

Boston Employment Commission Hearing Minutes

A monthly hearing of the Boston Employment Commission (**BEC**) was held on Wednesday, September 18, 2019 at One City Hall Plaza, Conference Room 801, Boston, MA 02201.

Commissioners

Present: Commissioner Travis Watson, Commissioner Charles Cofield, Commissioner John Redd and Commissioner Kenell Broomstein.

Hearing Begins: 1:06 PM

I. Minutes

August 21, 2019 minutes were accepted and approved.

II. SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

A. New East Boston Police Station

Duration: 12 mins.

Present: Cameron Oliveira (J&J Contractors), Brian Melia (Public Facilities Dept.), Susan Goldman (J&J Contractors) and Claudette Austin (BRJP Monitor)

Project Overview

Cameron Oliveira (J&J Contractors): J&J has been contracted to build new police station. They are aware of the new BRJP ordinance requirements. J&J Contractors has recently brought on Susan Goldman to help meet quotas under the new BRJP ordinance. They plan to mobilize in the next two weeks and will have applications for walk-ons. **Claudette Austin (BRJP Monitor):** This is J&J's first project under the new BRJP ordinance; I have stressed the importance of having strong BRJP system in place to get things done in a timely manner. **Commissioner Watson:** J&J worked on the B2 Police Station completed in 2011 under the old ordinance and made best faith efforts to meet all goals and did pretty well, so it just speaks to your willingness to work with the city. **Cameron Oliveira (J&J Contractors):** Yes, construction is expected in the next week or so, (J&J's workforce). First sub-contractors will mobilize January 2020.

B. Adam Branch Library

Duration: 8 mins.

Present: Cameron Oliveira (J&J Contractors), Brian Melia (Public Facilities Dept.), Susan Goldman (J&J Contractors) and Claudette Austin (BRJP Monitor)

Project Overview

Commissioner Watson: Any concerns? **Brian Melia (Public Facilities):** No, excited to get started. **Claudette Austin (BRJP Monitor):** No concerns, at this time. **Commissioner Cofield:** Just like to say that you should be staying on top of these subs as well, about meeting these goals. **Cameron Oliveira (J&J Contractors):** Yes, we will be working closely with the subs to make sure they meet the numbers. **Susan Goldman (J&J Contractors):** I have reached out

to some of the current contractors and spoke to them about meeting goals and walking them through the process.

Commissioner Watson: I would ask that you start keeping track; it just helps to have raw data. **Susan Goldman (J&J Contractors):** Yes.

Public:

Janet Jones (Boston Jobs Coalition): Some of the subs on project have a bad track record and I want to be sure that they are practicing best faith efforts and are making walk-ons accessible.

C. Seaport Block L4

Duration: 6 mins.

Present: Kevin Reppucci (WS Development), Asia Myers-hogu (Turner Construction), Carrie Borges Patricio (Turner Construction) and Pamela Ruffo (BRJP Monitor)

Project Overview:

Carrie Borges Patricio (Turner Construction): Building L4 Shell in Seaport, roughly 6,067 sqft. We have had our kickoff and pre-con meeting, and we are in full support of doing what's required. **Pamela Ruffo (BRJP Monitor):** We are aware of history coming off Turner projects, they have big shoes to fill. Some concerns, but we will work together as a team. I will be strong and forceful with the message, if need be. **Kevin Reppucci (WS Development):** We are fully invested. **Commissioner Watson:** Turner definitely does well and we commend you on that. **Commissioner Cofield:** Believe some subs are stretched too thin as it is. **Pamela Ruffo (BRJP Monitor):** Yes, often times, they are competing against their own GC's. I've spoken to S& F Concrete and AA Wills, if no one is available that they look outside to a Building Pathways. **Carrie Borges Patricio (Turner Construction):** That's something we support. We've used Building Pathways and Operation Exit. **Commissioner Cofield:** We have eligible members available and ready to go.

III. PROJECT REVIEWS

A. General Heath Square

Duration: 25 mins.

