



**Planning/ Career Center Committee
Meeting Minutes**

Tuesday, May 16, 2017

8:00 a.m.

255 Essex Street, 4th Floor

Lawrence, MA 01840

Members Present: Juan Yepez, Chairman
Rosalin Acosta, Ron Contrado, Andrew Herlihy, Bob Wescott

Members Absent: Mike Munday, Abel Vargas

Staff Present: Rafael Abislaiman, Corina Ruiz, Susan Almono

Other: Amy Weatherbee, Dawn Beati

I. Approval of Minutes of the April 18, 2017 meeting

A quorum being present, Juan Yepez, called the meeting to order at 8:15 a.m. and then called for a motion on the minutes of the April 18, 2017 meeting.

Motion by Bob Wescott, seconded by Rosalin Acosta, to approve the minutes of the April 18, 2017 meeting as submitted. Motion passed.

II. Performance Summary as of April 30, 2017

Rafael said we are below plan on exits in a few categories but we have two months left in the fiscal year and may catch up some. Overall, we are in ok shape. Bob asked what is a negative exit and Rafael answered that it's when someone doesn't get a job or doesn't complete training. Rafael added that statewide there is difficulty with youth recruitment and training. One of the NAMC programs sponsored by Mount Washussett, requires that 75% of the participants be between the ages of 17-29 and only 25% can be over the age of 29. It has been very difficult to find young adults that want to go into training and then work. As a result, we are considering recruiting some of the next group at area corrections facility.

Rafael mentioned the OSY LARE program and how they were only able to enrolled 5 youth out of 10. There was talk about the UTEC program out of Lowell and how it has been successful in working with young ex-offenders and placing them in jobs.

Susan Almono said the WCTF planning grant the MVWIB recently received is to work with ex-offenders who are on the outside and train them to become construction laborers. There was a big partners meeting and UTEC was invited to talk about the recycling program they have in Lawrence. We wanted to hear about their strategies and connect them with our truck driving program. We need to re-evaluate what we offer youth and how we approach them. We realized too late that area youth aren't now interested in electronic assembly.

Rafael added that under our policy, we mandate that ITA youth be high school graduates and have certain TABE scores. In our non-WIOA or group programs, those requirements are waived. Rafael spoke about a past meeting with Sheriff Cousins where he suggested we shift our focus from men to women because the recidivism rate for men at the Farm was 70%.

III. Budget Update as of April 30, 2017

Rafael asked if there were any questions. Juan asked if a reduce rent rate is still being paid and Rafael said yes. Rafael said MVWIB/DGA staff will be meeting with George Moriarty and NECC fiscal staff this afternoon to talk about that and other fiscal issues

IV. Grants Update

Susan gave highlights about the summer YouthWorks program. It's a program with many moving pieces that Cristy and her staff have well under way.

Something exciting this year is working with the Lawrence Partnership to have a "learn and earn" program using our YouthWorks funding to put about 20 graduating seniors to work while at the same time employers pay for education. There will be 16 youth going into the CNA/HHA training at NECC and the other 4 into the medical assistant training offered at LARE. Susan continued by saying that it's been exciting to work with the Lawrence Partnership that's put all these pieces together. Juan asked who the employers are and Susan said Holy Family Hospital, Lawrence General Hospital, Greater Lawrence Family Health Center, Mary Immaculate Health/Care Services, Pentucket Medical Associates and Home Health Foundation.

Rosalin asked if this is the first time we are partnering with a non-profit and Susan said no. Rosalin said we should continue to do more work with non-profits that are already trying to do workforce development. By combining resources and efforts we'll be more effective, especially if we are having a hard time finding youth got job training programs.

Susan said we will be awarded a fourth EPA grant for \$200,000. We've gone through three grants that were training people for entry level environmental remediation jobs and although it has been good, there have been issues. Environmental work of the type we're offering normally don't result in permanent jobs. Too many jobs are under temp contracts or cyclical. Some are too close to minimum wage. So we are changing our focus and bringing in our STTEP heavy equipment and CDL programming instead. We will use EPA funds to train for CDL drivers and heavy equipment operators. We are calling it a second run training program and are focusing more on driving hazmat tanker trucks, garbage trucks, etc. at hazardous waste sites and elsewhere.

Bob Wescott asked if we are working with Clean Harbors and Susan said we would like to work with them but haven't been successful connecting. Ron Contrado and Bob Wescott will connect us with them.

