



**Business Enterprise Program
Council for Minorities, Females and Persons with Disabilities**

Monday, December 09, 2019

1:30 PM – 3:30 PM

MONTHLY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

100 W. Randolph
Room 2-025
Chicago, IL 60601

401 S. Spring St
Room 500 ½
Springfield, IL 62706

COUNCIL MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

Marietta Denise Barreto; Alex Bautista; Bola Delano; Emilia DiMenco; Jaime di Paulo; Beth Doria; Karen Eng; Larry Ivory; Jesse Martinez; Sharron Matthews; Jorge Perez; Hedy Ratner; Sharla Roberts

COUNCIL MEMBERS NOT IN ATTENDANCE

Janel Forde; Edward McKinnie; Sheila Hill Morgan; Kaney Frances O'Neil; Alma Tello

COUNCIL CHAIR

Janel Forde

COUNCIL SECRETARY

Radhika Lakhani

CMS STAFF IN ATTENDANCE

Kori Acosta; Steve Booth; Patricia Boscan; Jeanetta Cardine; Terrence Glavin; Carlos Gutierrez; Radhika Lakhani; Irma Lopez; Mike Merchant; Elias Ricks Ngwayah II; Pedro Pineda; Harry Reinhard

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

Thomas Bowling; Paul Cooper; Charles Harrell, II; David Lockman; Paul Kuchuris; Reginal Lampkin; Carlton McGee; Dale Morrison; Herb Stokes; Lorell Williams; Rod Young

In accordance with the Illinois Open Meetings Act (5 ILCS 120) and the
Freedom of Information Act (5 ILCS 140) the above meeting is open to the public

BEP Council



**PUBLIC NOTICE
STATE OF ILLINOIS**

Business Enterprise Council for Minorities, Females, and Persons with Disabilities

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AGENDA

Monday, December 09, 2019

1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

WebEx: Telephone # 312-535-8110

Access Code: 804-232-650

- I. Welcome
- II. Call to Order
- III. Roll Call – Radhika Lakhani
- IV. Approval of Minutes of Council Meeting held on October 28, 2019
- V. Chair’s Report – Michael Merchant
 - Senate Bill 177
 - Includes a reciprocity program for BEP certification relative to Cook County and the City of Chicago; requires CMS BEP to develop a model for a social scientific disparity study for local governments to adapt and implement in order to address regional disparities in procurement. Requires that the model be completed by CMS by 12/1/22.
 - Mentor Protégé Program
 - Events and Outreach
- VI. Subcommittees Reports
 - Certification Subcommittee Report
 - Outreach Subcommittee Report
 - BEP Council Attendance Policy
 - New Chairs and Subcommittee Membership

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BEP Council



- Compliance Subcommittee Report

VII. Ongoing Business

- Update on Utilization Plan
- Update on Attendance Policy
- Update on Dispute Resolution

VIII. New Business

- Updated 2020 BEP Council and Subcommittee calendar

IX. Sheltered Market

X. Public/Vendor's Testimony

XI. Adjournment

- Next Subcommittee Meetings
 - Certification Subcommittee Meeting – Monday, January 27, 2020
 - Outreach Subcommittee Meeting – Tuesday, January 28, 2020
 - Compliance Subcommittee Meeting – Wednesday, January 29, 2020
- Next Council Mtg. – Monday, February 24, 2020

BEP Outreach Events: <http://www.illinois.gov/cms/events/SitePages/List.aspx>

Note: There will be no IPB Notices and Solicitations Reports for this meeting.

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MINUTES

Monday, December 09, 2019
1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

I. Welcome

Mr. Merchant welcomed everyone.

II. Call to Order

Michael Merchant called the meeting to order at 1:37 p.m.

III. Roll Call – Radhika Lakhani

Ms. Lakhani conducted roll call. Quorum was established.

IV. Approval of Minutes of Council Meeting held on October 28, 2019

Member Roberts motioned for approval of the October 28, 2019 Council Meeting minutes. Member Matthews seconded. All approved. The motion was passed.

Member Matthews motioned to include the approval of the minutes from the August 26, 2019 Council Meeting as an addendum to the agenda. Member Roberts seconded the motion. All agreed. The motion was passed.

