligently to meet those goals for the last two years.

**Jennifer McNaughton**: You said you have 520 minority own companies in your database. But there is a subcontractor approval process. Do you know of the 520 register firms how many are actually working?

**Edward H. Olivieri**: Don’t have that information right now but will be happy to pull that information and share it with the taskforce.

**Jennifer McNaughton:** That would be great. Lastly have you thought about utilizing technology for outreach and workshops? When you have a smaller business going to workshops during the day takes away from you trying to grow your business. You can YouTube everything so my recommendation to all the agencies provide online so business owners can watch at their convenience. Furthermore, if I have a sub that comes to me and say they have attended workshops or gone a viewed online class on how to be a good subcontractor their rate goes up in my mind.

**Edward H. Olivieri**: Indeed, leveraging technology to your viewpoint is actually critical. Because these small businesses, their time for coming downtown and coming to events certainly limited. Currently we doing a lot of outreach E-blast so we have the database certifying firms connecting them directly to opportunities and as I indicated in my testimony we are looking to create online in our office as well as the procurement office to provide technical assistance that will be available on demand.

**Raffi Sarrafian**: I would also like to say we are looking into, the chief procurement office, to utilizing the technology where we haven’t where we can and using technology is vital to driving MBE, WMB, DBE participation, it’s also user friendly and customer friendly. As you said it takes a lot of time out of someone day to come down to 118 N. Clark, Room 1018 to attend a workshop. So, we hope to start uploading content to our home page making use of the internet. So that is something we look forward to doing this hopefully this year.

**Senator Koehler:** Any information you want to pass on to the committee, please get Gilberto email afterwards and he will send to the committee.

**John Trotter**: Regarding the outreach events are they spread throughout the County?

**Raffi Sarrafian**: Yes, they are. We go county wide. We done over 40 events last year county wide and we expect to do the same robust outreach this year. The other things we are working to do is possibly go live streaming of our pre-bid conferences for the same reason it, customer friendly and many people can’t take the time to come downtown to attend pre-bib conference. We are also looking to upload our pre-bib conference to our home page so if you missed it you can still watch it at your convenience.

**John Trotter**: I also believe your outreach is building great network opportunities. I would like to compliment the county on leadership showing up at the events. This is also so critical to the MBE MWB to talk with you and to meet with you. The buying guide is perfect.

**Harvind Singh**: When you send information on the 520 certify firms can you send also their categories; contractors, architect, etc.? How is your certification process different from CMS or CDOT?

**Edward Olivieri**: The distinction between the city of Chicago and ours related to the SB side standards and the personal equity network cap. We are more stricker in that respect. However we believe it maes our program more unique and accessible. We lost our program in construction in 2000 so maintaining an accessible program is imperative to what we do. That the different in city and state of Illinois it’s similar standards are higher CMS than with county. We require they submit one-page affidavit and personal capital.

**Harvind Singh**: DBE program there is unify certification program. Have you or the agencies thought about having a unified program? Because if they can be sued you can be sued so why can’t we have the same set of standards across all agencies? You want my taxes, my personal net worth, you want my company taxes. So, if you are following the DBE program why can’t my information be for all agencies. Ton and tons of paperwork that I have to do for each agency. This is a burden. If there is a policy or recommendation, I think it will free up your compliances just as important. DBE is good and CMS is not going to change. If they already certify with CMS they are going to try to work with CMS. It’s too much to continue to do it over and over again. If you want more participation with this new program, we as a community need to think about how to make this certification process more streamline.

**Mary Person**: Have you ever considered reciprocity for the Illinois CDB considered you model the program after DBE program? I am sure it will take less time off your certification team if you have some kind of reciprocity.

You have a program with the Juvenile Temporary Detention Center. Can you send the board a write up about that program? I feel like we talk about workforce and what we can do for citizens who are returning to work especially our youth. This program is exceptional. It allows youth to train while they are at the Juvenile detention center which leads them into getting into an apprenticeship program. I would like to see that program expand if possible.

