

GENERAL SERVICES AGENCY
OFFICE OF LABOR STANDARDS ENFORCEMENT
PATRICK MULLIGAN, DIRECTOR



SWEATFREE PROCUREMENT ADVISORY GROUP
Minutes from the June 13, 2024, 2:00 pm

Members Present: Conchita Lozano-Batista, Coyote Marin, Julie Fisher, John Logan, Samuel Taylor

Members Excused: Jason Oringer

City Staff Present: Hallie Albert, Joyce Kimotsuki

WRC Present: Ben Hensler

CALL TO ORDER/INTRODUCTIONS

Introduced Samuel Taylor, who provided a summary of background, currently CFO of HRC. Group introduced themselves. Hallie Albert thanked Joyce Kimotsuki for her service to the SPAG and acknowledgements by the group were shared.

1. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Meeting agenda was adopted without opposition.

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

No Comment.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes from the meeting of February 8, 2024 meeting were reviewed and adopted unanimously with correcting spelling of Angela Chiu's last name.

4. OCA UPDATE

Albert provided Shawn Peeters's update that there is no news except that the garment rental was fully executed.

5. WRC UPDATE

Ben Hensler explained they still do not have Muscatello's factory disclosures. Discussion ensued about the disclosure forms and the following improvements were suggested:

John Logan – the form needs to distinguish if the information is complete or if it is missing factory disclosures, rather than just an option to check "Yes."

Conchita Lozano-Batista – addition of columns to note what information is obtained and what is missing and a way to track the status of obtaining the information.

Hensler – include a place to note if the vendor is exempt from disclosures.

Hensler presented on Northstar Manufacturing in Mae Sot, Thailand. The inspection ran from Dec '23-May '24. The factory sits on the Thai/Burma border and employes around 400 workers, dominantly Burmese. It supplies Elbeco and Banner with SFFD contracted goods (also supplies LA).

In 2017, WRC inspected the factory on behalf of colleges and universities. Hensler reviewed the factory's past attempts to hide abusive conditions in the factory and dormitories. In 2018, the factory engaged in remediation, made improvements, closed the dormitory, returned passports to workers, increased pay,

added weekly rest day to the schedule, paid holidays, and sick days. They also restored back pay to the workers.

When WRC saw the factory listed on the disclosure list, they proceeded with outreach at the factory and received complaints from pregnant workers who were constructively discharged. They interviewed 150 workers from January to April 2024 and completed an inspection in May 2024.

Preliminary finding of the Factory's conduct:

- Pressured up to 10 pregnant women to resign so as not to pay maternity leave;
- Failed to accommodate pregnant workers;
- 2018 remediation largely maintained, but increased production pressure; and
- March 2024 – workers negotiated a CBA with the factory (led by NGO) to address other problems (not allowed to form a union under Thai law).

Moving forward:

- WRC to correct violations against pregnant workers (reinstatement);
- Confirm implementation of CBA terms (fans and ventilation were already added);
- WRC will provide a report to OLSE.

Lozano-Batista asked about WRC's leverage to accomplish the next steps. Hensler does not anticipate any non-compliance. She then asked if WRC spoke with the auditor who provided false certification. Hensler confirmed that the certification company sent a new auditor and removed the false certification. Discussion ensued about the group's prior efforts to ensure accurate certification and auditing. Logan asked about WRC prioritizing areas for inspection that are subject to extreme conditions due to climate change. Hensler said they are already monitoring heat levels in factories and will need to adapt as climate change creates impacts. The group discussed the current legal advancements to prevent heat stroke and making sure workers trust in the complaint system.

6. CONTRACT RECOMMENDATIONS UPDATE/PLANNING

Group agree to wait until after the election to lobby and find a sponsor

7. DISCUSS MEETING SCHEDULE

Group agreed to move to a quarterly meeting schedule.

8. POTENTIAL ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

None raised other than continue with current items.