Present: Jordan Pomare (NEI General Contracting), Andy Koines (NEI General Contracting), Andre Barbour (NEI General Contracting), Matthew Henzy (Jamaica Plain NDC) and Robert Woodson (BRJP Monitor)

Project Overview:

Robert Woodson (BRJP Monitor): (Read stats off report). Project is at 70% completion and projected to end on time. **Commissioner Watson:** Walk me through what the process looks like, the communication how does that work with the team? **Commissioner Watson:** Get the report the week before for anything that may be reported. **Robert Woodson (BRJP Monitor):** Been working with Andre (Barbour) diligently to report and to address the issues at hand. **Commissioner Watson:** I'm appreciative of the extra steps taken. **Robert Woodson (BRJP Monitor):** Certainly, and kudos to NEI on being proactive. **Andy Koines (NEI General Contracting):** Wanted to introduce myself, I am Andy Koines, CFO of NEI. (Cross-talk) I've been to meetings before but sat in the back. **Commissioner Watson:** Appreciate the strides being taken. Andre has taken incredible strides; we can appreciate and recognize the efforts being made. Overall, the numbers are really good. I wanted to take this space to recognize your efforts, all best practices we don't always see implemented, so I just wanted to recognize you for that. Any challenges around Boston Residency? **Andre Barbour (NEI General Contracting):** Usually it comes down to finding a good fit.

Commissioner Watson: Alternative Energy's numbers are a bit alarming, low performing. **Andre Barbour (NEI General Contracting):** It's been a struggle, our first time working with them and they with us. We've been going through the process with them. **Commissioner Watson:** Low performance is something to look at down the line? **Andre Barbour (NEI General Contracting):** Yes, definitely weigh performance. **Commissioner Cofield:** Numbers look good; company (Titan) is bad with other stuff going on. Why name changes keep going on with this company, workers not being treated fairly. Maybe this is a conversation for another day. Andre, I hope has some input on some of the hires of these companies because he is out there with them. **Commissioner Watson:** To NEI team, in two months there's been a number of challenges within the firm; let us know what the action plan is.

Public:

Janet Jones (Boston Jobs Coalition): Some concerns about NEI, all good for the end product, but sloppy, inhumane practices, people not getting paid on time, need to diversify workforce, get a lot clearer and do better and better wages, which is partly NEI's responsibility. **Commissioner Watson:** I want to offer a supplement to the numbers earlier; they are at 88% resident verification. **Matthew Henzy (Jamaica Plain NDC):** This is the first project with job coalition. I will be honest, monitoring a bit challenging for us. I qualify the statement, where we need to do more. NEI is on board with \$20/hour pay, even though we know that still may be low for certain trades. **Commissioner Watson:** Commend anyone who is willing to raise the wage, it's a start. **Robert Woodson (BRJP Monitor):** This project is about 75% done, I leave it to the purview of the team if they need to come back.

B. Orient Heights

Duration: 4 mins.

Present: Sienna DeSantis (Trinity Financial, representing owner), Derrick Chery (Suffolk Construction), Margarita Polanco (Suffolk Construction) and Brooke Woodson (Suffolk Construction) and Manuel Barbosa (BRJP Monitor).

Project Overview:

Commissioner Watson: Anything before we start? **Brooke Woodson (Suffolk Construction):** These work-hour numbers are not accurate; believe the correct number is over 60,000. **Commissioner Watson:** Can I have a 2 minute recess to speak to the director. (Recess) **Commissioner Watson:** Team Suffolk has additional projects. Apologies to Sienna, I know you came down here for this. I will push this to next month to have a richer conversation. **Commissioner Cofield:** The commitment this team has made about meeting numbers and getting things done right has been great. We appreciate your efforts to lead by example. **Suffolk Team:** Thank you.

C. Parcel K Residence and Garage

Duration: 32 mins.

Present: Michael Foster (Lincoln Properties), Brooke Woodson (Suffolk Construction), Derrick Chery (Suffolk Construction), Vera Addi (Suffolk Construction), Paul Guity (Liberty Construction) and Vargas DaSilveira (BRJP Monitor)

Project Overview:

Commissioner Watson: Is it appropriate or fair to group the numbers together or should we separate them? **Brooke Woodson (Suffolk Construction):** Separate. **Vargas DaSilveira (BRJP Monitor):** Read stats on Parcel K Residence and Garage Report, page 3. They have exceeded the numbers for people of color, average of 8.7 days for payroll submission; this has not met BRJP goals. Continue to struggle with Boston residents in both carpenters and laborers trade. **Commissioner Watson:** Any supplement? **Brooke Woodson (Suffolk Construction):** Project is closer to 70% done not 50%. Vera recently took over for Cory. She was also our compliance person for Encore.

