



PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, October 30, 2013

7:30 a.m.

Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Board

Lawrence, MA 01843

Members Present: Peter Matthews, Juan Yopez, Mike Munday

Members Absent: Robert Leblanc, Ron Contrado

Staff Present: Rafael Abislaiman, Mary Kivell, Barbara Zeimetz

Others: Arthur Chilingirian

I. Approval of Minutes of October 2, 2013

A quorum being present Peter Matthews called the meeting to order at 7:50 a.m. and called for a motion on the minutes of the October 2, 2013 meeting.

Motion by Mike Munday, seconded by Juan Yopez, to approve the minutes of the October 2, 2013 Planning Committee meeting as submitted. Motion passed.

II. MVWIB 2013-2016 Strategic Plan & VWCC Charter dated 07/01/13

Rafael Abislaiman said that the distributed strategic plan is based on principals approved and noted at the quarterly board meeting that had Labor Secretary Joanna Goldstein in attendance. It in part articulates what the MVWIB has been doing for the last three years. For example, it indicates that the Planning Committee approved minimum standards for enrollment in adult and youth training programs. We now require that WIA funded trainees normally have academic skills at grade 7.9 or higher. Youth are also required to have a high school diploma or GED.

Rafael said that in these economic times we enroll folks with higher skills in an effort to help them gain employment that they can retain and that they can get sooner rather than later. When economic times are better and unemployment is lower we may focus on folks with skills below 7.9 but now we should do workforce development triage.

Peter Matthews asked if this plan could be adjusted or amended based on funding and Rafael answered yes. He said that it can be adjusted in our annual plan according to the financial circumstances we find ourselves in. Peter also wondered if the state goes back and makes revisions. Rafael said that they sometimes ask us to change our plan numbers. Barbara Zeimetz said that DCS looks at the information in the annual plan which is basically the next generation of

the High Performing WIB overview of the labor market and customers. We are monitored based on the performance goals in the annual plan, the strategic plan and the career center charter. Barbara said that we have generally met our performance goals.

Peter asked if we get feedback from the state and Chili said that they provide monitoring results but that DCS does not have a lot of staff left so they are less comprehensive than they were before. Barbara said that the annual plan is a compliance document. The WIB must be recertified every three years but last year we received a one year extension. Certification is a federal requirement and the certification documents are in place to comply with that requirement. This is an update to the strategic plan and the state will look at the charter and come out and monitor.

Rafael said that the strategic plan continues what was stated in our High Performing WIB document. It focuses on advanced manufacturing, health care, and green industry and life sciences as this region's most important job sectors. But it also states that we will work with all employers who have job openings and also give importance to customer choice. Current economic conditions and the possibility of continued Federal sequesters impacting defense, health care and 'green' funding make it inadvisable to commit inordinate resources to our focus areas. Rafael said that DCS information doesn't reflect the anticipated increase in manufacturing job openings due to the aging labor force. Massachusetts is also at a disadvantage due to high labor and energy costs.

He said that a recent publication reported that 91% of manufacturing employees are not in hands-on production. Hands-on production people are the ones we generally serve with WIA funds. Mike Munday said that he was surprised by that figure because he tries to keep the ratio at 1 to 1 production and non-production.

Rafael said that health care spending may continue to increase but it is now 18% of the national economy and future growth may be limited. Discussion followed on health care and its increasing costs.

Motion by Juan Yopez, seconded by Mike Munday, to approve the 2013-2014 Strategic Plan and VWCC Charter date 07/01/13 as submitted. Motion passed.

III. Communiqué to DCS Re: Staff Integration

Rafael Abislaïman said that the Planning Committee considered the option of continuing the Career Center charter or putting it out to bid to deal with less funding. He said that we are the only fully unionized Career Center in the state and that impacts staffing flexibility. Given the political environment and timeline for submission to the state, we have taken the Planning Committee option of re-chartering ValleyWorks Career Center. A centerpiece of the new charter is the integration of the state and local staff. The Secretary of Labor requested staff integration at career centers throughout the State. Rafael said that the state employees have been the frontline staff who refer those most in need to WIA services. The Secretary has stated she wanted to see integration in annual plans and we included detailed integration information in ours.

