



YOUTH COUNCIL

MINUTES

Friday, April 7, 2006

3:00 p.m.

**Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Board
60 Island Street
Lawrence, MA**

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Cal Williams, Megan Shea, Sr. Gwynette Proctor, Linda Piergeorge, Elizabeth Sweeney, Thomas Casey, David Konjoian, Cindy Mejia, Linda Scullane, Jenny Pickett, Jeff Marcoux

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Michele Collins, Efrain Rolon, Vinnie Ouellette, Misael Martinez, Erin Kelly, Janet Allison, Tim Sullivan, Manuela Munoz, Luis Munoz

GUESTS PRESENT:

Amy Weatherbee, Mike Lynch, Betty Kirk

STAFF PRESENT:

Mary Kivell, Chris Shannon, Fred Carberry

I. Approval of Minutes

MVWIB Interim Administrator Fred Carberry suggested that this item be moved to later in the agenda to allow for a quorum.

II. March 31, 2006: Follow-up

a.) Connecting Activities

MVWIB Youth Workforce Specialist Chris Shannon began by saying she wanted to follow up with some written information based on last week's discussion. She highlighted an overview of Connecting Activities and noted the disparity in the funding allocation. She said that Lawrence has consistently been the least

funded although it has the worst MCAS scores, but said that the state looks at regions and not cities. She compared the Merrimack Valley and Hamden County allocations. We are across the board on par with their county and they received \$349,056 at the same time Merrimack Valley received \$46,359. Chris said that this is a role the Youth Council can work on to secure appropriate funding amounts. Usually regions have been level funded. The only way we got an increase is through our efforts to bring it to the attention of local legislators.

Fred Carberry cautioned that folks should be aware of federal regulations regarding lobbying.

Discussion followed and questions on the funding formula were raised. Chris explained that the formula has never been disclosed and explained that it is state money through the Department of Education (DOE).

b.) MYPE (Youth with Disabilities)

Chris then referenced a one page handout referencing the MYPE initiative. The MVWIB recently conducted research concerning the needs of youth with disabilities.

Chris said that the goals of the grant are to develop a strategic action plan for the region to facilitate the transitioning of youth with disabilities from school to whatever is next for them, to provide agency information as it relates to transition needs of youth, and information pertaining to the change in eligibility for agency services when these youth are considered "adults." Also, the process that allows SPED practitioners to identify key issues and suggest solutions at the state level to address the needs of transitioning SPED students.

Another purpose of this grant is to build capacity by providing cross training to staff members.

c.) P21

Chris explained that the P21 Partnership met this past Wednesday and information provided to council members included policy recommendations for the state. Those recommendations include: Utilize the Boston PICs model of surveying graduating students for their post-graduation plans, identifying those who state they have "no plan" and connect those youth not to appropriate resources and programs before they graduate to ensure these youth do not become disconnected; pursue state legislation that would hold the K-12 DOE system accountable for counseling and tracking students who drop out of the K-12 system; utilize the existing DOE SASAID identification system to better track high school graduates through the MA higher education system for more accurate higher education completion data and development of appropriate supports to ensure degree completion; and, develop MOUs among state agencies to facilitate the access of youth data for the purposes of program referral, program recruitment and eligibility determination.

Chris said that everyone was welcome to participate in any of the P21 activities.

d.) Youthworks and Mayor's Summer Jobs Program

Chris distributed brochures she said were developed by the ValleyWorks Career Center that provide information and said that there will be more information to follow. She said that there are two different job programs, the Governor's Summer Jobs which is called Youthworks for at-risk and low income youth, and the Mayor's Summer Jobs Program which has no funding but is a media way to promote jobs and hiring of youth during the summer months.

e.) WIA Youth Programming Overview

Amy Weatherbee provided a document that outlines the utilization of the money which we must provide to the state annually. She referenced the first quarter report with the first column representing the Annual Plan goals and the other columns for actual performance and percent of Plan.

Ms. Weatherbee said that one area where we might not meet our goal is total customers enrolled and that is basically because of the lateness of this procurement. Amy said that with this grant we cannot enroll in the system until they begin training although the ValleyWorks Youth Department does a lot of work with youth ahead of time. Ms. Weatherbee feels that the enrollment will probably be about 90% of goal.

Ms. Weatherbee then explained the other goals. The entered employment goal is at 50% but our rate is much higher (88%) and our average exit wage is higher than our plan.