**Edward Olivieri**: Sure, we will be happy to.

**Aaron Ozinga**: How are you measuring performance? Why people are falling out of the program? How you tracking the data? Any thought behind as far as the contract side that qualified bidders can look at? A lot of time going off the education side of how to procure these jobs a lot of time you see people thrown in the deep end and way beyond their ability to manage the project. What is the velocity of certification how long does it take?

**Edward Olivieri**: We do track where our certification number from year to year to see who do fall off vs those who are coming into the program. We have a new data officer to identify who is dropping off and contact them and ask why they are dropping off. This will allow us to have hard data. Historically we gained more than we lost every year.

**Aaron Ozinga**: Is there a qualification by the size of the project?

**Edward Olivieri**: Not that I am aware of.

**Dan Meckes**: Commend County on leveraging the taxpayer dollars. You spent 820,000 to get almost 38 million commend on you that. On the types of projects which all are municipality those are all system projects. When doing those projects who are setting the diversity goals?

**Jennifer (Sis): Killen**: For the project we that we funded, designed and preliminary engineering on we the county are not setting goals on those projects but we are focused on as we mentioned the 838 thousand dollars brought in nearly 40 million dollars follow-on funding that construction is where we are going to have the greatest impact and through our investment cook program the locals do have the option to lead the contract but they have to go through the state letting process and then the state applied goals would apply to those construction contracts so if we are looking and that and we are focusing on the construction opportunities that without that seed investment that came with the program, those contractors opportunities and the design opportunities would never have reach fruition.

**Guillermo Garcia:** Is there some kind of target market program for professional services?

**Edward Olivieri**: There are some huge target markets solicitation obviously on a case by case bases. We recently had one for employment labor law services. But we are always looking for other ways to engage in target markets. I know the Labor law one we are particularly proud of that it is an area that we have had difficulty in getting participation and subcontracting on legal work is next to impossible show how industry work so when we structure we had a non-target market solicitation and a target market solicitation the same time. That way we can guarantee participation in the target market.

**Jennifer McNaughton**: Tollway provided data on how long their payment process was. Fast pay makes fast friends. Cook County reputation out there is very slow to pay. I think the assumption out there is doing business with Cook County puts a massive financial burden on your company. So, I’m thrill to hear you guys are pushing to improve and shorten the amount of closeout and finalize payments.

**Senator Hunter**: You guys are building at least one or more hospital? What are you doing in Washington park? Are you aware?

**Edward Olivieri**: That is a project that is being contemplated right now. Still in the works.

**Senator Hunter:** You said being contemplated so there have not been any decisions made that you are going to build it?

**Edward Olivieri:** That is correct.

**Jennifer (Sis) Killen**: What we can do provide is follow up information. That project is being run by our department of capital planning.

**Senator Hunter**: I know there where some community held. I attended a meeting and a lot of questions asked.

**Edward Olivieri:** Definitely want to follow up with you make sure we give you accurate information.

Person: Follow up on Senator Hunters questions, we had a meeting with CMA yesterday and Mr. Manning spoken and said, that procurement will go out by the end of the year this year for Providence.

**Senator Hunter:** So, it is going to happen?

**Mary Person:** Yes

**Leslie Sawyer**: I realize that Cook County is trying to increase the participation of diverse firms that is the number of diverse firms that win contracts to do work. However, as the County tries to include a larger number of diverse firms that as qualified and win contracts the pie shrinks. This creates less opportunity for individual companies to get work.

Additionally, what is already a great deal of competition is made further difficult by larger firms, medium size firms and smaller firms as well as well-established and new firms all competing against each other. This makes the selection process a challenge for both the County and the companies pursuing the work.

I realize in the past the county has been limited in the project opportunities they have been able to make available. With increased money from the Capital Bill, I understand that the County will be able to fund more projects and provide increased opportunities for more DBE and diverse firms. What is the secret formula?