Rafael explained that someone from our career center union complained to the state union and we were requested to temporarily cease integration training. He said that we should ask for an update on their union negotiations from the state because the delay will impact the performance

outcomes included in our charter. Juan Yepez asked if this is the only organization affected. Rafael said that it may affect other organizations. Mike Munday asked why they complained and Rafael said that they complained for new job descriptions and salary increases as many are at the top of their grade and only eligible for COLAs.

Barbara Zeimetz said that it was priority of the Secretary to work toward integration and our annual plan had a flow chart listing milestones and dates. The WIB, VWCC and staff had meetings with the state and local unions who had all blessed the proposed changes. She said that the centerpiece of the charter is around integration of staff and we have had no formal notification other than via a phone call to cease and desist integration training.

Chili said that he received a phone call from Eddie Bartkiewicz to hold-off on integration activities. Chili said that he had previously closed the office for 4 full and 4 ½ days of staff training and can't afford to delay the process because staff will forget what they learned. The State was supposed to meet with the union on Monday but that was postponed and there has been no communication to career center directors. Mike Munday said that we need to get something in writing.

Chili said that this complaint came from his career center and the state had previously been committed to doing integration. This is really about State staff getting a raise and Chili is worried that if they get a raise the other local staff union will also want one. He did hear that Alice Sweeney mentioned at a DCS staff meeting that the Secretary wants to resolve this issue with NAGE as soon as possible. Barbara said that the issue is no communication from anyone officially to stop and we need to protect that element of the charter. Mike suggested sending an email and asking if he has the authority to order this action and to cc Eddie. Chili said that he cannot restart integration training in December because of vacations and holidays. After the delay we will be half way through the fiscal year and it is unlikely that we can catch up to the timeline in the new charter.

Peter asked what the proper action of the Planning Committee is and Rafael said we should request the state keep us posted on the progress and time table for when this will be resolved. Mike Munday said we can state that we were stopped in mid-stride since receiving the phone call from Eddie and to please confirm if this is accurate. Juan also suggested stating that based on passed directives we set up trainings and now at the eleventh hour we need to break training. After discussion it was agreed to direct staff to communicate with the state and to keep the Planning Committee apprised of developments. Rafael said that he would do so.

Motion by Mike Munday, seconded by Juan Yepez, that because of the delay with ongoing integration training the Planning Committee requests that the MVWIB please seek a response from the state and keep this committee informed of developments. Motion passed.

IV. In-School Youth RFP

Barbara Zeimetz reported that we issued an RFP based on the Haverhill High School model last year and received only one (1) response with no public schools responding. This is a failed procurement and this is very disappointing. She feels that schools are not prepared due to increased funding whereas years ago they were looking for money. We sent the RFP to the

superintendents and have decided to re-issue it with emails to subordinate staff. We have compiled a more extensive bidders list and plan to release the RFP Friday and publish Sunday with a bidders conference next Thursday.

Peter Matthew said that there are several efforts ongoing at the LPS seeking to get businesses involved. One is a Summer Trek to NH which the MV Federal Credit Union funded. Lawrence Community Works is looking at established goals of the stakeholders meetings and some money is allotted to parent training. He did say that he feels that some things overlap and more coordination in the city would be helpful but that Jeff Riley continues to reach out. Barbara said that she has been involved in the Working Cities grant and that the WIB through Connecting Activities and YouthWorks has a connection to the schools. Rafael also tried to to put a career center in LHS via a Federal Innovation grant. She said that we are not looking for money but a better way to serve kids. Peter said that the next time he meets with Mike Kenneally he would invite Barbara. Rafael said that Working Cities is a national initiative and that he and Barbara helped change the model to focus on high school outcomes.

V. Update on Building Leases

Rafael reported that he was directed to postpone the RFP and we received a landlord offer to extend our lease through June 30, 2014 at the current rental rate unless we decide to move. If we do move there will be a 50% premium. Juan Yepez said that that is typical and is what happened the last time we negotiated the lease. Rafael said that we may part be of a plan to revitalize downtown Lawrence but the timing may be tricky to get 15,000 square feet of suitable space downtown. Being part of a developed plan may further delay a RFP and a prospective move.

VI. Adjourn

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

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Kivell,

Recorder