

# City of San Antonio



## Minutes

### Economic and Workforce Development Committee

#### 2021 – 2023 Council Members

Manny Pelaez, Dist. 8

Phyllis Viagran, Dist. 3 | Dr. Adriana Rocha Garcia, Dist. 4

Teri Castillo, Dist. 5 | John Courage, Dist. 9

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**Friday, August 12, 2022**

**10:00 AM**

**Municipal Plaza Building**

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The Economic and Workforce Development Committee convened a regular meeting in the Norma S. Rodriguez Council Chamber in the Municipal Plaza Building beginning at 10:12 AM. Deputy City Clerk Aurora Perkins took the Roll Call noting a quorum with the following Committee Members present:

**Members Present:** Manny Pelaez, *Chair*  
Phyllis Viagran, *Member*  
Dr. Adriana Rocha Garcia, *Member*  
Teri Castillo, *Member*  
John Courage, *Member*

**Members Absent:** None

#### Approval of Minutes

- 1. Approval of the minutes from the Economic and Workforce Development Committee meeting on June 24, 2022.**

Councilmember Rocha Garcia moved to Approve the minutes of the Economic and Workforce Development Committee meeting on June 24, 2022. Councilmember Castillo seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

**Aye:** Pelaez, Viagran, Rocha Garcia, Castillo, Courage

#### Public Comments

Jane Gonzalez, President of MedWheels, requested the City to provide \$25 million annually to assist small businesses in the community to address sustainability issues.

Jeremy Roberts, Small Business Advisory Commission (SBAC) Chair, spoke in support of small business needs and requested that the SBAC meet with the SAEDC to address small business needs and challenges.

Julissa Cariello asked the Committee to continue to support small businesses to include funding in the upcoming City Budget.

### **Briefing and Possible Action on the following items**

#### **2. Consideration of applicants to the San Antonio Economic Development Corporation Board of Directors (3 seats).** [Debbie Racca-Sittre, City Clerk, Office of the City Clerk]

Brenda Hicks-Sorenson, Economic Development Director, provided an overview of the San Antonio Economic Development Corporation and the related Board in which Members served two year terms. Hicks-Sorenson reviewed the candidate applications received and vetting process conducted to narrow the candidate list.

The Economic and Workforce Development Committee interviewed the following five individuals for three (3) At Large Board positions:

- Dr. Christine Burke
- Ralph Johnston
- Erika Moe
- Jose Padilla
- Dr. Sean Vina

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Chair Pelaez recessed the meeting at 11:14 AM to enter into Executive Session to discuss the following items:

#### **A. CONSULTATION WITH THE CITY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE CONCERNING ATTORNEY CLIENT MATTERS UNDER CHAPTER 551 OF THE TEXAS GOVERNMENT CODE**

Chair Pelaez reconvened the meeting in Open Session at 11:30 AM and announced that no action was taken in Executive Session.

Chair Pelaez thanked the five interviewed individuals for their interest in serving on the SAEDC and noted that all were worthy of serving on the board.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia moved to recommend and forward the appointment of Jose Padilla and the reappointment of Dr. Christine Burke and Erika Moe to the San Antonio Economic Development Corporation Board to the full City Council for consideration. Councilmember seconded the motion. The

motion carried by the following vote:

**Aye:** Pelaez, Viagran, Rocha Garcia, Castillo, Courage

3. **Briefing on the release of a solicitation for various support services included in the Small Business (Phase II) implementation plan from the City's American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) spending framework.**  
[Alejandra Lopez, Assistant City Manager; Brenda Hicks-Sorensen, Director, Economic Development]

Economic Development Assistant Director Ana Bradshaw provided an overview of the release of a solicitation for various support services included in the Small Business Implementation Plan (Phase II) under the City's American Rescue Act Plan (ARPA). She discussed the proposed implementation plan for place making and the solicitation program components under the solicitation which included web presence, back office support, growth funding, buy local implementation and operations and implementation of the identified small business pillars. Bradshaw reviewed the evaluation criteria and award points of the solicitation, evaluation committee make up and the proposed timeline of the solicitation and City Council approval in February 2023.

