

Small Business Advocacy Council Meeting

Friday, October 14, 2004

8:30 AM

RI Economic Development Corporation

Providence, RI

Meeting Minutes

I. Lieutenant Governor Charles J. Fogarty, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 8:37 a.m. In attendance were:

II. In Attendance were:

Lieutenant Governor Charles J. Fogarty, Chair

Jerry Meyer, East Greenwich Chamber of Commerce

Robert Lafond, North Central Chamber of Commerce

Heather Singleton, RI Hospitality and Tourism

Jerry Schaufeld, RI Slater Fund

Darlene Evans, South Kingstown Chamber of Commerce

Janet Raymond, Providence Chamber of Commerce

Mark Hayward, US SBA

Joe Cannon, CAS Manufacturing

Jackie Champagne, Center for Women and Enterprise

Ray Fogarty, RI Export Assistance Center

Ed Green, Central RI Development Corporation

Louis Soares, RI EDC

Lauren Slocum, Central RI Chamber of Commerce

Caroline Fairhurst, Wheels of Freedom

Mo Paradis

Sherry Carrera, Secretary of State's Office

Mark Deion, Deion and Associates

Hannah Hodgson, Cranston Chamber of Commerce

Tony Alves, Maral Sales

Helen Christy, RI Department of Purchasing

Phil Papoosian, MERECE

III. Approval of June 6 , 2004 Meeting Minutes

The Chairman called for the approval of the previous meeting minutes. A motion was made and seconded for the approval of the minutes.

IV. Comments from the Chair

Chairman Fogarty welcomed attendees to the second to last meeting of the year. He said that things were going well with the Second Annual Latino Business Expo with over 75 exhibitors and several hundred people signed up. He thanked Adriana Dawson for her work on the Expo with the RI SBDC. He said the Expo will take place on

October 15 from 5 –10 at the Rhodes on the Pawtuxet in Cranston. Chairman Fogarty welcomed Mark Dieon of Deion and Associates, an active supporter of the RI Regulatory Flexibility Act, who will be briefing the council on the new law. Chairman Fogarty said that this new law would require the EDC to act as a small business advocate and work with the small business community and state agencies to ensure that proposed regulations do not unduly harm small businesses. He said he looks forward to the SBAC working with EDC to ensure appropriate administration of the law. Chairman Fogarty welcomed Helen Christy from the Department of Purchasing and thanked her for presenting the new online purchasing procedures. Chairman Fogarty gave a recap on his healthcare proposals. These proposals include the Health Information Technology Fund, Rate hearing Notification legislation, Pilot Primary Care legislation and the Healthcare Administration Drug Disclosure. More information regarding this legislation can be found on the lieutenant governor's web-site at www.ltgov.ri.gov. Chairman Fogarty informed the attendees that he sent out letters to the RI congressional delegation advocating for the restoration of the Manufacturing Extension Partnership funding in the general budget. This was done at the request of SBAC member Cheryl Watkins Snead at the June meeting. Chairman Fogarty said that the SBAC would be hosting business visits for public officials and SBAC members to see some of the businesses in the state and to discuss business issues on their home turf. He said that any recommendations for businesses to be visited would be appreciated. Chairman Fogarty welcomed Phil Papoojian of

Mereco and a member of the Smaller Business Association of New England and said he looks forward to working with SBANE on business issues in the upcoming year.

V. RI EDC Update

Louis Soares, RI EDC

Louis said that the Every Company Counts Program recently held their kick-off at the State House. He said that the partnership network and the web-site is up and running. The quality assurance parameters are still being worked on. The EDC is working the partners to establish a measurement system to see how effective the network is helping small businesses. Every Company Counts (ECC) is working with the partners in order to measure the successes in the process. He said that the key to ECC is to map the customer service process. He said that the EDC is looking to market small business innovative research grants and asked SBAC members to forward this information to their constituencies. For more information on the Every Company Counts Program please visit www.everycompanycounts.com.

VI. Briefing on the RI Small Business Regulatory Flexibility Act of 2004

**Mark Deion, President, Deion Associates & Strategies Inc., Vice Chair,
Board of Directors, RI Small Business Alliance**

Mr. Deion said that he had been working with Senator Leo Blais for the past 8 years on the Regulatory Flexibility legislation and he thanked those in attendance who have helped advocate on behalf of the bill. He said that this legislation, which was modeled after model legislation put forth by the US Small Business Administration's Office of Advocacy, was signed into law by the governor on September 13. He said that this law would require the EDC to serve as an advocate for Rhode Island small businesses. He said the law requires state agencies to notify the governor's office and the EDC of any proposed regulation before the start of the formal rule making process. If either office identifies a regulation as having the potential for an adverse economic impact, the agency will be required to prepare a "regulatory flexibility analysis" (a report contrasting the need for change with alternatives that could accomplish the aim of the rules and minimize the impact on small business). He said that administrative procedures for carrying out the process need to be identified as well as further legislative language to give the law more authority. Chairman Fogarty said that the SBAC would put together a workgroup that will help develop administrative and legislative recommendations for "Reg Flex" going forward. Chairman Fogarty asked Mr. Deion to serve as chair of the "Reg Flex" workgroup. For more information on the Regulatory Flexibility Legislation, please see attachment 1.

VII. Briefing on Purchasing and Payment Information RIVIP/RIPAY

Helen Christy, RI Department of Administration

Helen Christy presented an overview of the RI vendor information programs that are of use to small businesses. She said that there are online tutorials available to businesses who would like to do business with the state that are available at the Department of Purchasing web-site located at www.purchasing.state.ri.us. She said that the RI vendor information program has gone under a complete web-based transformation and that it is very user friendly for small businesses. Ms. Christy said that the RIPAY online system is 6 months old and that the vendors can see payment status online in real time. She said this streamlines the process for small businesses.

For more information on this RI Purchasing presentation, please see attachment 2.

VIII. New Business

Bob Lafond asked that there be a briefing on the RI State Fire Code at the next meeting, as did Jerry Meyer. Chairman Fogarty said that it would be put on the next agenda. Ed Greene asked about sales tax use on certain services and requested that someone from the Division of Taxation come to an upcoming SBAC meeting to discuss sales tax issues.

Chairman Fogarty requested a motion for adjournment, which was made and seconded. The meeting adjourned at 10:08 AM.