



# YOUTH COMMITTEE

## MINUTES

Wednesday, April 12, 2017  
Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Board  
255 Essex Street, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Lawrence, MA 01840

### **Youth Committee MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Howard Allen, Francisco Brea, Brad Howell, April Lyszkowsky, Tom Raiche, Lisa Remington, David Tagliaferri, Ellen Weinhold, Cal Williams

### **MVWIB Youth Committee MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Liz Bennett, Michael Bevilacqua, Irene Chalek, Kelly Conlin, Beverly DeSalvo, Sonia Morales, Donna Rivera, Ed Warnshuis

### **MVWIB Staff Present:**

Susan Almono, Cristy Gomez, Corina Ruiz

### **Guest Present:**

Derek Mitchell, Sarah Starkweather

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

A quorum being present Cal Williams called the meeting to order at 11:40 a.m. Cal asked everyone to take a moment of silence in the loving memory of Mary Kivell who passed away unexpectedly April 11<sup>th</sup>. Introductions were made around the table.

### **II. Approval of the January 11, 2017 Minutes**

Cal Williams called for a motion to approve the minutes of the January 11, 2017 minutes.

**Motion by Ellen Weinhold, seconded by Howard Allen, to approve the minutes of the January 11, 2017 meeting as submitted. Motion passed.**

### **III. Guest Speaker**

Cal introduced guest speaker, Derek Mitchell from the Lawrence Partnership (LP). Derek said the Lawrence Partnership comprised of leaders from business, education,

healthcare, non-profit and government sectors who have come together to realize an economic development strategy that benefits residents, repurposes infrastructure, and seeks to lift all for greater prosperity. By its nature, LP is a collaborative body that convenes stakeholders to implement projects and ideas that nobody would have the capacity to do independently. There are many initiatives in process, ranging from complex multi-year plans to short-term solutions.

To understand business needs the Lawrence Partnership surveyed 100 companies two years. The survey focused on the healthcare and manufacturing industries. To support the manufacturing survey findings, Northern Essex community College was awarded lead partner for a Mechatronics training which will be hosted by Greater Lawrence Technical School. The survey also showed demand for entry level positions such as CNA/HHA and Medical Assistants (MA) in healthcare.

To address the need for CNA/HHA and MA's, a Healthcare pilot program has been formed. Derek came to describe this program to the Youth Committee today since its focus is youth. It will create a new pipeline of bi-lingual, highly proficient high school graduates into the healthcare field through an innovative 'earn and learn' model. There will be two cohorts starting in June 2017 of recent Lawrence High School graduates who will be hand-picked to participate in training programs while also working part time. The trainings will be fully paid by the employer partners while the work component will be subsidized through the MVWIB Summer YouthWorks program.

The participating employer partners are Greater Lawrence Family Health Center, Pentucket Medical, Holy Family Hospital, Lawrence General Hospital, Mary Immaculate Health Care Services and Home Health Foundation. One cohort will earn Medical Assistant qualifications while the other will earn CNA/HHA certificates. The CNA/HHA and Medical Assisting (MA) trainings will be provided by NECC and LARE. Upon completion of the training program, employers are committing to hiring the candidates for a year.

Howard Allen asked if there is a limitation on recruitment and Derek said yes. At this time the program is being offered to Lawrence High School seniors but if we do a great job this will be cost effective model that can be expanded.

Lisa Remington said VWCC has a hard time placing MA graduates in employment. If the employers are committing to hiring the students post training, that is a plus. She would like to connect with Lawrence General Hospital for future MA graduates.

Derek concluded by saying that by mid-summer the stakeholders will reconvene and consider how the program participants can move up the career ladder.

Heather asked if creating an apprenticeship was explored and Derek said no. Lisa said that based on the program description it can easily be transformed into an

apprenticeship. Susan Almono said the MVWIB can help in getting this program approved as an apprenticeship if that is what's decided.

Ellen asked who are the manufacturing employers and Derek said it's a regional collaboration. Lisa said there's the Northeast Advance Manufacturing Consortium and Mass MEP. Through NAMC there's CNC machining and quality control training at NECC and GLTS.

Cal asked if Labor is at the table and Derek said no. Holy Family Hospital works through their union but they haven't been present in discussions. Francisco suggested getting them involved and offered to help.

Cal thanked Derek and invited him to an end of summer meeting to give an update on the program.

#### **IV. Program Update**

Cristy described the status of the MVWIB and VWCC youth programs. Through the Connecting Activities grant, a Job Shadow day took place last week for 15 Lawrence High School Learning Center students. For the first time they were able to use the Lawrence Firefighters as a site. Lawrence General Hospital had students shadow professionals for the day. There were 13 companies in the area that were willing to participate.

Cristy said that the staff is now transitioning into the summer YouthWorks program. The recruitment for the summer YouthWorks started and she asked that all meeting attendees spread the word. Any youth from Lawrence, Haverhill or Methuen between the ages of 14-21 can apply. This year, if a student received free or reduced lunch at school, documentation for family size is not needed. The enrollment numbers decreased this year to 229 from 268 due to the minimum wage increasing to \$11 hour and a decrease in funding. Youth's will be able to work 30 hours a week for approximately six weeks. Cristy said that if any employer is interested in being a site to contact her. Ellen asked how many slots there are for Methuen and Cristy said 23 for Methuen, 69 for Haverhill and 137 for Lawrence. Cristy said this year we are participating in the healthcare LHS pilot program Derek just described.

