



# **YOUTH COUNCIL**

## **MINUTES**

**Wednesday, October 14, 2009**

**11:30 a.m.**

**Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Board**

**439 South Union Street**

**Lawrence, MA 01843**

### **Youth Council MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Christine Bradshaw, Lisa Coy, Megan Shea, Steven Noroian, Cal Williams, Ed Warnshuis

### **MVWIB Youth Council MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Howard Allen, Janet Allison, Tom Casey, Brad Howell, Ed Fitzgerald, Kristine Blum, Linda Cote, Howard Flagler, Jason Pimentel, Bill Blanchette, Irene Chalek, Gina Bozek, Bob Mazzone, Steve O'Brien, Linda Piergeorge, Barbara Richards, Vinnie Ouellette, Tricia Snow, Michael Strem, Marianne Vesey

### **GUESTS PRESENT:**

Mayor Michael J. Sullivan, Joseph Bevilacqua, Amy Weatherbee, Odanis Hernandez

### **MVWIB STAFF PRESENT:**

Mary Kivell, Fred Carberry, Deborah Andrews

### **I. Call to Order and Introductions**

Youth Council Chairman Cal Williams called the meeting to order at 11:50 a.m. Introductions were made around the table. Cal then welcomed Chief Elected Official Mayor Michael J. Sullivan. Cal noted that he has been on the Youth Council since its inception in 2000.

Mayor Sullivan began his remarks thanking Cal and the staff for their great work. He said that the upcoming year would see a new Mayor elected and Mayor Sullivan said that he will offer his help to the incoming administration.

Mayor Sullivan said that, reflecting on his past eight years, there was a lot of economic development. He referenced the empty building and chimneys on

Merrimack Street that will be imploded and filmed for a program called The Imploders set to view in December. We have had good positive activity and many then ask, with the number of jobs created in Lawrence, why the high unemployment numbers. Mayor Sullivan said that he thinks the piece is job training. We have people from all over the world coming to Lawrence and we try to bring them up to speed. He noted the improvement in the crime rate citing Chief Romero who said that 94% of crimes are gang and/or drug related. Mayor Sullivan said, look at the number of youth employed and trained this past summer. The more companies we can attract keeps the employment door open.

Once the new Mayor is elected on November 3<sup>rd</sup>, Mayor Sullivan said that he has a transition team ready for a retreat on November 18<sup>th</sup> with department heads and Joe Bevilacqua representing the WIB and speaking on economic development. He also plans to set up an office for the incoming Mayor and would like to get the Mayor-elect in front of this Council. On January 4<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m. Mayor Sullivan said that he would be passing the keys and said that it has been a pleasure working with everyone.

Cal Williams said that it has been a pleasure serving with Mayor Sullivan for eight years and with his brother for eight years also. He said that he welcomes any insight or feedback.

Joe Bevilacqua said that one thing that people may not realize is that as Chief Elected Official Mayor Sullivan not only represents Lawrence but all the cities and towns in our region on the MVWIB and has always represented them with a regional perspective. What the Youth Council does is prepare kids for the career of their choice and although the unemployment numbers are high if we didn't do anything they would be much worse. The WIB makes things better even though the Career Center is filled with job seekers. He said that it is systematic across the country.

Today Lawrence is viewed more positively. Workforce development should be part of every Mayors' economic development plans. Mayor Sullivan called together the other Mayors around the Summer Youth Program and has always cooperated with the WIB. He also reached out to other chambers and truly cares about workforce development.

He said that many kids aren't ready to join the workforce and we need to get them ready. We have been very fortunate to have such a good working relationship and need to work with the new Mayor to let him see how important the WIB is to the local economy.

Cal Williams said that he agreed wholeheartedly noting that 2M youth dropped out nationally last year with 11,000 in Massachusetts.

Fred Carberry said that when he first came on the scene economic development was first, workforce development second, and education third. Since that time Mayor Sullivan has helped bring those together and without that relationship we can't make progress.

Mayor Sullivan plans to remain active at the Sullivan Insurance Agency and on the Merrimack Valley Chamber of Commerce. He mentioned that, after being elected, he was told to go to a WIB meeting and a Pringle Trust meeting and didn't know what either was. It has been a learning experience.

Christine Bradshaw said that when she was first introduced to workforce development, she attended an introduction to workforce development presented by Commonwealth Workforce Coalition which was very informative and helpful.

## **II. Approval of September 9, 2009 Minutes**

Cal then called for a motion on the minutes of the September 9, 2009 meeting.

**Motion by Megan Shea seconded by Steve Noroian to approve the minutes of the September 9, 2009 Youth Council meeting as submitted. Motion passed.**

## **III. Program Updates**

### ***a. ARRA***

Deborah Andrews went over the Summer Youth Jobs for the week ending 10/02/09. She thanked Amy Weatherbee and Tracy Myszkowski for putting these reports together. There were a total of 736 youth enrollments including the EOPSS/Byrne Jobs for Methuen and a total of \$817,744 in wages earned by youth. She noted that there were 137 worksites and asked Amy if these were the final figures for YouthWorks stating that ARRA funds can be used until 3/31/10. Amy said that the figures are pretty close but we have to finalize the closeouts.

