

Special Task Force to Reduce Inefficiencies in Procurement (STRIP)

Location: Stephen P. Clark Center, 111 NW 1st St, Miami, FL 33128, 19th Floor

Date: August 5, 2025 - Time: 10:00 a.m.

Meeting Minutes

Start: 10:05 am

Stop: 12:25 p.m.

Appointed: 15

Quorum: 8

<u>Members Present (12)</u>	<u>Members Absent (1) Zoom (2)</u>
Albert "Al" Dotson, Jr.	Carolina Vester
Aldo Leiva	Kenneth Naylor (ZOOM)
Chairwoman Diana Mendez	Miguel De Grandy (ZOOM)
Erin Hendrix	
Jina Marie Braynon	
John Elizabeth Aleman	
Josenrique Cueto	
Maira Suarez	
Rey T. Melendi	
Rudy Ortiz	
Victor Herrera	
Willy Bermello	

Roll Call

Michou Jean (SPD) called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m., followed by Taskforce members introduction, and a quorum was confirmed.

Welcome

Welcome by Chairwoman Mendez where she outlined the structure of the day's meeting as follows. The Taskforce would first review previously discussed recommendations, revisit items requiring clarification, and consider additional proposals submitted by members. Following the recommendations, the meeting would transition into the staff presentations. Lastly, chairwoman Mendez emphasized the importance of being mindful of time given the volume of items. She noted that members may submit agenda items ahead of each meeting so they can be circulated and reviewed in advance, ensuring structured and efficient discussion.

She also reminded members that the STRIP Taskforce operates on a timeline agreed to earlier in the year, with meetings scheduled through the first quarter of 2026. Because of this, she stressed the need for discipline and focus so that the group could stay on track to meet reporting deadlines.

Reasonable Opportunity for the Public to be Heard

Chairwoman Mendez opened the reasonable opportunity for the public to be heard. There was one public comment from Jackie Sousa, FIU Metropolitan Center.

Jackie Sousa expressed gratitude to the STRIP Taskforce for its ongoing work to address inefficiencies in procurement. She shared that the Metropolitan Center is in the early stages of a project focused on strengthening local governments both operationally and financially. A key component of this initiative involves identifying and securing grants and external funding. Sousa emphasized that many grants are designed to support process improvements and software enhancements in government operations. Aligning those opportunities with STRIP's findings could help accelerate modernization and efficiency. She suggested the Taskforce provide input on the specific needs and priorities of the County, so FIU can better tailor its grant-seeking efforts.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

There was a motion to approve the July 15, 2025, Meeting Minutes with edits. (Approved 12-0)

- It was noted that Rudy Ortiz had attended the meeting virtually but was incorrectly listed as absent in the draft minutes. The minutes should reflect that Ortiz was present (virtually) and not absent, so that the attendance record is accurate.
On page 4 of 7, one of the items was marked simply as "adopted." It is recommended this be revised to read "adopted 11-2" to show the exact vote split. because, as originally written, the minutes implied only that there were two dissenting votes.

Discussion on Department Contract Managers attending STRIP meetings

Victor Herrera submitted a suggestion to the Chair that the Taskforce should hear directly from department-level procurement managers (or their equivalents) who oversee contracts and scopes of work. He mentioned that much of the inefficiency occurs in the pre-procurement stage at the departmental level, before projects reach ISD (procurement). It would be helpful to get insight from those on the frontlines of drafting scopes and managing contracts. This could help identify the inefficiencies that the Taskforce might not otherwise see. Some members agreed it would be useful to hear from key department representatives but cautioned against trying to include all 400+ departmental procurement staff. There was also a concern about overloading agendas with presentations and the need to give departments clear questions in advance to guide their input.

Suggestions from the taskforce included:

- Narrowing the focus to a handful of major departments.
- Considering directors or senior project managers instead of mid-level staff.
- Using a survey tool to first collect feedback from departments before scheduling in-person or Zoom presentations.

