

**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 15, 2025 - Time: 10:00 a.m.****Meeting Minutes**

Start: 10:08 am

Appointed: 15

Stop: 12:10 p.m.

Quorum: 8

<u>Members Present (13)</u>	<u>Members Absent (2)</u>
Albert "Al" Dotson, Jr.	Kenneth Naylor
Aldo Leiva	Rudy Ortiz
Carolina Vester	
Diana Mendez	
Erin Hendrix (Zoom)	
Jina Marie Braynon	
John Elizabeth Aleman (Zoom)	
Josenrique Cueto	
Maira Suarez	
Miguel De Grandy	
Rey T. Melendi	
Victor Herrera	
Willy Bermello	

Welcome & Roll Call

Michou Jean (SPD) called the meeting to order at 10:08 a.m., followed by Taskforce members introduction, and a quorum was confirmed.

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 Meeting Minutes

There was a motion to approve the July 2, 2025, Meeting Minutes, with an edit from John Elizabeth Aleman to reflect that she noted at the end of the meeting that a memo regarding NTPC A&E Procurement was posted to the SharePoint site for the committee's review. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved with the requested edit.

Welcome by Chairwoman

Chairwoman Mendez began by welcoming all members and reviewed an excel spreadsheet that was created and shared with the taskforce. The document included tabs outlining the STRIP mandate, recommendations, and an outline for future meeting topics, and dates.

She explained that the outline for future meetings aligned with the stages of the procurement process to help everyone understand the framework and be better prepared to make recommendations at each meeting. She suggested beginning each of the meetings with a 30-minute segment dedicated to reviewing and finalizing recommendations from the previous session, allowing for confirmation, amendments, and formally voting on the recommendations. She also noted that some topics might span multiple meetings, with time allocated at the end of the series to address any remaining items and refine the recommendations to develop the final report.

To support this process, she will update the excel spreadsheet with the preliminary recommendations discussed in each meeting to allow members to review them prior to the following meeting and solidify them without rehashing everything discussed previously. She noted that the Task Force members might decide to refine further the recommendations at the end of the meetings and after having the benefit of all presentations in preparation for the final report.

The Task Force engaged in a discussion regarding the implementation of its recommendations. Member John Elizabeth Aleman raised questions about the process and scope specifically whether the Task Force is responsible for outlining how recommendations should be implemented or if that responsibility falls to County administration. She noted that many of the proposed changes would require coordination across legal, IT, policy, and legislative areas.

The following motions were made and approved during the recommendation approval session:

- 1) Recommend the adoption of the goals provided by Staff for procurements timelines from advertisement to the filing of the recommendation with the clerk's office where for procurements under 5 million, the goal is that those procurements take under 90 to 120 days, and for procurements over 5 million, under 120 to 150 days. Further, recommend that as this task force makes recommendations on procurement policies the task force measure or consider the impacts on these goals. Additionally, recommend that when the Board of County Commissioners makes policy changes or takes action on ongoing procurements that the Board, as part of their policy or resolution, also consider whether the procurement timelines, are being extended or shortened (Unanimously adopted).
- 2) Recommend creating at least three procurement workflows, one for Construction, one for Architecture & Engineering (A&E), and one for Goods and Services providing the steps in the procurement process, from pre-procurement to award, that must be finalized during the term of the task force to include in the task force final recommendations and to be published online and creating a subcommittee that will work alongside staff to develop each workflow. (Unanimously adopted).

- 3) Recommend identifying and adopting a task management system including systems or software that may already be in use by the County that will establish roles and scopes for various participants in the procurement process and effectuate the workflow that will be a deliverable from developing the scope until recommendation to award and that tracks, manages, and escalates as necessary to the executive and managers with the goal of keeping timeframes. (***Unanimously adopted***).
- 4) Recommend extending the time for the publication for industry comment for future solicitations to four weeks after and identify a way to have the system automatically remove the future solicitation when the solicitation is advertised to avoid cone of silence issues. (***Unanimously adopted***).
- 5) Recommend adopting an standard operating procedure where if questions submitted by respondents to a solicitation are answered by the county less than 10 business days before the submittal deadline an automatic extension is triggered with the extended deadline falling 10 business days from the date that the County publishes the answers. (***Unanimously adopted***).
- 6) Recommend standardizing the methods to submit a response to a solicitation including bidding software/applications. (***Unanimously adopted***)
- 7) Recommend training for departments to improve development of scope (***Unanimously adopted***).

Presentations:

Phase I: Pre-Procurement Phase

a) Small Business Enterprise (SBE) Certification

Jeanise Cummings (*Strategic Procurement Department Certification Unit*) provided a detailed overview of the Small Business Enterprise (SBE) certification process. This included an explanation of application procedures, document requirements, review workflows, on-site verification steps, and re-certification timelines. It was noted that while the code mandates applications be processed within 90 days, current processing times average 125 days, with some exceeding 200 days.

The task force expressed concerns over inefficiencies caused by incomplete applications, document errors, and redundant reviews. Members recommended streamlining the process through increased automation, such as utilizing AI for initial screening and implementing virtual site visits in place of physical visits when appropriate. There was a robust debate about whether site visits were necessary for all applicants, with several members suggesting a self-certification process via affidavit and the use of random audits to maintain program integrity.

Legal counsel affirmed that many verification steps were policy-driven rather than mandated by statute, opening the door for potential reform.