Member Bautista motioned to approve the August 26, 2019 Council Meeting minutes. Member Perez seconded. All agreed. The motion was passed.

V. Chair's Report – Michael Merchant

➤ Senate Bill 177

- i. Includes a reciprocity program for BEP certification relative to Cook County and the City of Chicago; requires CMS BEP to develop a model for a social scientific disparity study for local governments to adapt and implement in order to address

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BEP Council



regional disparities in procurement. Requires that the model be completed by CMS by 12/1/22.

1. Mr. Merchant reported that both houses approved this bill which includes several BEP initiatives he listed as the following;
 - a. it defines commercially useful function;
 - b. it requires CMS develop a model for a social scientific disparity study for sourcing for use by local governments;
 - c. it prohibits the use of cost as a basis for qualifying BEP firms;
 - d. it creates a qualified reciprocity for BEP certification with the City of Chicago and Cook County;
 - e. it stipulates the requirements for written requests for waivers, individual contract exemptions and class exemptions;
 - f. it reduces the penalties for deception related to certification from a class one to a class two;
 - g. it sets out procedures for written requests for contract exemptions;
 - h. and it provides that any funds originating from penalties assessed by the BEP Council shall be used exclusively for the maintenance and further development of BEP or to encourage the participation of BEP Vendors with the State.

➤ Mentor Protégé Program

- i. Mr. Merchant spoke of the finalization of a robust Mentor Protégé Program, details of which will be presented at the next meeting. Member Roberts asked if there was credit applied towards the 20% goal? Ms. Lakhani stated they would receive a credit towards the goal. Member Roberts asked if the credit would be for future or current use. Ms. Lakhani answered future.

➤ Utilization Plan

- i. Mr. Merchant thanked the members of the various CPO offices, Council members, Sharla Roberts and Sharron Matthews for all their hard work.

➤ Events and Outreach

- i. Mr. Merchant reported that the first Native American Business Breakfast was a very amazing, well-attended event. He remarked that he was also very grateful to attend MBIC and learned much.

VI. Subcommittees Reports

➤ Certification Subcommittee Report – Chair Sharla Roberts

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BEP Council



- Member Roberts reported that on the subcommittee meeting held December 2nd, there were six appeals reviewed. The subcommittee overturned 4 decisions and upheld 2 decisions. Two of the overturned decisions were regarding South Coast Paper and TotalMed Staffing, Inc., both of which were over the cap.

- Outreach Subcommittee Report – Chair Emilia DiMenco
 - BEP Council Attendance Policy
 - Member DiMenco reported that the subcommittee met on Tuesday, November 26th, had a robust conversation and stated that their goal is to increase participation. She noted the responsibility that the council and subcommittee has and stated that all comments on the Attendance Policy were reviewed and taken into consideration. Member DiMenco alerted the Council to be mindful when going through the policy as there are three types of representation, individuals, business owners and agency representatives.
 - Member DiMenco said the second item discussed was having a program reception for all agency Directors so that they are made aware of their responsibility and the program’s importance throughout whole state. She reported that this item is at Governor’s office awaiting a decision. Member DiMenco stated that the 3rd issue is the one pager which helps people understand what BEP does and that the next step is to add a diagram to show how the program fits into ecosystem. The diagram is at the state marketing department for mock up. She listed the 4th item being new members and working on onboarding them to help make them more effective faster. Member DiMenco explained that the 5th item, the strategic plan for outreach was to try to pull together best practices and work on improving their ability to identify barriers so that they impact their ability to touch more, also looking at what can be counted so they can have some baseline and be able to truly reflect effectiveness.
 - New Chairs and Subcommittee Membership
 - Member DiMenco put forth the idea to consider some rotation for subcommittee chairs and membership. She thanked the new people in charge of the minutes.