**Raffi Saraffian:** To use your words there is no secret formula. It’s our responsibility to drive the participation DBE, MBE, and WBE. What we all spoke to this morning speaks to the initiatives we need to undertake to drive the increase in participation. You might have heard it before and you heard it this morning the initiatives we speak about, outreach, vendor fairs, using technology those are important. We can do more with them and that is what we plan to do. From the OPCO side I asked that you continue to pursue our opportunities just by participating as I said in our testimony you are helping to make our process more competitive. Competition is the operative word there we must follow a competitive process often end we usually make single awards. We are still looking at what we can do with our solicitations to make the opportunity more corresponding and more to the financial operational capacity for smaller businesses. I ask for your continued patience. We are available to answer questions at any time and provide information.

**Leslie Sawyer**: As a follow up for establish firm I think that are taking participation. As smaller firms I think I was looking for more. I don’t know what that something more is, but we will just be patience and keep trying.

**Jennifer (Sis) Killen:** If I may add to that from a department perspective, we didn’t have a lot of money years past so we were putting contracts out in the spirit of trying to create that pipeline to the extent we could sprinkle some money to the preliminary engineering designate area. In our five-year capital program, we have nearly a hundred and fifty million dollars coming out just for our preliminary design age engineering services. Whereas before we were putting a little bit out at a time were, we also needed to have construction contracts out. So those firms that have been unsuccessful in doing business specifically with transportation in the past we know that those opportunities are going to increase. It is our firm expectation that there is more coming down the pipeline for AME and contractor industry.

**Leslie Sawyer:** Thank you

Senator Koehler: So, when we passed the capital bill last year some very important things happened. One, we double the gas tax which means you can anticipate MFT monies doubling in terms of all entities, and we index it which means that here on out we don’t have to go back and revisit this issue. It provides opportunities. What does it do in terms of capacity problems or issues you see on the horizon?

**Jennifer (Sis) Killen**: With that increase the doubling of the gas tax we are seeing about a 70% increase in our revenue allocations, but the department have been gearing up for this over the last 2 fiscal years our vacant positions in terms of hiring we seen those numbers go up with each of our merchants, so we are trying to hire additional management professional, technical professional who can help build that capacity. We talk about stream lining opportunities we have to involve from the way we have done business before. Where we picked up a project and it pass through each of our hands before it gets out. We work together and generate roundtables so we can work to generate project in a turnkey fashion where there is less effort need to be extended by the office of contract compliance and procurement when it comes to getting project out on the street. We recognize we are competing with many of you sitting in front of us and we are all seeking the same talent, but it comes down to workforce development, outreach; stem development and we will not be able to generate those technical staff overnight but what we can do is engage those that are in high school and college and bring them in and extent internship opportunities.

**Senator Koehler**: So, you are talking about capacity within the County, but what about capacity with those you contract with?

**Jennifer (Sis) Killen**: I think that will come back down to outreach for whether it’s through stem internships opportunities. How can we create the right type of jobs to attract other firms to market? Back a comment that was made earlier, what is the correct size, are they all large projects or small projects, I think we have a role to play that as well making sure we are putting out the right kind of opportunities where those who wish to become and entrepreneur and create their own business they know in taking that risk and they know that there is something out there for them that they actually can sustain their business. Sustainability is a very large part of this. Growing new firms or supporting those firms that are currently out there and letting them know there is going to be sustainability so as they move forward in their growth and bringing on new talent themselves is not something that is going to last for 2 years.

**Senator Koehler:** What you laid out is really a great plan and experience in terms of how you get other contractors in. What about the workforce itself? How do track the diversity of the workforce of those you have contracted? Whether they are DBE, MBE, or WBE or not they have a workforce what is the participation looking like within the workforce itself?

**Jennifer (Sis) Killen**: We do not have a formal policy on but we have heard a quite bit more about as of lately they focus is on who is the owner of the firm and is there enough credit given to those who are employees of the firm and that should count to as they are equally some level as well, but those are not conversation we have had were a formal answer can be provided at this time.

