



Joint Newark & Essex County Business and Economic Development Committee

Essex County College- Training Inc.

Thursday, June 11, 2019 at 9:00 am

Meeting Minutes

Attendees:

Jasmyne Beckford, Apryl Caldwell, Mitra Choudhury, Jada Croom, Keisha Flemming, Barbara George Johnson, Jonathan Kobza, Davetta Lane, Monica Lassiter, Daniel Leon, Elizabeth McLilly, Jobi Odeneye, Ivelise Pabon, Janine Schaeffer, S. Aisha Steplight Johnson, Bhavna Tailor, Howard Weiss,

Meeting Called to Order: Co-Chairperson Bhavna Tailor

Bhavna called the meeting to order. A roundtable roll call was conducted to introduce all meeting attendees.

Committee Business

Bhavna distributed information about the sub-committees and expressed that the current focus of the committee is to form sub-committees for the Small Business Expo in October. Sam advised that the sponsorships were recommendations of the staff and stressed that it is up to the committee to determine how or whether to move forward with petitioning financial support from sponsors. Feedback from the committee included:

- Sponsorship levels (silver, gold and platinum) to include low level tier contributions for small businesses (under \$1000)
- Signage for all sponsors with Gold and Platinum Sponsors being given the opportunity to speak at the Forum
- Identify the financial goal and solicit sponsors that will give generously to help to cover the total costs event.
- The cut-off for sponsorship and print materials should be October 1st.

Sam Okparaeké, Director of Small Business of Essex County and Essex County Workforce Development Board said that the cost of the event would roughly cost about \$30,000 to \$35,000 which includes the cost of the venue, food, printing and marketing. He advised that although the boards do not have large budgets, they should be able to make up the difference of the shortfall.

Bhavna suggested that the BEDC committee would break out into two sub-committees {Sponsorship and Marketing}. Bhavna (Sponsorship) and Willie Tolbert (Marketing) will filter information to the general committee. She also advised that the best way for the sub-committees to work would be to communicate by way of conference call to keep things moving in between regular meetings.

The Sponsorship Committee will focus on identifying, keeping track of and soliciting companies for donations. Bhavna suggested that a pledge document be created for distribution to those who have expressed an interest in

being a sponsor. Jobi advised that Chase Bank and MIT expressed interest in being a sponsor for the symposium. Bhavna requested that Jerrah Crowder serve on the Sponsorship Committee because he communicated at the last meeting that he had a contact from JP Morgan who may be interested in sponsoring. Barbara spoke about the responsibility that banks have to commit moneys to the communities that they have denigrated for years and she conveyed her dedication to soliciting from \$5000 to \$7000 from each bank.

The Marketing Committee will focus on brochures, follow-up calls, registration and keeping track of those who will participate. Sam stressed the significance of marketing and how it makes the difference in whether or not an event that is well attended. It gives businesses an opportunity to network with other businesses, meet workforce professionals. The Essex Team attributed a large part of the success of their February event to saturating their partnerships, marketing through emails, phone calls, flyers and word of mouth. Bhavna suggested that committee members tap into any relationships that they may have with marketing companies and ask that they promote our event to extend our audience. The sub-committee may also come up with creative ways to diversify the businesses that they are marketing to, i.e. minority, veteran or women owned businesses.

As the committee reviewed the flyers, Sam explained that the County of Essex and the City of Newark has separate marketing flyers for the event to ensure flyer compliance requirements for both entities.

The Save the Date will be sent to the database of 600 small businesses. Camille suggested that the time be added to the Save the Date. Sixty vendor invitations will be sent out, with a goal of 45 vendors to participate. To date, 15 of 45 vendors have been confirmed.

Robert Deihl is looking into Rutgers and Seton Hall Law to see if they can offer resources for small businesses.

Action Items:

- 1- To create a form for the ask for sponsorship for the event.
- 2- To identify which sub-committee that committee members will serve on.

Conclusion

Bhavna presented a motion to move the minutes from the last meeting. Mitra moved and Jonathan seconded the minutes with the addition of Elizabeth's name being added to the attendees. There was no further business with the committee. Bhavna thanked everyone for their participation and called motion for adjournment. The meeting was adjourned.