- Compliance Subcommittee Report – Chair Sharla Roberts
 - Member Roberts stated the subcommittee did not meet yet, however the topic for the next meeting will be regarding the Internet Egress and said they need to know if that contract had a goal. She informed the Council that goal setting is the next topic they will have on Wednesday. Member Roberts reported that if they use the database where vendors are registered, then they will have the most accurate information, so that what is needed is to look at our own database because that’s where all their real vendors are found. She added that the way goals are currently established is a disservice to WBE. Member Martinez requested clarification that CMS is not using

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BEP Council



their database to establish goals. Member Roberts confirmed this and explained that Collette Holt had put a stop gap process in place because CMS did not have an established database at the time to use to generate goals, but now that CMS has the CPO's office database to compare real to certified vendors, that real goals should be built and they should cease using the stop gap process. She said people are stopping with the formula but they should not be stopping there, instead when they are placing these goals they should make certain that they are exhausting all of their resources to ensure that minorities, women, and disabled, veteran owned businesses will be able to play a role in the ecosystem. Member Roberts stated they are going to make a recommendation. She said they have so much outreach, but then only 1% or no goals on contracts. Member Roberts stressed they want to discuss accountability, establishing appropriate goals and how to provide a service to firms who can be certified in our program.

- Member Martinez suggested that the next conversation could be on agencies' process for good faith effort. Member Roberts agreed and stated that she spoke with Mr. Merchant as well about how to review the waiver process on a consistent basis. Member Doria mentioned having developed a formula with a committee at the GPC (Government Procurement Compliance) Forum where everyone signed on to using the same methodology. Member Roberts stated that they as a council have not done a good job ensuring everyone has a good understanding of how to review waivers and administer goal setting.
- Member Matthews pointed out that in terms of transmitting the information, for example in her agency there are 84 different people that touch procurement and that it is not enough to have the director and liaison of each agency attend procurement workshops. She emphasized that all need to understand what is going on because direct accountability is what is desired. Member Roberts chimed in that BEP will want to go directly to a bigger agency like DHS and provide training on good faith effort because it is well needed and protects the program overall. Member DiMenco added that the only time anyone pays attention to anything is when it is placed in their performance review and in doing so it becomes part of how they will be judged and they will figure it out. She stated that if no accountability is tied to their job performance, then the Council are just spinning their wheels.
- Chair Merchant spoke to goal setting in that they have just implemented a pilot program working with the BidBuy database which holds all registered businesses interested in doing business with the State. Member Roberts concurred and stated that now that they have something in place there is no need to look at the Hoover database. Member Ivory asked for summary of Member Roberts' comments due to microphone issues. Chair Merchant explained that the Hoovers formula implemented by Ms. Holt was more of an overbroad stop gap and not Illinois vendor focused, basing percentages on BEP vendors. He said the percentages were coming out much lower but they are now focusing on the vendor pool, with specific vendors who want to do business with Illinois and it is increasing the goals. Chair Merchant added that the new goal setting, waivers and all other BEP issues will be incorporated

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into the statewide trainings. Member Matthews noted that all 84 of the people involved in procurement at DHS need to have the same information. Member Matthews pointed out that BEP has suffered from a Roger Dangerfield, “can’t get no respect” effect, because she finds she has to do a history of BEP every time she sits down with someone, and asked that they make sure the program is known. Member Barreto indicated that the one pager is part of that update.

VII. Ongoing Business

➤ Update on Utilization Plan

- i. Ms. Lakhani reported that together with the CPOs office and Compliance Subcommittee, they have worked really hard to make sure the Utilization Plan is more user friendly and understandable for vendors and that both Primes and Subprimes understand the compliance aspect of it. She said they have put more teeth into it and the solicitation documents. Ms. Lakhani stated it is made clear the Utilization Plan is part of the contract and must be abided by. She said they will have a final copy to distribute this week. Member Roberts complimented Ms. Lakhani for all her hard work. She also stated that these go out with every solicitation and are what people have to adhere to and what minority, women-owned vendors have to stand on. Member Roberts added that there are not a lot of things in law, they only have the document until something is put into the administrative rules. Member Matthews recommended that this needs to be part of the training not only for primes, but for State staff, training for all.