**Senator Koehler:** Seems to me that’s often time a critical part of how we move forward with this whole thing. I see in my own community that you will have a journey person in some craft and they become good at it and spend off into their own business, it seems that the development of the small diverse firms really comes from trying to publicate that throughout the workforce. I think that all organization how to engage in this thought process.

**Raffi Saraffian**: OCPO are working with the Chicago Cook workforce partnership on this issue. It is a group of bringing together those of us in the public sector and the privite sector to strategize and plan how we can we address this very important issue. It’s a process and it’s a long process but it is on our radar and important and working towards it.

**Senator Koehler**: Give shout out to Director Kleinik, who have some legislation that involves the department of labor on this very issue, so I will use him as a resource as well.

**Jennifer McNaughton**: There is great amounts of information that is required for contract on workforce right now. There is multi EEO reports that must be submitted there are mandates in terms of the diversity for my work. There is a lot of reporting going on, on a monthly basis as required of all contracts to make the 19 and 7%. That information is being captured right now and being submitted to the governmental agency who is the owner of the contract. I suggest that if we want to get that information, we don’t create more forms maybe we share that data that is already been submitted.

**Senator Koehler**: My question is how that is used and how is that a part of the process?

**Aaron Ozinga**: What programs or incentives do you have?

**Raffi Saraffian**: The incentives and big credit that we have right now speak more to local preference and we can give you a list of all our incentives. My recollection is we don’t have incentives and big credits that speaks to what you are raising.

**Karen Jensen**: Re: capacity you have 520 firms. What is the goal to increase or sustain the firms you have?

**Edward Olivieri:** The goal is creating opportunities. We have a lot of contracts that don’t have goals because we don’t have availability so the number we at is too low. What that number should be is anyone guess but needs to be higher than 520. 520 is just Cook County certified, there is city of Chicago certified that is higher than ours. Increasing the number is the only place to go.

**Leslie Sawyer**: Competition is very difficult. What do projects looks like in terms of size and scope?

**Jennifer (Sis) Killen**: With the influx of funds and additional opportunities that we had spoken on and we intend to see as a department having reflection period and time to look back is critical and say is our size selection, are that achieving the benefits, we want It to.

**Leslie Sawyer**: That make sense and glad you are looking at that. Because that is something that is really important.

**Raffi Saraffian:** Key here is making the information available. This establish firms that have been around for a while. They pursue opportunities with all the agencies. They know the processes, they know how it work, they know the data, so they know how to sharpen their pencils the best. Making the information available though it sounds simple but it is so important and making it available going out there, doing outreach as well and giving people the knowledge that is so vital to their agent to plan and sharpen their pencil. To make it an even playing field.

**Aaron Ozinga**: Chief Data officer have he collaborated with peer reviews, auditing program using third parties. How do you measure success not just inside the program how do you measure success using peer metrics and other things up against other programs not just here in state but other parts of the country? If you have key metric can you submit them at some point. Data is there and there got to be top 3 top 4 top 5 key performance metric you guys are looking at. If you could highlight that find out where you stand.

**Edward Olivieri:** Absolutely, our chief data officer participates in the program, but we have a new department called research operation and innovation and that office is housing our performance review programs. So, each department has been required to develop the KPI. So, we will be having public facing dashboards so public can review every county department in terms of what the KPIs are, where we are and were, we are not hitting the KPIs.

**Dr. Amir Al-Khafaji:** Explain the different processes you have for professional services and construction. How do you go by selecting winners or losers?

**Raffi Saraffian**: On the construction side we advertise those solicitation. On professional side we do a combination we have a prequalified program and we also go to the street as well.

**Dr. Amir Al-Khafaji**: But you have committees that make those determinations.

**Raffi Saraffian**: For the prequalified programs we have committee of county personnel that review qualification packages that are received if we go out to the street with an RFP than we form an evaluation committee that would do the same thing. Review the proposal, score and the highest ranking or highest scoring get the award.

**Dr. Amir Al-Khafaji**: Do you have a criterion when you talk about scoring?

**Raffi Saraffian**: Criteria are published in the solicitation itself whether it’s an RFQ or RFP the criteria is there, and our bids also speak to the level of the experience and knowledge of the skill set that is required as well.