Vera Addi (Suffolk Construction): I took the project over and I am working on compliance. I review them as they come in, been sending my comments to Vargas. Keeping track of all recommended sub-contractors. **Brooke Woodson (Suffolk Construction):** Vera has brought along all communication with subs. **Vera Addi (Suffolk Construction):** I've sent Vargas a list of recommended contractors, waiting to see if any of them are acceptable. **Commissioner Watson:** Vera can you send me the list and I can review it, so that we can set a protocol in place. Maybe review ahead of time. Liberty Construction still has work to get done but trending upwards from 6-7 months ago. I want to hear practice methods for core crew and how you weigh future contracts. **Paula Guity (Liberty Construction):** I am Paula Guity and I was hired as the diversity and compliance specialist. I have been with Liberty for 3 years and in this position for 6 months. **Commissioner Watson:** I recognize Liberty created this position and it's a step in the right direction. **Paula Guity (Liberty Construction):** I have been working with the Operations Manager making sure numbers are met, there's diversity on worksites and holding weekly meeting. We've diversified core crew, most of the projects have been diversified, the older projects are kind of set and working for better goals on future projects. **Commissioner Watson:** Do you track vets? **Brooke Woodson (Suffolk Construction):** We do. **Commissioner Watson:** If you wouldn't mind sharing it. **Commissioner Cofield:** What's the scope of work and the general conditions? **Paula Guity (Liberty Construction):** General conditions and Drywall. Work with a lot of laborers than carpenters. Significant change coming, given a lot of leeway to diversify. We have not met with the unions as of yet because of history with Liberty. Doing background work first, so we can know what changes need to be made. **Commissioner Watson:** Resident verification - do you have someone internally looking? **Brooke Woodson (Suffolk Construction):** Trying to update our system. Vera reached out and gave a firm deadline of 10 days to respond.

Public:

Janet Jones (Boston Jobs Coalition): I have flashbacks to the Kroc Center, when numbers where so high. "We the People". Remember that book? I suggest the Suffolk team re-read the book. It's time to reboot. Suffolk is making incredible money in Boston and people benefitting, don't live in our community. **Brooke Woodson:** I want to let Janet know that we give the book as assigned reading.

D. Parcel K Hotel

Duration: 11 mins.

Present: Luca Cerasane (CSL Consulting), Connor Slye (Suffolk Construction), Vera Addi (Suffolk Construction), Brooke Woodson (Suffolk Construction) and Vargas DaSilveira (BRJP Monitor).

Project Overview:

Commissioner Watson: Any additions? **Vargas DaSilveira (BRJP Monitor):** (Read Stats from page 3 of report) Although the overall goals are below par, there has been an increase in Boston residents and people of color, recently. JK Glass has had a significant impact on driving down resident and people of color numbers way down. American Plumbing has failed to meet BRJP goals in every category. Component Assembly Systems continues to struggle with residents and females. I would recommend they submit corrective action plan. **Commissioner Watson:** I agree with corrective action plan. I would love to get the three listed companies in for corrective action meeting. These are firms with enough work under their belt to know better. Commissioner Cofield, if you could arrange to have someone reach out, I want to see the core crew and get to the issue. Is it a lack of available workers? **Director Barrios-Millner (Equity & Inclusion Director):** I agree it would make sense to invite them to the corrective action or have the business agents there so it's a working meeting. **Commissioner Watson:** We want to have tough conversations with the business agents. We just want to understand the issue; if we do both at the same time, I would like to get the firms, BRJP and business agent to sit down and get a better sense of what's going

on. Liberty's numbers are going up on female participation, just wanted to recognize that. I will leave it up to the team if they want to bring them back in, just concerned about those 3 companies.

IV. Director's Report

Duration: 4 mins.

Director Celina Barrios-Millner (Equity and Inclusion Director): Updates: we have tools of the trade coming up in October. OSHA 10 training course again, which is a 4 week series? If you are looking for more information, please feel free to email me or Sheryce. Construction Supervisor License following immediately in November, also a 4 week series, taking place at the Bruce Bolling Building. The courses are free of charge, we provide OSHA card at the end and the only thing you pay for is the CSL training books. Also, not related to BRJP, if you are interested, we have the discussions around the Disparity Study taking place. There will be 4 listening sessions in the upcoming weeks, September 25th, 26th and October 1st and 2nd. These are 4-hour sessions and I will share the flyer with all the details.

Hearing adjourned at 2:53 pm.