



**PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING
Minutes**

Tuesday, January 19, 2016

8:00 a.m.

Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Board

Lawrence, MA 01843

Members Present: Juan Yepez, Chairman
Rosalin Acosta, Ron Contrado, Dennis DiZoglio, Andrew Herlihy,
Bob Westcott

Members Absent: Mike Munday, Abel Vargas

Staff Present: Rafael Abislaiman, Susan Almono, Mary Kivell

Others: Arthur Chilingirian

I. Approval of Minutes of February 16, 2016

A quorum being present, Juan Yepez called the meeting to order at 8:05 a.m. Chairman Yepez then called for a motion on the minutes of the February 16, 2016 meeting. Rosalin Acosta expressed concern with the minutes and presented suggestions. After discussion it was agreed that approval of the minutes should be tabled until the next meeting.

Motion by Andrew Herlihy, seconded by Bob Westcott, to table the minutes of the February 16, 2016 meeting until the next meeting.. Motion passed.

II. Performance Summary as of 3/31/16

Executive Director Rafael Abislaiman said that with the exception of youth we are ahead of plan in virtually every category. They labor exchange is at 73% which is just 2% less than plan. Bob Westcott asked if we get applicants connect to pest control as someone he knows is looking to hire a dependable candidate and is willing to train, Chili said that he doesn't know of any applicants in that field and noted that they are just about of this year's funding for training. The only category is the youth 18-24 who they could train. Rafael said that we serve many more people than we train and could possibly get someone who is looking for work in that company. Chili advised Bob to have his contact call him with what the requirements are and he will post the job. He noted that at a recent meeting employers were stating that what they are looking for in an employee is some who is dependable and can be trained.

III. Budget Update

Rafael said this is the format the state likes us to use. He mentioned UI online and BizWorks. He said that we are at the half way mark and in pretty good shape. The reason that the line item for personnel may appear high is that we include all the summer youth in that number. Rafael also said that we often like to spend less than the plan in case we get budget cuts or 9C cuts so we don't have to lay people off. Bob Westcott asked about the accrual column and Rafael explained that if someone is in training they are listed as an accrual until they are paid.

Bob mentioned that he talked with Tracy and was surprised to learn that over the year there are fifty-two (52) funding sources. He noted that some are small but they need to be answered. He said that his goal has been to try to identify a flow each month from each funding source.

Dennis DiZoglio said that his not unusual but as far as his agency is concerned, if a grant doesn't promote their mission they pass on applying. Rafael also said that Commonwealth Corporation has a very cumbersome reporting process.

Rafael then said that Andrew Herlihy asked at the last meeting for reporting on funding opportunities. Rafael went over the list and details of the grant handout prepared by Susan Almono.

IV. Out of School Youth Group Procurement

Rafael said that we had spoken last meeting about looking at possibly doing a group RFP for out of school youth. He explained that we continue to focus on kids with high school diplomas or HiSets and would like to offer a group program with more academic remediation. Also discussed was lowering the 7.9 academic requirement to a lower grade as we are finding some youth, although they have graduated from high school and thus passed the MCAS, are not scoring at that level. This would be an opportunity to help them.

Rosalin wondered how many people are turned away because of not meeting that requirement. Amy said that youth and adult standards overlap for six years and if there is another grant source that makes them eligible and can support them we look at that. Rafael said that we have trouble filling the 18 and older who are not testing at 7.9. Amy said that ValleyWorks tests for reading and math using the TABE test. Rafael said that math draws people's scores down. Amy said that we could put out an RFP and ask vendors to give back a threshold that would get them to their outcomes. This is an opportunity for vendors to design a program with remediation.

Rafael said that most vendors lower the grade level requirement below 7.9. Abel wondered what the likelihood is that they would be placed and what the education requirements would be. Bob Westcott asked if vendors have had success. Rafael said that some participants gained three grade levels in six or seven months. Mike Munday felt that you would need at least a 7 to achieve in high school. Rafael said that we are trying to cast a wider net and a 7 may not work even though they have completed high school. Most of our training is for girls

in rudimentary health care and we would like to be able to offer something attractive to males such as auto repair or mechanics.

Rosalin asked if there is some repository of this testing information and Amy said that she would try to pull a crystal report and get three months of TABE scores. Mike Munday wondered if language is a barrier and Amy said it wasn't. Mike felt that there is a need to understand math for any jobs in the trades. Amy then said that they have a Career 101 program at ValleyWorks for math competency that clients can use at home or in the lab to get their skills up.

Discussion followed on a vote to proceed and Mike Munday said that he would like to see a draft or something so he would know what he was voting for.

Motion by Dennis DiZoglio to recommend the preparation of an RFP to meet the needs explained by Rafael to cast a broader net to reach out-of-school youth, particularly male, by lowering the grade level and then bringing the RFP back to the next meeting of the Planning Committee for approval and release. Andrew Herlihy seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

V. Site RFP Update

Rafael reported that the RFP for office space was released and there were three respondents. There is an eight or seven member review committee analyzing the proposals and we may have a selection by the end of the month. Abel Vargas said that the next meeting will be held on January 25th.

VI. Other Business

Andrew Herlihy mentioned that he is pleased that the next MVWIB Quarterly Board meeting is being held at Southwick in Haverhill. Rafael said that our guest speaker is Ron Marlow, Undersecretary for Workforce Development, who is an excellent speaker.

VII. Adjourn

Having no further business Rosalin Acosta made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mike Munday seconded the motion and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Kivell,

Recorder