➤ Update on the Attendance Policy

- i. Chair Merchant asked if members wanted to vote on the attendance policy update today. Member DiMenco confirmed this and summarized some of the items listed including under what conditions one can participate electronically, and depending on your level that you can have a designated proxy. Member Roberts stated that members have to be duly appointed and that that item needed to be rechecked. Member DiMenco answered that a lot of time was spent on this, but they will ask for it to be rechecked. Ms. Lakhani called on Mr. Booth to discuss this. He stated Member DiMenco is correct and that according to OMA and the BEP Act, folks do have to be designated and that within that section the requirements are listed. Member Roberts and Member Matthews further discussed clarification on this issue. Mr. Glavin stated that a designee and proxy are not the same thing and that a designee can have a proxy. He added they will check this and Ms. Lakhani will revise it accordingly.
- ii. Member Ivory expressed concerns about keeping continuity and the potential loophole for placing proxies without background checks. Member Delano pointed out that the reason they wanted this policy was because people weren’t attending and there was no accountability for members not attending. She emphasized the need to get this in shape for next year and expressed concern about dilly dallying



in the details while not being able to get business done because of attendance issues. In response Member DiMenco stated that is the purpose of allowing a proxy, designee or whichever is the legal term. Speaking to Member Ivory's concern, she said that the person substituting must be identified up front so that due diligence can be performed. She also emphasized that the policy is not a flexible one where designees can be constantly in flux. Member DiMenco affirmed that a member or their designee/proxy who cannot attend and does not give notification, is not in attendance. Members Roberts and Doria questioned whether a non-governmental member may appoint a proxy. Member DiMenco affirmed that any proxy will have to go through the due diligence process. Ms. Lakhani stated they want to make sure all are comfortable with the policy and will do more checking to make sure everything is in order for presentation at the next meeting. Member DiMenco requested further clarification on the section regarding proxies.

- iii. Member Ivory expressed concerns over allowing proxies to come in who do not have the history, fears a slippery slope and that the council will not get the best talent needed but that whatever is decided he hopes is best for all. Member Bautista reiterated that they have not had quorum, but have people whose attendance ranges from 100% to 20% and that from this the subcommittee had the idea of creating an attendance policy with the sole goal being to encourage accountability. He continued, stating that if the Director of Human Rights, who designated him wants to attend, he can. Member Bautista said that if the concern is over a slippery slope then they will withdraw items from the proxy procedures.
- iv. Chair Merchant asked if there were any further questions. Member Doria asked if a member retires how is the council notified. Chair Merchant stated they will look into that. Ms. Lakhani reminded members to please state their names for the record.
- v. Member Matthews raised the issue for private members, independent business owners, to be paid to participate because the rest of the members have the same type of due diligence which is growing and they are being paid. Member Barreto stated she already follows the notification process in the attendance policy when she chooses not to attend and when she does not attend it is because she is out trying to draw business. She echoed Member Matthew's recommendation. Member Barreto added that part of what she is trying to rectify is for voices like hers, of which there are not many, to be around the table. She explained that she reads through the materials in good faith that it will pay off for people like herself. Member Barreto made known that when she is in attendance and there is no quorum, she is hurt and disappointed. Chair Merchant thanked her for her comments.

➤ Update on Dispute Resolution

- i. Ms. Lakhani reported she is working with the director of administrative hearings to have administrative law judges be part of the process. She said that first they

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BEP Council



will have the prime and subcontractor attempt to resolve the issue among selves, then the issue moves to agency level, and if at that point there is no resolution they would like it to move to the ALJ. She said hopefully they will have a program in place within the next couple of months. Ms. Lakhani mentioned they have been piloting a resolution over the last 4-5 months, have learned a lot, and would like to make the appropriate changes so that primes and especially subcontractors or BEP vendors feel they are being heard and that their concerns are being addressed.