**Dr. Amir Al-Khafaji**: Can you share some information about pre-qualification?

**Raffi Saraffian**: Prequalification mean we are going to put together a pull of firms who are qualified generally to do certain type of work. I will use architecture and engineering as an example so we will put out a request for qualification saying we want to establish a prequalified program of firms who can generally do this architect and engineering type of work. We will speak in general terms the type of work we anticipate needing services for during the life of the contract. We qualified the firm. It ‘s a qualification-based process more or less. When we need them to work on a specific project than we usually have things for different groups because we have a lot of firms than we will go to one of the groups ask them to give us their qualification for the specific project. Then we bring the firms for a specific project and we select the highest one and the highest firms begin conversation about price.

**Dr. Amir Al-Khafaji**: In terms of sub prequalification does it follow IDOT, CMS in term of certification and this applies to vertical, horizontal and professional services?

**Raffi Saraffian**: I don’t have an answer for that I will have to get back to you.

**Jennifer (Sis)Killen**: I can piggy back on that response so, the pre-qualification for transportation and highway, that’s where raffie had mention that there some prequal pools you see a lot of that happening on the capital planning side so that among our construction. On the horizontal side within transportation we don’t define prequal pools on the AME side there is prequalification for both prime and sub to complete the engineering technical component of the work but we do not see that similar on the contracting side where your prime may have that prequal approval process. But we do not do that same level of approval with the subcontractor.

**Dr. Amir Al-Khafaji**: Explain the rational of why when it comes construction no prequalification are required except the prime, but yet the professional service side it is required?

**Jennifer (Sis)Killen**: We do have follow suite with IDOT on this but more of a common. It is allowed for what we have seen both in County and City to grow in ways they may not been able to with a certain prequal. To the might be doing minor flat work starting out a couple of contracts and we’ve seen them grow to do the larger flat work contractor within the city of Chicago.

**Dr. Amir Al-Khafaji**: Do you see an issue with that process?

**Jennifer (Sis) Killen**: Since we do not have a process, I will not offer comment on that.

**Dr. Amir Al-Khafaji**: You mention IDOT what is the level of interaction between cook county and IDOT in general?

**Jennifer (Sis) Killen**: The level of coordination has increased tremendously. We see the need for increase synergy when it comes to a project delivery right now. We are looking to find synergy to take those smaller projects and make them larger. Regional projects who the leads are and when they are happening to make sure we are getting the projects out in the order in which they should

**Dr. Amir Al-Khafaji**: Can you elaborate on your interaction with CMS?

**Jennifer (Sis) Killen**: We don’t engage much with CMS. Maybe one of the colleagues can answer that.

**Edward Olivieri:** For my office in terms of MWD participation we certain leverage resources that IDOT and CMS in terms of technical assistance so capacity building is a critical component. Our offices have limited resources for that, so we partner closely with IDOT and CMS and the support that they offer firms.

**Dr. Amir Al-Khafaji**: Any collaboration with CDB?

**Edward Olivieri:** Yes, we have done outreach with them as well because we want our firms to do work wherever they can. We want our firms to grow because if they grow they have more capacity to do our work, so we are open to partner with other agencies.

**Dr. Amir Al-Khafaji**: Do you interact with them on certification? CDB want their sub DBE to be certified.

**Edward Olivieri**: Correct. That also go for the WBE, MBE programs as well our certified vendors. Additional certification is a benefit for business, and it is also tremendous burden to go through the process. Also important for us to identify opportunities to have reciprocity within the City of Chicago.

**Dr. Amir Al-Khafaji**: It’s my understanding that IDOT is requiring their prequalification due annually. Do you have anything similar to that?

**Edward Olivieri:** We will have to get back to you on that.

**Dr. Amir Al-Khafaji**: When was the last time you conducted a disparity study?

**Edward Olivieri**: The last disparity study was complete in 2016. We will be conducting another one this year hopefully be done a year from now.