The Taskforce agreed that:

- Victor Herrera would draft a set of questions to circulate to Taskforce members, which could then be sent to departments to gather input on their procurement processes.
- The Taskforce would first review the responses from departments before deciding whether to invite individuals for presentations.
- If presentations were warranted, they could be scheduled virtually via Zoom, with the understanding that no formal recommendations would be made during those sessions.
- Members identified key departments and individuals whose input would be most valuable, including Frank Ramirez (Seaport), Sylvia Novella (Airport), and Paul Adams (Water & Sewer).

Taskforce Recommendations

The Taskforce unanimously moved to adopt two recommendations outlined in the agenda, with one recommendation being deferred as follows:

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. Unanimously adopted
2. Recommendation to adopt the following recommendations from TC/PQC Staff:
 - Rename review committee to review team
 - Eliminate in-person review meetings
 - Consider simplified TC similar to PQC recertification
 - Eliminate Notarization of the certification application
 - Integrate PQC/TC registration portal with INFORMS to eliminate the need for screenshotsUnanimously adopted.
3. Recommend freezing living wage for existing contracts for the contract years after September 30, 2026. Deferred to Aug. 26, 2025, meeting to allow input from staff on (1) how many contracts would be impacted by freezing living wage for existing contracts after September 30, 2026, and (2) The actual workload impact this recommendation would have on staff.

Wages and legislative preemption discussion

The Taskforce revisited the issue of how to handle living wage provisions considering the recent Florida legislative preemption. Taskforce member Miguel De Grandy mentioned that for efficiency, the County should freeze living wage rates on existing contracts after September 30, 2026, rather than continuing to escalate them annually. Maintaining wage compliance requires nine full-time

staff. Freezing wages would reduce that compliance burden, allowing staff to focus on more productive areas. Several members disagreed, stating that freezing wages would harm low-wage workers such as security guards, janitors, and landscapers, who already struggle with the high cost of living in Miami-Dade.

Some clarified that existing County-funded contracts could legally continue at current wage levels until expiration, without needing to be reopened or renegotiated. Others felt this was more of a policy issue for the Board of County Commissioners to decide, not a matter for STRIP to finalize as a consensus recommendation.

- A motion was introduced in support of Miguel De Grandy's earlier recommendation to freeze living wage rates on existing contracts or contract years after September 30, 2026, following State legislative preemption.
- The intent was to improve efficiency by reducing compliance workload and allowing market forces to determine wages.
- Several members opposed, citing negative impacts on low-wage workers and emphasizing that wage policy decisions rest with the Board of County Commissioners.
- The Taskforce did not reach consensus, and the motion failed with no formal action taken.
- The item was defer to allow staff to provide information regarding 1) how many contracts would be impacted by freezing living wage for existing contracts after September 30, 2026, and (2) The actual workload impact this recommendation would have on staff, also distinguishing between privately funded contracts versus county-funded contracts, since the discussion involved treating these two categories differently.

60-Day Report – Discussion

The report was originally due August 8, 2025, but since no County Commission meetings were scheduled before then, the deadline was extended by 30 days to align with the September 3, 2025, Board meeting. Chairwoman Mendez noted that based on Taskforce discussions and existing recommendations, there was already enough material to prepare a preliminary report. She would draft it and circulate to members for review before submission.

Several taskforce members suggested the report should include a concise executive summary that clearly highlights findings for the Commissioners.

John Aleman requested that her recommendations on NTPC/A&E procurement (already uploaded to the Taskforce SharePoint) not simply be attached as her own memo but instead be evaluated by the committee for potential adoption, modification, or removal. Her intent was for them to become Taskforce recommendations, not just individual comments.

Chairwoman's Response: Agreed to integrate Aleman's proposals into the draft of the discussions outline for each meeting, showing where they fit under existing recommendation categories.