➤ Senate Bill 177

- i. Chair Merchant introduced the next agenda item, Senate Bill 177 and asked for questions or comments. Member Doria requested the status of the reciprocity program. Chair Merchant replied that he met with the CPO at the City of Chicago and that they as well as the county are both on the B2GNow system so there is a way to make this logistically possible, along with intergovernmental agreements. Member DiMenco asked Chair Merchant to clarify whether this meant the vendor is not BEP certified. Chair Merchant confirmed this and stated the vendor would still have to go through the steps to become BEP certified. Member Roberts asked if accepting these certifications meant the vendor can move ahead with the bid and if it counts towards goal spend? Ms. Lakhani explained that this is not in relation to a bid, that the BEP certification department will request additional documents from the vendor if they were not part of the original documentation with the city or county, but overall it is an expedited review that will allow the vendor to become certified.
- ii. Member Matthews commented that this is a time crunch in terms of bidding and asked how this will be operational. Ms. Lakhani clarified that when there is that time crunch our staff will make sure to do an expedited review, but say if it's 80% that we accept from the county then there is only 20% left. Member Matthews reaffirmed that with more coming to be certified and the push for higher goals, that this is not operationally feasible. Chair Merchant added that they are in the process of hiring more staff.
- iii. Member Doria argued that the intent of the language states reciprocity and not recognition meaning acceptance of the certification and highlighted that BEP caps are the highest. Member Delano asked what's happening to the rest of the state. Chair Merchant stated they will have the opportunity to accept other jurisdictions once they have been properly vetted. Member Barreto stated she certified with CMSBC and asked if the intent is to have reciprocity with others. Chair Merchant stated it is only with governmental entities right now.

VIII. New Business

- Chair Merchant asked if all agreed there is an additional issue that they would like to discuss. There were no objections. Chair Merchant opened the floor to Ms. Lakhani.

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BEP Council



She stated this item is relatively new, apologized and announced they are working on a policy addressing conflicts between members and potential vendors.

- Member Roberts asked if a DoIT representative was available to discuss the Internet Egress contract. Mr. Lampkin responded, stating he did not expect to discuss that topic today. Member Roberts stated there is an Internet Egress RFP that is due soon. She reported that their disparity study found a substantial disparity in information technology and she knows there are a lot of MWBE certified in that area. Member Roberts stated there is a bid that's due on 16th and she wants it pulled if it does not have a goal and accessed for MWBE. Chair Merchant assured her they will reach out to DoIT. Member Roberts invited Chair Merchant to attend the compliance committee.
- Updated 2020 BEP Council and Subcommittee calendar
- Member DiMenco asked if committee membership could be discussed in the next meeting. Member Roberts stated her committees were good.

IX. Sheltered Market

- Member Matthews stated that in addition to IT, she read that the council had approved PR and marketing for sheltered markets and has not seen anything on that while procurements have been going out. She noted that within each agency she is sure there are a lot of opportunities, but has seen nothing as far as how these will be gathered and placed in sheltered market mode. Chair Merchant announced Ms. Lakhani is going to address that now.
 - i. Ms. Lakhani reported she has been working the past month on reviewing the history and creating a policy on sheltered markets. She stated the Council will be voting on sheltered markets, then they will move on to the agencies and how sheltered markets will be identified. Ms. Lakhani also reported that they have applied to have capstone, masters, and policy students, with the help of their professors, conduct targeted disparity studies to identify new sheltered markets. Ms. Lakhani assured the Council they will have policy in place that has been reviewed and approved by both BEP and Procurement so that they can get started without experiencing confusion or disconnect.
 - ii. Member Roberts remarked that she is familiar with that program and that it is 15-week process. Ms. Lakhani explained that they are at the beginning stages of a long-term partnership with UIC and recognize it is a lot of data to work with, but that the finished project may not look like the 15 week program Member Roberts works with. Mr. Merchant added that they would like to come up with something equivalent to a legally defendable mini disparity study. He said Ms. Lakhani is also looking to implement the two sheltered markets that have been identified.
 - iii. Member Ratner asked how the capstone relates to contract. Mr. Glavin explained that the collective holds contract is for a program-wide disparity study and is not



done for any specific market, but that the attempt now is to identify specific markets and groups.