The Task Force discussed a preliminary recommendation to shift toward a self-certification model for SBE applicants, supported by affidavits and backed by the county's authority to conduct audits.

b) PQTC Certification

After hearing the presentation from staff, various members of the Task Force commended the Prequalification/Technical Certification Process for being excellently run and were concerned to adopt various staff recommendations, particularly the recommendation to eliminate notarization of the certification application, as they believe the system is working well.

c) Wages and Hiring Programs

Alice Hidalgo-Gato (*Strategic Procurement Department – Contract Monitoring & Compliance Unit*) outlined the status of the county's wage and hiring programs, including the Responsible Wages and Benefits Ordinance, Community Workforce Program, Residents First, and Employ Miami-Dade. It was noted that House Bill 705 and House Bill 433 have significantly restricted the county's ability to apply wage and hiring requirements to both construction and service contracts.

The data shared revealed a significant administrative burden with minimal return. For example, only 2–3 hires per year were attributed to the First Source Hiring Program, which also caused delays and confusion during vendor negotiations.

Several Task Force members raised concerns regarding the administrative challenges businesses face when managing varying wage requirements across different construction projects. Specifically, they noted that such disparities could lead to a preference among workers for certain projects over others. Additionally, members highlighted difficulties in securing subcontractor participation in County-related contracts due to the complexity of complying with wage regulations. Concerns were also expressed about the applicability of wage requirements to contracts awarded prior to September 30, 2026, which would remain in effect until those contracts are completed. Finally, some members voiced apprehension about broader policy and cost implications—beyond the scope of the Task Force—that may arise from the elimination of hiring and wage programs.

Motion: A motion was made for the Task Force to recommend the elimination of all the wage and hiring programs effective on the date when the majority are being eliminated under HB 705 and HB 433, which is September 30, 2026, given that the legislation from the state has created disruptions in the application of the local wages. (***Adopted on Jul. 15, 2025, with two nay votes by Mr. Al Dorson, Jr. and Chairwoman Diana Mendez to allow the Board of County Commissioners to examine impacts on other county programs outside the purview of the taskforce***).

Task Force Member Miguel De Grandy suggested exploring whether to recommend freezing the living wage for existing contracts for the contract years after September 30, 2026. (to be included in the discussion of recommendations portion of Aug. 5, 2025, meeting).

d) SBE Programs

Laurie Johnson (*Strategic Procurement Department -Project Review and Analysis*) presented on the process for applying small business participation measures in procurement. She explained the review methodology and thresholds for setting aside contracts or applying goals based on vendor availability. The discussion focused on the challenges with applying small business measures to work order-driven or indefinite-quantity contracts, especially when scopes shift mid-contract.

Members raised concerns that unclear scopes and inflexible compliance requirements were discouraging participation from qualified firms. It was noted that this has contributed to vendor attrition and hindered competition.

Staff responded that they have begun working with departments to identify work order-driven projects more accurately and avoid applying rigid participation goals to unpredictable contracts.

JULY 15, 2025, RECOMMENDATIONS:

Adopted:

1. Recommend the adoption of the goals proposed by the Strategic Procurement Department regarding procurement timelines, measured from advertisement to the filing of the recommendation with the Clerk's Office. Specifically:

- For procurements under \$5 million, the goal is to complete the process within 90 to 120 days.
- For procurements over \$5 million, the goal is to complete the process within 120 to 150 days.

Further, recommend that, as the Task Force continues to make policy recommendations, it consistently measures and considers the potential impact of those recommendations on the established timeline goals. Additionally, recommend that when the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) makes policy changes or takes action on ongoing procurements, the BCC much like it does with budgetary impacts, also assesses whether such actions may extend or shorten procurement timelines. (unanimously adopted).

2. Recommend creating at least three procurement workflows, one for Construction, one for Architecture & Engineering (A&E), and one for Goods and Services providing the steps in the procurement process, from pre-procurement to award, that must be finalized during the term of the task force to include in the task force final recommendations and to be published online and

creating a subcommittee that will work alongside staff to develop each workflow. (unanimously adopted).

3. Recommend identifying and adopting a task management system including systems or software that may already be in use by the County that will establish roles and scopes for various participants in the procurement process and effectuate the workflow that will be a deliverable from developing the scope until recommendation to award and that tracks, manages, and escalates as necessary to the executive and managers with the goal of keeping timeframes.

4. Recommend extending the time for the publication for industry comment for future solicitations to four weeks after and identify a way to have the system automatically remove the future solicitation when the solicitation is advertised to avoid cone of silence issues. (unanimously adopted).

5. Recommend adopting a standard operating procedure where if questions submitted by respondents to a solicitation are answered by the county less than 10 business days before the submittal deadline an automatic extension is triggered with the extended deadline falling 10 business days from the date that the County publishes the answers. (Unanimously adopted).

6. Recommend standardizing the methods to submit a response to a solicitation including bidding software/applications. (Unanimously adopted)

7. Recommend training for departments to improve development of scope (Unanimously adopted).

8. Recommend the elimination of all the wage and hiring programs effective on the date when the majority are being eliminated under HB 705 and HB 433 given that the legislation from the state has created disruptions in the application of the local wages. (Adopted with two nay votes by Mr. Al Dorson, Jr. and Chairwoman Diana Mendez to allow the Board of County Commissioners to examine impacts on other county programs outside the purview of the taskforce).

Pending further discussion and approval:

1. Recommend simplifying the SBE Certification process by adopting a self-certification model, similar to the process utilized by the Department of Transportation, while implementing a robust audit system to ensure compliance and integrity.

2. Recommendation to decline the following recommendations from TC/PQC Staff:

- a) *Rename review committee to review team*
- b) *Eliminate in-person review meetings*
- c) *Eliminate Notarization of the certification application - declined to be adopted based on legal concerns*
- d) *Integrate PQC/TC registration portal with INFORMS to eliminate the need for screenshots*
- e) *Modernize MS Access based certification audit log*



STRATEGIC PROCUREMENT DEPARTMENT

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3. Recommend freezing living wage for existing contracts for the contract years after September 30, 2026.