



YOUTH COUNCIL

MINUTES

Wednesday, June 28, 2006

8:30 a.m.

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

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Cal Williams, Linda Piergeorge, Thomas Casey, Janet Alison, Maria Medina, Tim Sullivan, Ed Warnhuis

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Sr. Gwynette Proctor, Michelle Collins, Erin Kelly, Dave Konjoian, Elizabeth Sweeney, Jeff Marcoux, Misael Martinez, Cindy Mejia, Jenny Pickett, Tom Cuddy, Vinnie Ouellette, Fred Shaheen, Megan Shea

GUESTS PRESENT:

Betty Kirk, Ed Anderson, Lucy Lozada, Tracey Szatkowski, Amy Weatherbee

STAFF PRESENT:

Mary Kivell, Chris Shannon

I. Approval of Minutes

Cal Williams called the meeting to order and introductions we made. Cal noted that due to lack of a quorum the minutes of the May 19, 2006 meeting would be tabled.

II. Youth Programming/Initiative Updates

a. Connecting Activities

- i. Restructuring
- ii. Funding and current programming
- iii. Economic Stimulus Bill update

Chris Shannon reported that although our Connecting Activities grant scored in the highest category, we have been level funded. Chris continued stating that our allocation is one of the lowest allocations in the state. This is disappointing because new models of learning and the need for school to career programming have come up as part of the P21 Initiative for our region. Connecting Activities can bring more workplace learning activities to the table.

There was an inclusion for Connecting Activities in the Economic Stimulus Bill of \$3million that passed the house and the senate. Chris reported that the Governor vetoed the Economic Stimulus package citing the fact that it doesn't create jobs. Chris said that this package is now going to committee and urged members to contact our legislative delegation. We should be in good standing to receive some of this money since we scored so well and we have also outperformed the past couple of years. Chris said that last year, through contacting the legislative delegation, we were able to raise our allocation as well as that of Northern Middlesex and South Coastal. Chris said that she has also e-mailed the legislative contact information to the School-to-Career and P21 partnerships and copied the Youth Council.

Ms. Shannon then handed out the state allocations and noted the differences in at risk students and in funding. If the \$3m Economic Stimulus package should go through, Chris said there is no equitable funding formula that she is aware of at this point.

Three of the schools who had participated in the School to Career Initiative and maintained staff are Newburyport, Triton and Amesbury but Chris noted that two of the school-to-career counselors are retiring and wondered if the school systems would continue to fund these positions. Chris also noted that the Merrimack Valley Chamber of Commerce is also interested in supporting a local School to Career partnership.

Regarding the restructuring, Chris explained that when Connecting Activities first came out it was run through the Career Center and later through the WIB. There was a dip in funding due to poor performance. Chris said that the WIB and the Youth Council should be the policy machine and not directly running programming that should be run out of the Career Center. With the restructuring of the WIB we are looking to move Connecting Activities back to ValleyWorks Career Center but Chris said she will still be actively involved. ValleyWorks will be hiring a Student Career Specialist to work with Greater Lawrence Technical High School, Haverhill, Lawrence, and the Academy for Strategic Learning in Amesbury. If additional funding is realized, we could work with other school systems. This grant is geared to MCAS at-risk youth.

Chris also informed Council members that David Perez is leaving to become the Teen Resource Director at the YMCA and said that he has done an outstanding job for the WIB during his tenure.

b. P21

- i. Library meeting review
- ii. Funding possibility (incentives funds)
- iii. Next steps

Chris Shannon said that this grant is focused on increasing positive outcomes for 16-24 year olds. We have a large partnership with approximately 25% active and strong. She said that we are working on four strategies; enhanced coordination, equitable resources, building off of current successes, and creating new models of learning.

Chris continued stating that there was a P21 meeting yesterday at Nevin's Memorial Library which was attended by five out of fifteen Library Directors. This is the week that there is a Library Directors conference and vacation so she was pleased to see five in attendance. Chris said that there was frank discussion about needs and students cutting class and going to the Library. Also, there was discussion on funding possibilities and whether they meet the criteria and might be eligible for incentive money. This money has been designated to go to P21 and SABES and is about \$40,000 per region. The next P21 meeting will talk about utilizing the MVHUB website.

Discussion then followed on the 211 telephone initiative for youth from United Way and the fact that testing will be starting up the beginning of July and the actual implementation in September.

c. MPYE

- i. Year 2 Programming update
- ii. Year 3 Sustainability update

Chris Shannon said that we have been given the opportunity to extend our demonstration period from last summer to this summer and this means subsidized employment for 15 youth from three different schools. The schools are Andover, Amesbury and Triton. The purpose of this grant is to provide additional supports to secure jobs and the youth's wages will be subsidized through the summer with a move to unsubsidized. Job coaching will be available through the summer. We have nine youth who have been submitted to be enrolled in this program, seven from Amesbury and two from Triton.

For year three sustainability we considered taking our best practices on the road to other career centers. We have found that externships will help us sustain our region.

