

Special Task Force to Reduce Inefficiencies in Procurement (STRIP)**Location: Stephen P. Clark Center, 111 NW 1st St, Miami, FL 33128, 19th Floor****Date: July 2, 2025 - Time: 9:30 a.m.****Meeting Minutes**

Start: 9:35 am

Appointed: 14

Stop: 12:10 p.m.

Quorum: 8

Members Present (12)	Members Absent (2)
Albert "Al" Dotson, Jr. (Zoom)	Victor Herrera
Aldo Leiva	Rey T. Melendi
Diana Mendez	
Erin Hendrix	
John Elizabeth Aleman	
Josenrique Cueto	
Kenneth Naylor	
Maira Suarez	
Miguel De Grandy	
Rudy Ortiz	
Willy Bermello	
Jina Marie Braynon	

Welcome & Roll Call

Michou Jean (SPD) called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m., followed by welcoming remarks from Chairwoman Diana Mendez, Taskforce members introduced themselves, and a quorum was confirmed.

Chairwoman Mendez outlined expectations for orderly participation, reminding the board members to wait to be recognized before speaking and to stay on topic. She noted off-topics matters would be captured and revisited at a later time.

Reasonable Opportunity for the Public to be Heard

Chairwoman Mendez opened the reasonable opportunity for the public to be heard, and after seeing no one speak, the reasonable opportunity to be heard was closed.

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

Motion: To approve the meeting minutes from the previous STRIP meeting.

Moved By: John Elizabeth Aleman

Seconded by: Josenrique Cueto

Status: Motion passed (12-0)

Meeting Time Discussion

Several taskforce members expressed concerns about the current 9:00 a.m. meeting start time, citing challenges with early morning traffic, commuting from different parts of the county, and scheduling conflicts. It was noted that the early start time made it difficult for some members to arrive on time and be fully prepared to engage. Members emphasized that beginning meetings slightly later would support fuller participation and allow for a more productive and focused discussion environment. After a brief discussion and confirmation that staff could accommodate the change, the following motion was introduced:

Motion: To adjust future STRIP Taskforce meetings to begin at 10:00 a.m. and end at 1:30 p.m. .

Status: Motion passed unanimously without objection.

Approval or Modification of Updated Calendar

The taskforce members reviewed a newly proposed meeting calendar that reorganized discussion topics and reduced the total number of meetings from 14 to 12. Several members expressed concerns that the scope and depth of the task force's mandate risked being under-addressed by condensing the timeline. They expressed that reducing meetings could prevent adequate attention to complex or critical areas of the procurement process. The board members requested a detailed outline of how all required topics would be covered.

Staff confirmed that no topics were eliminated; instead, the schedule was restructured to focus on urgent or foundational issues such as the procurement process and selection committees. Staff also explained that the calendar aims to follow the logical sequence of the procurement process and to keep discussions streamlined, starting with pre-solicitation and moving forward.

A suggestion was made to include a table of contents or outline in the SharePoint folders for each meeting, so members can anticipate discussion areas and to better prepare recommendations. It was agreed that the Chair and staff would work together to finalize a more detailed topic alignment and bring it back to the group for consideration. This discussion has been tabled, and a formal adoption of the revised calendar was on hold until the Chair and staff finalize a detailed outline confirming that all mandated topics are appropriately addressed.

The chairwoman advised that the taskforce would keep a running list of the recommendations made. The members voiced concerns that the existing meeting timeline may not be sufficient to fully explore complex mandated topics such as procurement reform, legislative review, selection committee practices, and small business inclusion, which required extensive research and conversation. Several members emphasized that the compressed timeline risked producing a rushed or incomplete set of recommendations, particularly for the interim (midterm) report, which was originally due in the fall.

Motion: A motion was made and approved to extend the Taskforce's timeline by two months allowing the final report to be submitted in the first quarter of 2026, and to extend the deadline for the preliminary (midterm) report by 30 days. It was clarified that while the Taskforce supported these extensions, final approval must come from the Board of County Commissioners, as they hold the authority to amend the reporting deadlines. Motion passed unanimously without objection.

Discussion – Identify Concerns

Staff provided an overview of the pre-solicitation process for the following procurement types:

1. ITB (Invitation to Bid)
2. RFP (Request for Proposals)
3. NTPC (Notice to Professional Consultants)
4. RDBS (Design-Build Services)
5. MCC (Miscellaneous Construction Contracts)

Pre-Procurement Process

Namita Uppal, Director and Chief Procurement Officer, provided a comprehensive overview of the pre-procurement phase, focusing on internal processes, compliance requirements, and workload statistics. She highlighted that:

- The procurement process involves over 209 pieces of legislation which increased to 216 by June 2025, creating layers of complexity and delay.
- There are over 100 steps required to initiate and complete a typical RFP, many of which are tied to documentation, approvals, and external reviews.
- Key pre-solicitation documents and procedures were reviewed, including the Request to Advertise memorandum and internal milestone tracking.