This handout also included demographics of the youth actually enrolled who must meet one or more barriers to employment. Ms. Weatherbee said that these reports are done on a monthly basis and she will be providing ongoing data to the Youth Council.

There was discussion on limited English speaking youth and how they are identified and served.

III. Approval of Minutes and Youth Council Chairperson

A quorum being present Cal Williams made a motion to approve the March 31, 2006 Youth Council minutes as submitted and Megan Shea seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Fred Carberry explained that the process for the election of a chair as stated in the MVWIB by-laws submitted to the State is that the Chair of the Board appoints all committee chairs, who must be from the private sector.

With that in mind, Mr. Carberry said that the Council could vote to recommend a member to the Chair for consideration.

Cal Williams made a motion to recommend Dave Konjoian as Youth Council Chair to Board Chair Pedro Arce and Jeff Marcoux seconded the motion. Discussion followed on the term of office and frequency of meetings as well as Mr. Konjian's schedule. Motion then passed unanimously.

IV. FY'07 WIA Youth RFPs

- a. Discussion and Approval of FY'07 Out of School Youth Proposal and Review of Timeline.

Amy Weatherbee said last week she had provided the major points of the FY'07 Out of School Youth Proposal and said that the timeline requires that the Youth Council meet again on May 19th to review proposals. We have about \$250,000 in out of school youth training dollars that we need to competitively procure.

The major focus of this RFP is employment and occupational skills that are from emerging and critical industries identified in the MVWIB Blueprint. It also focuses on the hardest to serve and requires a strong employer connection. Ms. Weatherbee explained that a total of five staff members from ValleyWorks, DTD and the MVWIB are part of the review process. Amy also noted that there is also technical assistance available for all vendors who are interested in submitting a proposal. Information will be provided on the proposals that have been submitted after the staff review for Youth Council members and it was also agreed that examples of a proposal that was funded as well as one that was not funded would be e-mailed to the Council. Amy also said that geographic distribution of services is taken into consideration.

Megan Shea also said that we are always looking for new vendors and encouraged folks to call before the bidders' conference next week.

Tom Casey expressed concern around the timeline when information is received and a vote is required. Amy said she is hopeful to get information out to the council Monday, May 15th and staff review information by May 18th.

Motion by Cal Williams seconded by Tom Casey to recommend approval of the FY'07 Out of School Youth RFP as written. Motion passed.

V. Discussion/Vote in IRs and ITAs

Chris Shannon explained that we need to apply to the state for a waiver to make the option to use ITA (Individual Training Account) vouchers available to Out of School youth who are hard to serve with barriers to employment.

Amy Weatherbee said that we need local approval for this system switch. What the ITA does is give a different mechanism that is more in line with the way we provide training services to adults and dislocated workers. WIA regulations didn't allow for this but the state of Massachusetts applied for a waiver from DOL because it is a much more streamlined way of getting service to youth. We set

aside a pool of training dollars for youth who may have a credential but have other barriers to employment and need services.

Amy further stated that there is money which is already in our training money for youth which we would like to move to this account. The amount we are requesting to move is \$30,000 and will be checking where the training dollars are needed and being used going forward.

Motion by Cal Williams seconded by Sr. Gwynette Proctor to recommend approval to initiate the ITA provider eligibility for youth. Motion passed.

Motion by Sr. Gwynette Proctor seconded by Cal Williams to approve moving an additional \$30,000 to the IR fund. Motion passed.

VI. Next Steps

Chris Shannon informed Youth Council members of the upcoming MVWIB board meeting which is being held on Wednesday, April 12th, 8:30 a.m. at Lawrence Heritage State Park. The Youth Council will be reporting to the board at that meeting and members are invited to attend.

Chris also said that there is a tentative voluntary Planning meeting scheduled for Tuesday, May 9th, 8:30 a.m. at the MVWIB office. Youth Council members are invited to give their input for the Annual Plan and recommendations on where to target resources to best meet the needs of youth.

The next Youth Council meeting will be on Friday, May 19th to review and recommend funding for the Out of School proposals. Discussion followed on the difficulty for meeting on Fridays and with the exception of the May 19th meeting. It was agreed to take up discussion on how frequently and when the Youth Council will be meeting at a future meeting.

VII. Adjournment

Having no further business Cal Williams made a motion to adjourn seconded by Tom Casey. Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Kivell
Recorder