



# City of Milwaukee

200 E. Wells Street  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53202

## Meeting Minutes AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE UNEMPLOYMENT TASK FORCE

**ALD. ASHANTI HAMILTON, CO-CHAIR AND ALD. TONY ZIELINSKI, CO-CHAIR**  
*Deborah Blanks, Sedgwick Daniels, Ald. Joe Davis, Joe Fahey, Pam Fendt, Curt Harris, Wendell Harris, Ralph Hollmon, Carl Jaskolski, Ossie Kendrix, Marc Levine, Arturo Martinez, Gerard Randall, Michael Rosen, Tim Sheehy, Julia Taylor, McArthur Weddle, Lenard Wells and Ken Wheeler*

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Tuesday, January 4, 2011

12:00 PM

Room 303, City Hall

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*Meeting convened: 12:12 P.M.*

*Members excused: Tim Sheehy, Joe Fahey, Lenard Wells and Marc Levine.*

*Members absent: Michael Rosen. Sedawick Daniels and Ken Wheeler.*

### **1. Review and approval of the minutes of the December 14th meeting.**

*Ald. Hamilton moved, seconded by Mr. Martinez, for approval of the minutes. There were no objections.*

### **2. Appearance by local agencies working on job creation.**

*State Rep. Jason Fields was present at the meeting and said that there are approximately 6,000 foreclosed homes in Milwaukee. Mike Dwyer, Home Depot, said that it is his personal mission, with Home Depot's blessing, to improve neighborhoods and give back to the community. He also noted that he's seeing a number of individuals who had previously been buying and rehabbing foreclosures who are no longer able to do so. Rep. Fields said that the "Another Hand Foundation" (brochure attached to Common Council File 100425) gives out money and items for individuals hurt by floods or other natural disasters. Home Depot will offer training to contractors on energy efficiency and city building regulations and getting people hired to rehab these houses. Rep. Fields sees the housing problems as holding back other initiatives. According to Rep. Fields, from one rehab project, 66 jobs can be created. The city would need to provide 75% and the state 25% of the needed funds for this program. Pastor Ernie Eubanks and his father, also a pastor, have been talking with their nephews, both NBA players, about solutions to train and employ people. With this program, individuals receive training and money while doing the rehabilitation on foreclosed properties. Benita Fields said that even with a Master's degree she is unable to find employment; she has noticed a number of gutted vacant properties which can be rehabbed. Danny Boyd also mirrored Ms. Field's comments about turning the city around. Ms. Fendt is concerned that*

*individuals may not get long-term employment in the construction/rehab field. Rep. Fields feels that education needs to be addressed in the city as 56% of African Americans don't graduate from high school. Mr. C. Harris wanted the criteria to be training African American contractors to hire African American males. Ald. Zielinski will meet with Mike Dwyer and Pastor Eubanks prior to the next meeting to hammer out the details on "Another Hand Foundation".*

*Pastor Walker Fields is in partnership with the Dept. of Corrections to hire formerly incarcerated individuals at minimum wage 5 days a week, 6 hours a day, in landscaping, demolition and rehab over a 12-week period in his program called "Project Restoration". Unfortunately, funds don't exist for individuals to be hired for more than 12 weeks and many don't go on to permanent employment with other companies. Many of these individuals have never held a job and received a paycheck so it's more challenging to find them employment when they also have a felony record. He is attempting to have these individuals employed at least one year so they have a work history to show potential employers. Mr. Martinez said he is willing to work with other agencies to create credentials or college-type credits so those can be used to build a career. Mr. Martinez, Pastor Fields, Ald. Hamilton, Ald. Zielinski and Mr. Kendrix will get together to look at creating credentials for this and other programs.*

*Ald. Davis said that the city needs thriving African American jobs, which don't need to be just rehab jobs, but a variety of strong businesses.*