SPD staff detailed the workflow for ITB, RFP, MCC, and PSA projects, explaining that different solicitation types come with different bottlenecks and review procedures. The taskforce members requested visual swim lane diagrams for each procurement type to understand step-by-step progress and identify pain points. There was also a push to map these steps to legislative requirements so the taskforce could recommend streamlining where possible.

Local Preference

Staff noted that while the Locally Headquartered Preference ordinance is in place to support local businesses, its application can vary depending on the type of procurement and funding source. Some departments apply it with more consistency than others.

Members raised concerns about the Locally Headquartered Preference Ordinance, asking whether it truly gives local vendors a competitive edge or if it introduces unintended disadvantages. There was also mention that departments interpret local preference inconsistently, leading to confusion and lack of transparency among vendors. Some members recommended auditing the outcomes of local preference usage to see if it had a measurable impact on local economic participation. Other Taskforce members proposed standardizing how locally headquartered preference was applied or updating definitions for what qualifies as “locally headquartered.”

Competitive Selection Committee IO 3-34

Namita Uppal, Director & Chief Procurement Officer, provided insight into how selection committees function under the framework of IO 3-34, which governs how competitive selections are conducted within the County. Below are the key points she addressed:

Namita described how competitive selections (such as RFPs for professional services) are managed by the Strategic Procurement Department (SPD) in accordance with IO 3-34. She noted the selection committee was typically composed of five voting members, and by policy, the chairperson is a non-voting staff member from ISD (Internal Services Department). Namita stated the voting members are chosen to avoid conflicts of interest and to represent a diverse set of perspectives, but many times only two or three members have subject matter expertise related to the project under review.

Namita expressed a willingness to revisit and modernize IO 3-34 to improve the selection process, especially considering the taskforce's mandate to recommend efficiencies. She acknowledged that increasing committee size to include more technical experts could improve evaluations, though it may create scheduling challenges. Allowing limited collaboration or deliberation among voting members, under proper oversight, could support more informed and equitable outcomes.

During the discussion on the competitive selection process, the taskforce members reflected on how procurement was executed more efficiently during emergencies, such as Hurricane Andrew, where projects were completed with greater speed and collaboration. They questioned why such responsive and agile practices could not be replicated under standard operating conditions. Several members expressed concern that overregulation and heightened sensitivity to political scrutiny have created an overly cautious environment. They noted results in rigid procedures that often sacrifice quality and timeliness in favor of strict rule adherence.

Proposed reforms included:

- Re-evaluating IO 3-34 to allow for larger selection panels comprised of individuals with subject matter expertise.
- Allowing collaborative scoring or structured group discussions among committee members to foster deeper understanding and improve transparency and fairness in the selection process.

Recommendations were made to improve vendor access to draft solicitations and reduce redundancy in affidavit submissions. Members highlighted issues with inconsistent “drop” access to proposals and encouraged a more open approach to sharing pre-solicitation documents.

Members recommended standardizing processes across all departments (not centralizing), to reduce confusion and enhance vendor participation.

STRIP Taskforce Follow-Up Task List**1. Reporting Deadline Extension**

- Confirm next steps with County Attorney (Eddie) regarding how to formally request a deadline extension.
- If advised, contact Chair’s Office to request Board approval for:
 - 2-month extension for final report (new deadline: Q1 2026)
 - 30-day extension for preliminary report

2. Meeting Calendar Follow-Up

- Revise meeting calendar to reflect extended timeline and additional meetings
- Align all agenda topics with legislative mandate
- Share revised calendar with members prior to the next meeting

3. SharePoint Updates

- Upload the updated calendar and supporting documents to SharePoint
- Verify that all referenced documents (e.g., IO 3-34 concerns, local preference notes, sample memos) are uploaded
- Send notification to Taskforce members to review materials ahead of the next meeting

5. Midterm Report Preparation

- Begin outlining structure and contents for midterm report
- Identify which issues should be addressed based on completed discussions
- Set internal drafting deadline to stay on track with extended timeline

Adjournment:

There being no further business to come before the Special Task Force to Reduce Inefficiencies in Procurement (STRIP), the meeting was adjourned at 1:09 p.m.