She emphasized that the group would discuss, refine, and decide which items carried Taskforce consensus. Some members suggested that their individual recommendations should be included in the Task Force Report as an appendix. However, some members cautioned that including every individual's recommendation in the Report, even as an appendix, might cause confusion about what the Taskforce had formally endorsed. They suggested continuing to collect recommendations in SharePoint but only incorporating those the group approves into the final report.

Presentations

I. Phase I: Pre-Procurement Phase

- SBE Programs (cont'd) – Laurie Johnson

Laurie Johnson continued her presentation on the Small Business Enterprise (SBE) Programs, focusing on their role in the pre-procurement phase. This stage is critical because it sets the foundation before solicitations reach ISD for processing. She walked the Taskforce through how businesses are certified under the County's SBE programs and the steps required before they can participate in solicitations.

It was moved and seconded that the Taskforce adopt the recommendation to simplify the SBE certification process by implementing a self-certification model, similar to the U.S. Department of Transportation, with a robust auditing system in place to ensure compliance and integrity. The motion carried unanimously.

II. Phase II: Advertisement

- Discuss County's Online Procurement System & Standardization of System and Methods of Submittal - Adil A. Khan

Adil A. Khan presented on the County's online procurement system and the need to standardize both the platform and methods of bid submittal across departments. He noted that currently, departments use varying processes and submission formats, which creates inefficiencies and confusion for vendors. Standardization would provide a single, streamlined system that ensures consistency, reduces administrative errors, and improves the vendor experience. The taskforce noted that vendors face confusion because different departments use inconsistent methods for submittal and bid handling. Some members commented that eliminating variations in departmental processes would reduce administrative errors and delays, while also helping staff manage solicitations more efficiently. The taskforce emphasized that moving toward countywide standardization of procurement systems and submission methods should be included as part of the broader set of recommendations in development.

New Discussions

III. Phase III: Evaluation

Selection Committee (IO 3-34) – Rita Silva

Rita Silva provided an overview of the Selection Committee process under Implementing Order (IO) 3-34, which governs how committees are formed and how evaluations are conducted for County procurements. She highlighted recurring issues with the current process, including delays in committee formation, inconsistencies in training and guidance for committee members, and concerns about transparency and fairness in how selections are made. Silva emphasized that these inefficiencies often contribute to lengthy procurement cycles.

The Taskforce members acknowledged that the Selection Committee process is a major bottleneck in procurement and agreed it must be addressed as part of STRIP's work. Members suggested standardizing training for committee members to ensure consistency, streamlining how committees are formed and scheduled to reduce delays, and exploring technology solutions to support evaluation and scoring.

Recommendations Summary:

The following recommendations were discussed at the presentations portion of the meeting:

1. Small Business Program Improvements
 - Shift to contract-level SBE requirements for task-based contracts.
 - Set standard SBE percentages (10–15%) for A&E procurements, with waiver option.
 - Subject to legal review, explore bonus point system for exceeding SBE goals
 - Replace SBE advisory board review with audit-based monitoring.
2. Selection Committee Enhancements
 - a. Committee Size - Multiple proposals on member thresholds based on contract value.
 - b. CSC Selection & Expertise
 - i. Proposals included AI-driven member selection, training modules, neutrality affidavits, and technical expertise requirements.
 - c. Scoring & Deliberation
 - i. Proposals to eliminate variance reviews, automate scoring, and encourage deliberation.
 - d. Presentation Standards
 - i. Standardize Tier 2 presentation equipment and criteria.

- e. Transparency & Oversight
 - i. Record and publish Tier 1 & 2 meetings; allow public observation.
- 3. Process Standardization
 - a. Countywide eBuilder implementation for construction.
 - b. Standardized vendor notification process.
 - c. Formalize non-competitive repeat purchases for standardized goods/services.
- 4. Delegation of Authority
 - a. Raise MCC cap to \$20M; formal bid threshold to \$1M.
 - b. Expand Mayor's authority to award contracts up to \$5M.
 - c. Resolution Needed: Align on thresholds, scope, and oversight.

With there being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:25 p.m.