- iv. Member Matthews asked that if the two sheltered markets have been established, then why are there inquiries about what DoIT is doing regarding Internet Egress. Mr. Merchant explained that they realize that the IT sheltered market has been established and that they want to come up with a clear process so that when they look contract by contract, they can see them coming down the pipeline.
- v. Member Roberts asked what are the stops in the process that designate a contract for use under the established sheltered market. Ms. Lakhani stated there will be two tracks of flags, the agency and BEP staff and if the agency doesn't catch it BEP staff will.
- vi. Member Ivory professed that this is a conversation they have had for years and that when you look at the numbers they are deplorable. He said that after years of disrespect there is always a legal argument for "we can't do it now because we need a disparity study". Member Ivory added that the only legitimate way to fix the disparity and where the rules are clearly laid out is sheltered markets. He said it's the law and it should be enforced. Member Ivory pointed out that as far as numbers, if anyone challenged it there is nothing except for maybe basketball that anyone can point to and say that African Americans are doing too well that BEP will lose a legal challenge. He stated that nationwide there have been no challenges on general procurement and that they should take on a more aggressive stance. Member Roberts and Member Matthews added that institutions of higher education, boards, and commissions must also adhere to the rules not just agencies.

X. Public/Vendor's Testimony

- Mr. Thomas Bowling, Obama Energy
 - Mr. Bowling introduced himself and thanked the council. Mr. Bowling stated that there is money is involved in attending these meetings and it is not cheap. He said that however often quorum is not given, he has to come back later. Mr. Bowling emphasized that he needs board members to really tighten it down and that when he began attending these meetings, he had an afro. He reiterated that it's costing them major money to be here and that nothing is received in return.
- Mr. David Lockman, COO, Obama Energy
 - Mr. Lockman spoke to the documents that Obama Energy passed out to the council members pointing out that they are real numbers that are being maliciously ignored. He stated he played football for the University of Alabama back in 1996. Mr. Lockman said he took advice about how to approach this from one coach who told him to find out who is the coach's pet

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and knock his head off saying then he would get the attention he was looking for. He stated this is what the Council needs to do, to get that helmet back on to get everybody's attention. Mr. Lockman said they will do all they can to assist and that Mr. Bowling has done all he can to make council's job easier. Mr. Bowling interjected stating that Wesco didn't give them those numbers and asked that the Council to put themselves in their shoes, they have been coming year after year and that action is what this meeting is all about.

- Mr. Rod Young
 - Mr. Young introduced himself as an MBE and thanked the council members. He stated he attended the meeting today to gather information and look for opportunities happening in the state.
- Mr. Herb Stokes, Chair of Advocacy for the Chicago Minority Business Council
 - Mr. Stokes introduced himself and stated that they have made recommendations to fill Sheila's (Sheila Hill Morgan, Council Member) seat. He stated wanting to acknowledge that the council represents over 1200 certified MBEs, a lot of them in the private sector. He thanked Mr. Merchant and Mr. Ngwayah for attending their meeting and believes it opened their awareness for other certified BEP members. Mr. Stokes said they also have monthly scheduled meetings he wanted to invite them to. He pointed out that he has been here often and offered caution to the Council that although he knows it is important, the Council should not be stuck on process. Mr. Stokes requested they start to put topics that show results on the agenda. He stated he believes this committee is here for oversight and would like to hear items discussed that are pertinent to his body. He thanked everyone for their time.
- Mr. Charles Harrell, II

Mr. Harrell passed on commenting.
- Member Matthews agreed with Mr. Stokes and suggested a retreat, another forum to discuss process because some things should be in house and thanked Mr. Merchant. Member Barreto suggested holding another strategic planning session as they had in 2015. Member Matthews stated to Member Barreto that there are supposed to be nine more of you.

Member Delano pointed out that one of problems is changes in administration where people don't transfer information. She reasoned that they should be able to leave a legacy that can be followed through and has seen this happen too many times. Member Delano noted that it is the minority businesses who are the ones suffering. She offered to leave something that is sustainable. Merchant asked if the Comptroller's office would sponsor a strategic planning session. Member

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Delano agreed. Member Roberts offered that Member Delano meant she would like to transfer information. Member Delano agreed.

XI. Adjournment

Member Doria moved to close the meeting. Member DiMenco seconded. All agreed. The meeting adjourned at 3:37 p.m.

- Next Subcommittee Meetings
 - Certification Subcommittee Meeting – Monday, January 27, 2020
 - Outreach Subcommittee Meeting – Tuesday, January 28, 2020
 - Compliance Subcommittee Meeting – Wednesday, January 29, 2020
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