

Small Business Advocacy Council

Meeting minutes—November 20, 2009

Lt. Governor Roberts called the meeting to order at 10:15 a.m. and welcomed the members of the Small Business Advocacy Council (SBAC) and guests.

Lt. Governor Roberts asked for approval of the meeting minutes for the last SBAC meeting that were circulated electronically and in hard copy at the meeting. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Lt. Governor Roberts stated that there would be two presentations during the meeting. The first presenter would be Jamia McDonald from the Governor's Office of Economic Recovery & Reinvestment. Jamia would be discussing stimulus spending in Rhode Island, and how small business could gain access to stimulus funds through the State of Rhode Island. The second presentation would be from Laura Adams, President and CEO of the Quality Institute of Rhode Island.

Lt. Governor Roberts introduced Jamia McDonald, Director, Rhode Island Office of Economic Recovery and Reinvestment

Jamia McDonald stated that the majority of funding from the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act (stimulus funds) has not yet made its way to Rhode Island. Expenditures are expected to increase in the coming year. (Please see additional attachment for full presentation).

Lt. Governor Roberts questioned whether there was an easy way, accessible on the web, for small businesses to gain access to potential opportunities.

Jamia McDonald responded that the Office of Economic Recovery & Reinvestment had mostly focused on setting up processes to receive, spend and monitor the funds, but that a website has just recently been launched that summarized business opportunities.

Lt. Governor Roberts acknowledged the startup challenges, but also urged the Office of Economic Recovery & Reinvestment to partner with the Economic Development Corporation and the Small Business Advocacy Council to create a web portal that would allow business to be proactively notified when opportunities arose in their business sector. In addition, the Lt. Governor stated that there was a need to designate a point person who could walk businesses through the application process.

Mark Hayward, District Director of the Small Business Administration of Rhode Island, stated that the programs in the stimulus package that allowed the SBA to offer a 90%

loan guarantee and waive application fees would be ending shortly. He agreed about the need to help small business navigate the process and urged every business considering an application for stimulus funding to complete the registration process to be a federal vendor. <http://www.sba.gov/localresources/district/ri/>

Phil Papoojian urged the Small Business Advocacy Council to support an extension of the SBA loan guarantee and fee waiver programs.

Bob Catanzaro noted that even with the SBA programs, it is extremely challenging to lend to small businesses in the current regulatory and economic environment. He expressed frustration that different arms of the federal government seemed to be working at cross purposes.

Lt. Governor Roberts introduced Laura Adams, President and CEO of Quality Partners of Rhode Island.

Laura Adams made a presentation about “*currentcare*,” a new proposal to improve healthcare efficiency and patient outcomes through electronic medical records. (Please see additional attachment for full presentation).

Lt. Governor Roberts adjourned the meeting at 11:33 a.m.

Meeting Attendees: Robert Catanzaro, Laura Adams, Michael Cooley, Mark Deion, Mark Hayward, Paula Hopkins, Ben Jones, Robert Kalookowski, Ingmar Klumpers, Ed Mazze, Jamia McDonald, Charles Newton, Don Nokes, Phil Papoojian, Miriam Ross, JR Neville Songwe, Bill Vernon, Cap Willey