



YOUTH COUNCIL

MINUTES

Wednesday, May 14, 2014
Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Board Conference Room
439 South Union Street – Suite 102
Lawrence, MA 01843

Youth Council MEMBERS PRESENT:

Howard Allen, Francisco Brea, Wilberto Mejias, Linda Piergeorge, Megan Shea, Michael Strem, Ellen Weinhold, Cal Williams

MVWIB Youth Council MEMBERS ABSENT:

Janet Allison, Marina Acosta, Michael Bevilacqua, Beverly DeSalvo, Tom Connors, Irene Chalek, Brad Howell, Superintendent John Lavoie, April Lyskowsky, Ed Fitzgerald, Maria Miles, Steve Noroian, Tom Raiche, Lisa Remington, Barbara Richards, Donna Rivera, Nancy Tariot, Ed Warnshuis

MVWIB STAFF PRESENT:

Rafael Abislaiman, Cristy Gomez, Mary Kivell

OTHERS:

Joseph Bevilacqua, Stephanie Cross, Brian Norris, Denise Perrault, Joseph Miglio

I. Call to Order and Introductions

A quorum being present, Cal Williams called the meeting to order at 11:40 a.m. and introductions were made around the table.

II. Approval of April 9, 2014, 2014 Minutes

Youth Council Chairman Cal Williams then called for a motion to approve the minutes of the April 9, 2014 meeting.

Motion by Howard Allen, seconded by Ellen Weinhold, to approve the minutes of the April 9, 2014 Youth Council minutes as submitted. Motion passed.

III. Youth Programs Update

Youth Programs Director Cristy Gomez presented the youth program update. She explained the Summer YouthWorks application process and said that the deadline has been extended to May 30th to allow us to get more applications. Our goal is 309 through YouthWorks and we have received 185 applications as of last Friday May 9th. Cristy said that we have 148 of the 185 goal for Lawrence; 74 of the 93 goal for Haverhill; and 25 of the 31 goal for Methuen. She also said that we have hired two new staff for the Summer YouthWorks Program, Denise Murray and Jeremy Shannon, who are working on outreach. Cristy spoke about the schedule for outreach at each of the area schools. She said that students who file their applications by May 16th will be rewarded. She did say that we have not announced the extension of the deadline so that youth will submit early and not procrastinate if they know they have until May 30th. Megan Shea said that she is glad that CBOs with volunteers are being allowed to collect applications.

Rafael Abislaiman said that Mayor Rivera wants to increase the number of youth jobs in the City of Lawrence. His priority is to provide subsidized youth to employers who also employ kids using their own money. Rafael said that this is a very worthy goal which is being implemented quickly and which we are trying to make as flexible as possible for our long-time employer partners.

The Lawrence Public Schools have so far hired 23 kids with their own funds so we can plan on providing them with 23 subsidized slots. The plan is for them to hire 30 so we can take the extra 7 match slots and place them at non-profits.

Rafael continued stating that \$1,550 donations cover the cost for one youth to be employed for the summer. So far about 65 slots have come through for our goal of 185 and we would like to wrap this up by the end of the month to allow staff sufficient time to complete their youth orientation and employer matching work. Companies that have responded include Lawrence Public Schools, Sal's, New Balance, McDonalds, and GEM Group to name a few. Rafael said that if folks know of any employers hiring Lawrence kids to let us know. If we can get the name, address and phone number of the youth they are hiring we can use them as a match. We are taking youth from age 14 to 21.

Megan Shea mentioned working with Community Works and GroundWork Lawrence and Ralph said that we are working with them in a number of different ways. Megan also suggested Covanta in Haverhill. Rafael mentioned that there are things that a 16 year old can't do such as climb a ladder or cut grass by law. Fourteen year olds need a physical but once they are 18 these restrictions do not apply.

Joe Bevilacqua said that he has sent Match the Mayor information out via email and fax again to his Chamber of Commerce member of which the aforementioned companies are members. Joe said that this is an important project for Lawrence and everyone. He said that Cristy, Rafael and he met with the Methuen, Haverhill and Lawrence

superintendents and hope to work with the area mayors and town managers earlier next year to get them on board. Megan mentioned piggy backing on the Connecting Activities program. Staff agreed.

Rafael said that he has also reached out to the Boating Program and that donations are being accepted by Greater Lawrence Community Action Council, Inc. We would like to translate the summer program into long term year round employment in some cases. Joe said that people don't realize the great work that this WIB and Career Center do and we need to do a better job of letting people know what we do.

Ellen Weinhold mentioned funding cuts since sequestration as a barrier for Methuen Housing hiring youth who can only do interior and exterior maintenance as there were issues with union jobs in the past. She said that she would love to have some of these kids hired on full time and would do so if not for the current financial situation.

Joe Bevilacqua said that if the WIB doesn't reach its goals it is through no fault of ours as this is a national crisis. The economy has contracted, mature workers are forced to work longer as people are living longer and are healthier. We need to make sure that kids are prepared to enter the workplace and have the soft skills to succeed.

Mike Strem also noted that some folks don't have the technical skills required for jobs. Joe said that with the coming of baby boomer retirements there will be jobs available and we need kids to have the skills to fill them. Joe spoke about the president's push on apprenticeship programs which the unions have used for years. Rafael said that the apprenticeship programs have been very successful in Europe, especially Germany for youth who are not college bound.