Rosalin asked Susan to talk more about the summer YouthWorks program and how we are recruiting. Susan said the youth are recruited and the staff is working on getting employer contracts. Out of the 229 youth to be recruited, almost 100 of them will be part of group programs that separately employ youth with their own funds. This is a result of Mayor Rivera's emphasis on helping employers who separately employ youth in Summer jobs. The Mayor's plan was for employers to hire a youth and get one from the summer YouthWorks. With a few exceptions, private sector employers were not receptive to that. We succeeded with non-profits because they hire youth for the summer. Under this partnership, we use them as match and pay for part of their Summer workforce. We also prioritize private sector employers who hire youth permanently after the Summer.

Rafael added that the funding is the same as last year but due to the minimum wage going up to \$11/hr we are serving fewer youth. Susan said that to be a successful outcome, youth have to work a total of 125 hours for about 5-6 weeks.

V. Career Center Report

Dawn Beati said VWCC had a job fair in April and will be having others coming up. They had 154 job seekers attend and 38 employers' present out of the 40 that signed up. Overall it was pretty good but we know we have to work harder to attract more job seekers. There will be an event tomorrow at NECC. The Department of Revenue will host an employer information session to talk about childcare and employers revenue responsibility.

Amy Weatherbee said that on May 18th at 7:30am there will be a manufacturing convening event in partnership with the Lawrence Partnership to cultivate manufacturing employers and support for them. So far there are 150 attendees registered and it looks to be successful. This event will also provide employers with direct one-on-one resources, including direct access grants.

Dawn said that on June 15th the Clippers City Job Fair in Newburyport will take place and there will be 28 employers present. Every year, in collaboration with the Lowell Career Center, the VWCC hosts the Spinners Job Fair. That job fair will have about 70 employers present.

Juan asked what kind of jobs employers are looking to fill and Dawn said it's a mix of everything. Amy added that they were disappointed at the number of job seekers that attended the last job fair. It's getting harder and harder because the economy is good right now and there are more job openings than qualified employment candidates.

Dawn said VWCC will be supporting Rapid Response with a job fair at Parlex in Methuen. Amy added the number of Parlex lay-offs is not large enough to qualify as a major dislocation for National Emergency Grant (NEG) funding but their HR is working with us on getting their employees jobs elsewhere.

Amy said Flowserve is getting ready to shut down and about 80 employees will be affected. Because the company has known for over a year, VWCC will not see all 80 laid-off employees. The BSR's are working with their HR to recruit and train their workers for employment as CNC machine operators.

Dawn concluded by saying that on June 7th they will be supporting NAMC at NECC in trying to connect employers for the apprenticeship program.

VI. WIOA Update

Juan discussed his observations from the Workforce Board conference in North Adams. There was talk about branding and how the State wants to redesign their website and logo. There was much discussion about funding reductions. Rafael added that our WIB is doing well because we apply for additional funding. Juan mentioned there was discussion on career center partners working together. He learned that, on the first Monday of every month, WIB Executive Directors meet.

Rafael talked about the branding presentation and talk about the possibility of WIB consolidation from 16 WIBs to 7. Rosalin asked about when larger regions may happen. Rafael said the State is silent about that but super regions is a step in that direction. Susan added that the WIBs are going through regional planning and a consultant has been hired to lead that effort.

Bob Wescott said that making web links easier to find would be useful and the State doesn't need branding for that. Juan said the State needs to do a better job of making the navigation of their website easier because employers don't know much of what the State has to offer. Rosalin added that the website is cumbersome and talked about the experience she recently had navigating it. Amy said that is the reason 24,000 people annually visit the Career Center and that the DUA website is not for job search, it's a collection website.

Amy asked if the 15% of WIOA that the State keeps won't be partially coming back to the field. Rafael said most of it will stay at the State.

He added the MVWIB applied for NDWG last year and is re-submitting again with the hopes of getting funds retroactive. If we get retroactive funds, DCS will keep 15% of that. But DCS is going through federal monitoring and that may delay the release of funds. In the new FY, the WIBs will be responsible for more career center operational monitoring. That was previously more of a DCS role. There won't be more regional funding to facilitate that. But DCS will continue to conduct financial monitoring.

Rafael talked briefly about how we are often directed to help the hardest to serve while employers want people who are easy to train and who require minimal supervision. There are plenty of balancing acts in our workforce development system.

VII. Other Business

No other business.

VIII. Adjourn

Having no further business Andy Herlihy made a motion to adjourn the meeting seconded by Bob Wescott, and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Corina Ruiz

Recorder