Councilmember Viagran requested that financial education be considered in the evaluation process. She noted that logistic and operations consideration was crucial to be included in the solicitation. Bradshaw stated that logistics category consideration would be included in the back office component of the solicitation. Councilmember Viagran stated that it was important to assure that understanding of City corridors was considered in the evaluation process.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia asked if funding requests for economic development and capacity building had to be requested by the City Council in the upcoming budget. Assistant City Manager Alex Lopez stated that requests would need to be approved at the City Council level and approved in the Budget process.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia expressed evaluation members concern of conflict of interest in the evaluation process of small business awards and direction. Bradshaw stated that the Economic Development Department had worked closely with the City Attorneys' Office to assure that no conflicts of interest were associated with voting process and would continue to work with the City Attorney to assure compliance. Councilmember Rocha Garcia asked if the Committee would be able to provide input on solicitation components and performance measures on the submitted applications. Bradshaw confirmed that staff would return to the Committee for feedback.

Councilmember Castillo asked how micro or small business could be provided guidance in growing their business using web presence. Bradshaw provided examples of services provided and that it depended on what was identified by awarded vendors.

Councilmember Courage requested clarification on ARPA funding current awards associated with COVID impacts and how growth funding would be utilized. Bradshaw stated that there were various funding sources to be used for COVID impacts and other growth funding awards. She

noted that there were different loans, grants and gap financing that would be used, and the program agencies would assist in identifying appropriate assistance.

Councilmember Courage asked for clarification on the implementation of pillars and if they would be further developed by outside stakeholders or community engagement. Bradshaw stated that the pillars were the framework for the Small Business Ecosystem framework and that the pillars would be implemented through community engagement and stakeholder input.

No action was required for Item 3.

**4. Briefing on small business utility repayment plans available through CPS Energy and San Antonio Water System (SAWS).** [Alejandra Lopez, Assistant City Manager; Brenda Hicks-Sorensen, Director, Economic Development]

Caitlin Cowart, Economic Development Manager, provided an update on the small business repayment plans available through CPS Energy and San Antonio Water System (SAWS) and introduced Meghan Parronella, Director of Operations Excellence for SAWS who reviewed commercial account payment plan options for businesses. Parronella reviewed SAWS customer outreach conducted, services provided to applicants who were subject to disconnection and provided data on customer delinquency statuses. She stressed that financial assistance outreach was crucial to assist business owners to avoid disconnection of services.

Chair Pelaez asked why it was difficult to gain data from small and large businesses associated with water operations. Parronella stated that it could be difficult since businesses didn't always provide information on applications and on-site visits were frequently needed. Assistant City Manager Alex Lopez confirmed the difficulty of gaining data because there was not a business directory available to capture the data.

KJ Feder, CPS Energy Vice President of Community Engagement and Corporate Responsibility, provided an overview of community engagement and support provided to small businesses to include support initiatives including media outreach, CORE Team program development and site visits. She reviewed COVID Impact Grant communication efforts and resources available to small business owners requesting assistance. Feder also reviewed the payment plans available to small businesses, current statuses of delinquent accounts and outreach and actions taken by CPS Energy prior to disconnections.

Cowart provided an overview of the City's grant program communication efforts and partnership with the non-profit LiftFund.

Councilmember Viagran asked if businesses needed to have past due bills to be eligible for grant programs. Feder and Parronella provided clarification on program eligibility. Councilmember Viagran asked if additional resources were needed for increased community outreach and associated marketing efforts. CPS Energy and SAWS representatives stated that there was great collaboration between stakeholders, community organizations and City staff to provide information on programs but welcomed input and updates from the Council Districts.

Councilmember Castillo requested a break down data of disconnections of small businesses by Council District. SAWS and CPS Energy stated that they would provide the data by Council District and business size.

Councilmember Courage asked for data on customers that were delinquent in payments and still obtained assistance and recommended confirming that the businesses were still in existence. He suggested that the utilities share information on businesses who were delinquent in both utility services and coordinate assistance. Councilmember Courage requested that the data be reported to the Committee.

Councilmember Castillo asked for data on specific industries at risk of disconnection.

Chair Pelaez asked for clarification on the difference between small and large business. CPS Energy stated that it was determined based on usage. Chair Pelaez requested that these presentations be provided to the SBAC on a regular basis.

Councilmember Viagran asked for clarification on what the SBAC's charge was and what they could recommend to Council Committees and City Council. Assistant City Manager Lopez stated that the SBAC charge document would be provided with input from the City Attorney's Office.

No action was required for Item 4.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further discussion, Chair Pelaez adjourned the meeting at 12:24 PM.

**Approved**

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*Manny Pelaez, Chair*

**Respectfully Submitted**

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*Debbie Racca-Sittre, City Clerk*