Deborah said that certificates and thank you notes are being prepared to go out to all the employers who participated. Joe Bevilacqua mentioned doing an event to keep employers invested and Ed Warnhuis suggested doing a full page thank you in the Tribune listing the names of employers. Amy said that she would check to see if there is any lag in the budget to pay for such an event. Christine Bradshaw said that she could possibly do an event in November but that it would have to be at her facility in Devens.

### ***b. YouthWorks***

Deborah continued stating that there is \$313,000 in ARRA funds and we are looking at holding back \$250,000.

Deborah said that YouthWorks funding for next year is being cut and in jeopardy of not being funded at all.

Amy Weatherbee said that the Youth Council and Planning Committee has already looked at this. We need to see where we are as of 9/30/09 and how many ARRA youth we will have through 3/31/10 to make a decision on the amount. With the potential cuts in YouthWorks we need to cover the amount committed through 3/31/10 and then stop to put money aside for the summer.

Lisa Coy said that the Youth Department, on Tuesdays and Thursdays invites 40 kids to come in and see about 10. Therefore, her estimate is that there are 60-70 youth working 30 hours per week through 3/31/10. If we lose YouthWorks, we cannot serve the 700 summer youth with the ARRA money and would need to reduce that to 200 if we have carry-in from ARRA.

Deborah said that we would also need to make a decision on which communities to serve. Megan Shea noted that we have not served that many youth in outlying communities. Deborah said that there are a number of reasons such as youth not wanting to work on farms, problems with transportation, etc.

### ***c. Connecting Activities***

Deborah said that we are getting \$75,000 which is around the same amount we received last year. She said that there is a lot of advocacy and push back for funding for next year especially from the Boston PIC who lost one half of their funding. We have partnerships on the seacoast and Lawrence and have had job fairs, teacher externships and internships.

Christine Bradshaw mentioned meeting someone from Joseph's at a job fair, who agreed to host six Job Corps participants and suggested contacting them.

## **IV. Review and Discuss FY'10 WIA Youth Funding Proposals Draft**

Deborah said that we need to review the FY'10 WIA youth funding. It was decided by the Planning Committee in the past that we have a 70% Out of School Youth (OSY) and 30% In School Youth (ISY) funding.

Lisa Coy said that we have had more success and the need is for OSY. Megan Shea said that the rubric for attainments and outcomes is geared toward OSY. The credentialing for ISY is different. There is nothing out there for OSY and the true dropout rate is not reflected in statistics since youth begin dropping out in eighth grade.

Amy Weatherbee noted that over the years the bulk of youth money has targeted OSY as there is no other source to serve them. She also said that it is a very difficult population.

Lisa said that the numbers of OSY have doubled and the basic skill level she is seeing is so low. Christine Bradshaw also has seen her numbers doubled.

Deborah suggested diagramming services to see where we need to fill in the blanks.

Lisa said that there is a need for job placement and training and a strong relationship with other vendors.

Megan Shea said that youth employment has gone from 50% to 30% in the current economy.

Christine Bradshaw said that family experience or community experience needs to help develop job skills.

Amy said that we are trying to roll out two start times in January and February to connect with seniors and carry them over in the summer and get placements. We also want to recruit juniors and keep them connected over the summer. Amy said that we are working with a consultant on the adult dislocated worker RFP with ARRA funds. At a recent vendor meeting, over 70 people showed up representing 30-40 agencies. This will be an opportunity for some OSY to learn occupational skills and get a job.

Deborah said that we told the vendors what is coming down the pipeline. We explained what the program should look like and funding streams. She talked about a cohort of 70 youth transitioning from eighth to ninth grade at Lawrence High School and the use of ARRA money to get soft skills into the curriculum this summer.

Lisa also said that there is a problem with recruiting youth who are at risk and low income to commit from January to June four days a week after school with no pay. There could also be a problem with outcomes as most seniors don't want a job right away.

Christine wondered about a stipend and Lisa said that Connecting Activities can pay for one staff without extra money. If we paired ARRA with Connecting Activities we can do workshops at the Career Center in kind but they need to be co-enrolled in WIA.

Amy said that we have done internships and paid work experience with the goal of unsubsidized employment. There is \$150,000 for ISY programming through a competitive procurement.

Amy said that we can support funding for the program and still follow up with a coach once a week if they are enrolled in WIA.

Megan said that there is always a lot of technical thinking and a lot of disciplines necessary. They must have all elements. Boston has more of a network of providers.

Amy said that we are looking for an education component, occupational skills, work experience and certification and gave the list of DESE providers. She said that the first RFP for Adult dislocated workers and older OSY youth has \$510,000 in youth money available.

## **VI Other Business**

Deborah mentioned that she has the "Where the Boys Aren't" presentation by Lane Glen of Northern Essex Community College available and if members want a copy emailed to them to let her know.

Amy explained that we are trying to expand the vision and create more outcomes with other trainings and programs.

Joe Bevilacqua said that he is looking to put together a presentation for the NAWB conference in March 2010 as we can use some of Andy Sums information on the young men not in the workforce. We need to invite employers and experts to meetings to get information and talk about skill shortages.

It was also agreed because the date of the next meeting falls on the November 11<sup>th</sup> holiday to hold the meeting on Tuesday, November 10<sup>th</sup>.

## **VII. Adjournment**

**Having no further business Megan Shea made a motion to adjourn seconded by Christine Bradshaw. Motion passed.**

Respectfully submitted,

*Mary Kivell*

Mary Kivell  
Recorder