**Senator Hunter**: Once you receive the result from the disparity study, how do you utilize the results?

**Edward Olivieri**: A component of the study is recommendation, our last disparity study address a series of operational improvement that we needed to make concerning, contracting and goal setting, in terms of leverage our diversity management system. Fewer waivers because the majority of waivers are partial wavers so having more precise goals will decrease that number. It also shows that there is a disparity and that minority women own business has suffered discrimination and continue to do so

**Senator Hunter**: So how do you deal with the discrimination issues? How do you increase the number of DBE, WBE and all of the other categories?

**Edward Olivieri:** In term of certification?

**Senator Hunter**: Yes, maintain growth and capacity. Will your study cover those issues?

**Edward Olivieri:** They will. Once that comes out. There has certainly been growth overtime. Each program has matured tremendously in the last 30 years since we started. This is a problem our nations is primarly still suffering from the impact of systemic discrimination from decades and decades of generation. Our program is putting our shoulders to the will in terms of improving that and you all are helping to raise awareness of societal problem. We want to leverage our program to build capacity so that those firms can operate in private sector.

**Senator Hunter**: What kind of systems have you all put together to build capacity? Systemic discrimination is a major problem and we keep talking about it, but what kind of steps have you put in place?

**Edward Olivieri**: I think our program is a key piece because these are the programs that model the hope and concept that supply diversity that didn’t exist 30 years ago. That came about because of programs like our, City of Chicago, and State of Illinois. So, I think the national conversation around diversity and contract diversity appointments, we all collectively take credit for that in supporting these programs. It put this issue in the for front of the national dialogue. What is actually important for us and inclusion and equity is critical important for us to advance as a nation. So, programs like this certainly raise awareness. We look the last disparity study we saw the utilization minority pay very high level in county and in the private sector very low level. Just that study show society see the disparity. It’s critical we have these programs.

**Harvind Singh:** On your contracts do you allow firms and WD firms to be brought on even if they were not originally on the team? Is it a laborist process or simplified process?

**Edward Olivieri**: There is process that happen with some regularity. The prime will request a modified utilization plan the utilization plan will indicate the firm they are using and the dollar amount and percentages.

**Harvind Singh**: I am thinking of it in a different way. I will give you an example. Because we are taking about building capacity. I think this has been a good mechanism for a firm like ours to be able to get on contracts that are large. The example I will give is CTA, totally different agency. When they have their prequalified pool selected. What is helpful is they do a lot of meet and greet with short listed and all the MDE and even if you were not on their original submittal you are still able to come. I think those kinds of opportunity has diffidently allowed building capacity with firms that might not be getting work.

City also allows you to even if it is an existing contract you can bring on anybody for any reason. Doesn’t have to be because utilization plan.

**Edward Olivieri:** Something to take into consideration.

**Aaron Ozinga**: Do you track the success rate and is there an alumni network of those people that tie back to the people in the program to talk to a mentor? Is data being tracked regarding contractors that are pushed out versus contractors that are graduating? The end goal being captured in data form.

**Edward Olivieri:** We only had 5 firms graduating but not any of them fully graduated. So, we don’t have alumni network there is not a lot of graduations. Firms is a 5-year average so if there 5-year average come down they are back in.

**Aaron Ozinga**: So, is that automatic or do they have to recertify?

**Edward Olivieri:** Every year they submit either a no change affidavit or recert in the 5th year DB tax return gross receipts.

**Senator Koehler**: I would like to offer a kind of wrap up of this. Thank you so much or your presentation and your interest in this is outstanding. It seems to me we have discussed a lot about the what and that is we want a more exclusive fair system. But what I hear in the questions and the answers and the exchange we had is that we are also concerned about the how. In other words, is there enough training is there nurture is there growth taking place. That seem to be an important ingredient to this entire process how we go about putting people in the process to be successful. That is the purpose of this taskforce and we will continue to do our work and thank you for your involvement and participation.

**Meeting Adjourn:**