III. Youth Council Recruitment

- a. Recommendations for recruitment
- b. Role of private industry members

Youth Council Chair David Konjoian asked that members think about recruiting people who will attend the meetings with adequate representation from private

industry. A quorum has been a constant issue. He would like Youth Council members to make recommendations for recruiting and what the role of private industry should be on the Youth Council.

Cal Williams said that private industry should take the lead and Lucy Lozada said that we should look to include members who youth can relate to. Chris Shannon said that the role of the Youth Council is to decide policy and funding to meet the needs of youth as opposed to directly providing services.

Ed Warnhuis mentioned perhaps getting involved with a Jim Derosiers, someone who is coming to Lawrence and works with 6th, 7th, and 8th graders on goal setting, behavior modification, and success planning.

Amy Weatherbee said that one thing DGA could do is pull data that helps give a better sense of the barriers for hard to serve youth. She said that this information may be useful to the council.

Ed Anderson mentioned his work on a School to Work partnership with Jim Casey in Maine, specifically with foster children. He said that we need local colleges at the table. He said that what is needed is for the college component, private industry with the jobs, and the community to pull together to help youth succeed.

Janet Allison mentioned recruiting education members such as superintendents and the local colleges and offered to help with that. Chris said that there are concerns with getting a quorum for meetings and Amy Weatherbee said that Fred Carberry was going to look into what constitutes a quorum of this committee for the future.

In the meantime, folks were asked to think about possible candidates for membership on the Youth Council for the next meeting.

IV. FY'07 WIA OSY Youth RFPs

- a.) *WIB Vote on Youth Council Recommendations***
- b.) *Contract Updating***
- c.) *YouthBuild Update***
- d.) *Request of Policy Development***

Amy thanked Youth Council members for working within the tight time frame and working to make their recommendations to the board. She reported that the Workforce Investment Board voted to approve the Youth Council recommendations for funding. The WIB also questioned why a program with poor performance was being considered for further review.

Amy met with program individuals from LARE/American Training Inc. and finished contract negotiations for all four programs with one change in the Medical Billing & Coding. Amy also met with Sr. Gwynette, who agreed to

increase the length of her program and added three weeks of internship with afternoon ESOL instruction and job placement. The CAI, Inc. program is still being worked out regarding youth as teaching assistants without credentialing. Amy expects a couple of more meetings will be required to see if we can work things out with them.

The last program we needed to meet with was Youth Build. Amy reported that she, Chris Shannon and Fred Carberry met with Andrew Mente and Patricia Karl and talked about what our recommendation was. Amy said that there is a history of trying to work with this program and offer technical assistance that has not been accepted. These youth need to get training related positions. There are twelve participants in the current program with nine being basic skills deficient. Five have attained their GED and an additional four are testing in August but only two are in a training related position. They have until September to continue to work with these youth to move to training related positions or post secondary training. WIB staff offered to convene a meeting with union representatives on the board and an offer to provide a labor market CD-ROM with a list of local businesses from ValleyWorks.

It was noted that these are the hardest to serve youth and Chris said that she is concerned that the goals we recommend don't match the objectives of Youth Build. One obstacle mentioned was transportation and it was noted that there is an abundance of training related work in the city. Also, Amy said that ValleyWorks would assist with subsidizing licensing costs if that were an issue.

Chris said that this program is in a critical and emerging industry and attractive to males and that is why we would like to see them succeed.

Amy said that we will look at the performance in August and see where they are at that time.

Ed Warnhuis asked about the food service program applicant and was advised that they are pursuing other funding sources at the federal level. We have provided assistance and advised them to build in a managerial component.

Amy said that the final item is one that she realizes can't be voted on today due to lack of a quorum.

Amy then mentioned that as we go into the next year we need to decide when we involve the Youth Council regarding ITA's. She is suggesting that a policy be considered that would allow no concurrence and/or board vote as long as the amounts requested meet the following guidelines:

1. There are adequate funds in the WIA Youth Training fund line item as determined through concurrence from DGA and MVWIB staff; and
2. The amounts requested do not exceed 15% of the original budgeted amount for the IR/ITA Pool.

Amy also noted that LARE is requesting an additional \$810.00 from their original FY 2006 OSY Education and Medical Assisting Contract for two students who need additional time to complete their training. These are work experience funds and go directly to the customer. LARE is also requesting an additional \$494.00 for the current 13 OSY participants to take their NHA certification on June 30, 2006. If they all pass, they are then entitled to two additional certificates, one in Phlebotomy and one in EKG. The total request is for an additional \$1,304.00 in FY'06 funds. Staff of DGA and the WIB have reviewed these requests and conclude they are reasonable.

Amy said that she would send out an update on programs in July and also discussed was the possibility of site visits.

V. Next Steps

- a. Youth Council Training
- b. Next Meeting

Chris Shannon said that she would invite a representative from Commonwealth Corporation to come to the next Youth Council meeting and explain what they offer in way of training for Youth Councils.

The next meeting has been scheduled for August 22, 2006.

VI. Adjournment

Having no further business the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Kivell
Recorder