Francisco Brea said that the good thing about having labor at the table is that we have an opportunity to try to make things work. We will try to cooperate when possible in order for the kids to get work.

Cristy then continued her report and spoke about WIA In-School Youth Programs and the Haverhill Public Schools SNAP – Students Need a Plan. This year's program enrolled 16 students who are completing their internships. They will have their final presentations on Wednesday, May 14, 2014 at Haverhill High School and Student Recognition Night & Dinner is Tuesday, May 20th from 5:00 7:30 pm at the Haverhill High School Library. American Training's Senior Success Program at Methuen High School enrolled 10 student and 9 students got the attendance award for keeping attendance above 85%. All 9 Methuen students are graduating.

Cristy said that the 12th Annual Construction Career Day was held on Thursday, May 1st. 139 Youth and 25 chaperones from across our area participated. It was held at the New England Training Academy in Hopkington. Students were able to experience hands on demonstrations.

Cal then called on Joseph Miglio, Director of Cambridge College's Merrimack Valley Regional Center. Mr. Miglio said that he has been involved with Cambridge College management for ten years and is looking to develop a blue ocean model collaborating with Northern Essex Community College. He has been at the college for 25 years and he will be attending various local meetings to gather ideas and thoughts on how to provide wrap around services for youth 16 and older. The idea is to build services around career assessment and preparedness with instruction evenings and even on Sundays. They hope to expand the number and types of courses that provide college credit. He also said they are looking at partnering with NECC on an ELL program based on math and computers.

IV. Special Presentation

Cal then introduced Stephanie Cross, Science Coordinator at the Lawrence Family Development Charter School. Ms. Cross was nominated by the WIB for an award from the 2014 English Works Coalition for educators in the field of science. She won and will be traveling to Las Vegas to receive this national award.

Ms. Cross began her remarks noting that more than ever the world needs good engineers. However, she said that the pool of talent is shrinking and not growing. She said that educators need to bring the world and the skills and challenges of the 21st century to students. One way to do this is through introducing our students to Engineering as an academic challenge. Students sometimes rise to the problem solving challenge when they sense that teachers don't have all the answers. Teaching and learning can be approached in multiple ways.

At LFDCS she said that they have been working on bringing Engineering skills to the students for the last 6 years. They started off by introducing Engineering in 5th and 6th grade with curriculum materials that were given away at a Museum of Science Open House. Ms. Cross said that they made juice box windmills with 5th graders and Popsicle stick bridges with 6th graders. A grant then allowed the purchase of multiple Engineering Kits for the Lower and Upper Schools. Projects have included Acoustical Engineering, Agricultural Engineering and Environmental Engineering. She said that they also developed the English language skills of the students that enabled them to access this curriculum. She said that they are seeing significant gains in overall listening and reading comprehension skills.

Ms. Cross continued stating that three years into the initiative they embarked on a transformative partnership with the University of Mass/Lowell School of Engineering through Professor John McKelliget. The 7th graders started off visiting the School of Engineering and there Stephanie said that she met Professor Ed Hajduk who suggested some After School engineering projects. The first year they ran a Bridge Building and Breaking Competition with only 13 students. The next year they added Future Cities and asked students to imagine a city of the future 150 years from now. There were a

total of 24 students in both activities in the second year. Ms. Cross said that this year they added the Carrero Challenge Cup for 4th graders. This is modeled on the Deans Engineering Cup at UML. She said that Prof. Hajduk thought engineering activities to their 4th graders with short engineering challenges in Civil, Plastics, Chemical and Mechanical Engineering. This year there were 45 students involved in the After School Engineering programs.

She continued stating that they have also connected with Mr. Reed Brockman, President of the Boston Society for Civil Engineers and Regional Coordinator for Future Cities who came and judged our first competition. The partnership with UML has been a key part of this program and she said that they have attracted an equal number of boys and girls. The mentors from UML are typically male. Ms. Cross said that one of her goals is see more LFDCS female Engineer enrolled at UML. This year with the aid of the MVWIB they were able to run the greatest number of engineering programs and to increase the number of students exposed to quality engineering educational experiences. Rafael said that no WIA funds were used to fund LFDCS but rather DOE funding in partnership with Metro North WIB. Ms. Cross was nominated for Inspiring English Skills in students and won.

Megan Shea asked if it was filtering up to the classroom and Stephanie said they are not that far yet but are partnering with NECC for 6th graders for pre and post testing. Howard Allen then spoke about smart rooms and students learning on iPads at the third grade level. He said that this increases team building and collaboration.

V. Partner's Information

Megan Shea said that they have completed their 4th cohort for CNC and all passed. She said that 26 graduated and 24 are employed. They are starting Nurse's Aide training and a new manufacturing consortium with WIBS and the college for 20 people with 60 hours of math.

Francisco Brea spoke about an upcoming Cape Cod conference on Wednesday, May 21st, called Connecting Jobs with Community. He said that he would email information to the council members in the event they wish to attend.

VI. Adjournment

Having no further business Howard Allen made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Francisco Brea. Motion passed and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Kivell

Mary Kivell
Recorder