*Dorothy Buchannan Wilson and Troy Norman are present on behalf of Goodwill to discuss its programs to find jobs for African American males. Goodwill has 3 locations in the Milwaukee area and two in Chicago. It's served 10,000 men with about 1,000 who have moved on to full-time work with other jobs. They assist with interview skills, driver's license recovery and soft skills training. Goodwill also has a transitional jobs program with the state, the bulk of the clientele being formerly incarcerated men. The transitional jobs program is managed by Mr. Norman who is continually looking for employers with job openings. The program is set up to provide up-front training and quickly move individuals into subsidized employment. The jobs are subsidized for six months and after that time attempts are made to move individuals into non-subsidized jobs. A lot of the people are employed by Goodwill, but also other employers. A lot of the individuals in the program live in the northwest side of Milwaukee. Most of the jobs are in light manufacturing and retail jobs, not in those jobs that require certification. Goodwill has retail stores as well as a commercial laundry and a referral board of companies with whom they have a relationship.*

*Mr. Hollmon wants to discuss first, how the large-impact development funds will be spent, than work on comprehensive strategies.*

**3. Awareness and use/non-use of employment assistance programs.**

*This item was not discussed due to time limitations.*

**4. Discussion relating to suggestions from the public relating to the work of this task force.**

*This item was not discussed due to time limitations.*

**5. Appearance by Osker Ellis relating to his training/apprenticeship program.**

*This matter was taken up out of order at 12:10 P.M.*

*Mr. Ellis and Mr. James Green appeared before the Task Force to discuss Mr. Ellis's program. This program uses early identification through the job centers of unemployed individuals likely to go into manufacturing, then the machining and welding training services are offered to these individuals. The program works with employers to have potential employees get additional training. The opportunities are in the skilled-technical area. The idea put forth two years ago was to do the actual training at the Century City site. This training would also involve the use of small-hand tools and licensing to make people more marketable. This program is also working with individuals who need math and reading skills with the intention of starting them at salaries that begin at \$35,000. This program also works with veterans and works with both apprenticeship programs as well as other means of certifying people as not all individuals can get into apprenticeship programs. The program has looked at hazardous waste and lead abatement certifications in order to increase employment. The program tries to locate individuals who used to work in the field, but now need additional training or money in order to continue with employment in the field. Ald. Davis feels that non-African Americans more easily obtain certification than African Americans and lose out on opportunities due to the lack of certification, so he feels programs must focus on certification of participating individuals. Mr. Ellis will also be present at the next meeting to speak on this issue again.*

*Ald. Zielinski and Mr. Martinez will meet with Mr. Ellis and Mr. Green prior to the next meeting to get some more statistics relating to this program.*

**6. Discussion on the Emerging Business Enterprises disparity study.**

*This item was not discussed due to time limitations.*

**7. Discussion of the funding recommendations from members.**

*This item was taken up out of order at 1:15 P.M.*

*Mr. Steve Mahan, Community Block Grant Administration, spoke briefly on how the distribution of large-impact development funds would be administered. Any recommendations would have to meet Housing and Urban Development's criteria for job creation. There are other funds to address the foreclosure issue, so that program may not be the best use of these funds. Mr. Mahan is able to vet the recommendation ideas for the funding criteria. Mr. Mahan feels that these funds would be best used with an existing project to expand.*

*Mr. Hollmon said the immediate primary responsibility of the Task Force should be to identify an eligible project. Ms. Blanks, Ms. Fendt, Mr. Weddle, Ald. Zielinski, Mr. Hollmon, Mr. Martinez, Mr. Mahan and others will serve on a subcommittee to review existing projects to see if they will meet the criteria for these funds. A sheet is being passed around for interested individuals to sign up for this subcommittee.*

*Marty Walls, a citizen, wanted to look at creating transportation connections within the city.*

**8. Set next meeting date and agenda.**

*January 25th at noon.*

*Meeting adjourned: 1:30 P.M.  
Linda M. Elmer  
Staff Assistant*