The MVWIB partnered with GLTS and Haverhill HS on a new Connecting Activities Healthcare Careers in STEM grant that will end June 30<sup>th</sup>. . Different activities are underway at Haverhill HS, including two job shadow days. One took place at Holy Family Hospital where students learned how doctors are using robotic arms to perform surgery; the other took place at Lawrence General Hospital. MVWIB youth staff will be doing career exploration and work readiness workshops at GLTS and Haverhill HS for juniors.

Cristy concluded by saying the MVWIB is in the process of hiring an intern to help with the CA STEM program and the YouthWorks Summer.

Cal asked if the Mayor was running his summer youth program and Cristy said not that we are aware of.

#### **V. Partner's Information**

April Lyszkowsky said YouthBuild will be affected by budget cuts. YouthBuild will be submitting an application to DOL with award announcements happening in July. YouthBuild Lawrence is very vulnerable right now and this may be the last class if funding isn't received. They are doing other things and recently developed a comprehensive youth development program to be able to serve specifically out-of-school youth between the ages of 16-24 who have had significant issues. April made an appeal to the committee to support them in the application to the DOL.

Brad Howell hopes Career Resources is minimally affected by public funding cuts. They are more focused on Mass Health reform since they have some Mass Health funded programs. They are also serving special education in-schoolers through an internship program funded by Mass Rehab Commission (MRC). This program was put together because of WIOA's focus on youth, so 15% of MRC's budget was re-designed to serve youth. They are serving 20 youth referred from the Lawrence MRC office and waiting to hear about funding for program expansion to serve 40 more youth with disabilities that will ultimately lead to job placement. Brad said that most of the youth are seniors or aging out of the special education system. So far 85% of the students are on the autism spectrum. Career Resources is working with employers in setting up these internships with the long term goal of youth employment. Brad mentioned that in the past a Mass Rehab person sat at the table and Cal said that person retired. Cal will talk to Rafael about having MRC presence at the Youth Committee.

Sarah Starkweather said GLTS has all the approvals in place for the new STEAM Innovation Academy partnering with MIT, and it will be accepting the first freshmen this fall. GLTS is also breaking ground on their new football field.

David Tagliaferri said DMH is in the process of re-procurement. There's a lot of ambiguity since funding will be impacted by Mass Health. DMH will not know what the structure will look like until mid-summer and right up until then, it is status quo. David said that from a vocational stand point, they struggle with getting kids work. From a provider's standpoint, Vinfen is their biggest provider and they are in constant need of CNAs. It would be good to connect Vinfen to the program Derek talked about and use the schools as a feeder system to fill those positions. Brad added that there are nine group homes in the area and if the CNAs from the pilot program don't get certifications they can still work at the group homes in positions which don't have the CNA title (nor require the certificate) but do CNA functions. Susan asked the average wage for that position and Brad responded that it's about the same as the CNA's rate.

Ellen Weinhold said April is child abuse prevention month. Her institution had their annual breakfast and awarded the Larry and Eileen Giordano this year. The fundraising efforts will start with the 16th Annual DRIVE AGAINST CHILD ABUSE Golf Tournament, raising funds for Michael B. Christensen Family Support Center on May 15, 2017. They have a lot of sponsors and will be having a cannon this year. Ellen is taking \$1.00 dollar donation with 100% of the proceeds going directly to the center in Lawrence which does child abuse prevention.

Francisco Brea said funds are annually allocated for apprenticeship programs and at this moment it is uncertain how they will be impacted by the anticipated budget cuts. The hope is that they will be level funded. Francisco mentioned being a part of the planning process of the MVWIB STEPP program, which provides CDL training through Teamsters Local 25. Cal added that one of the problems encountered was finding suitable candidates who could pass a drug test and have a clean driving record.

Lisa Remington said there's still WIOA youth training funds and if we used up 10 more slots we would deplete all of the WIOA monies for this year. She said youth need to have a high school diploma to participate in training.

VWCC will be doing an orientation hosted by a guidance counselor for North Andover and Lawrence schools graduating seniors and perhaps this is something that can be done for YouthBuild youth.

There will be 24 openings for CNC training and 13 slots for quality training. The VWCC is looking for 17-29 year olds, they want 75% of the individuals to be young people moving into the manufacturing field and then growing from there. Lisa passed out flyers and emphasized that participants in the CNC training need to pass a CORI because training will be held at the vocational school. They do need strong math skills but math tutoring will be offered two afternoons for three weeks.

## **VI. WIOA Update**

Susan Almono said WIOA came into effect in 2014 but is being slowly implemented. DOL gets guidance which they pass down to the State and then down to us at the local level. There are a couple of guidelines in WIOA that the WIB has been working on for the last couple of months.

The RFP for OSCC operator was one of them. We received two proposals, one from our current operator, the City of Lawrence, and the other from NECC. A review committee made up of 11 reviewers made the unanimous recommendation to select NECC. April asked if that information is public and Susan said yes. You can visit the City of Lawrence website for a copy of the RFP, find the proposals submitted on the MVWIB website, or contact Rafael for additional information. Susan continued by saying that come July 1<sup>st</sup>, we will have a new operator. The staff, location and services will remain

essentially the same. Staff will go from being City employees to State employees. Tom Raiche asked about staff pension and Susan said all that is being worked out by City of Lawrence and NECC HR's. Susan clarified that this does not pertain to WIB staff, only VWCC and that President Lane Glenn will be talking to the staff in the afternoon.

Susan said the WIB is also working on partner MOUs. WIOA mandates that certain entities be partners with the career center because of the many customers shared. WIOA also mandates that the career center receives some funding from the partners to cover shared infrastructure. The designated partners are DTA, MRC, MCB, ABE ESOL providers and Senior Network but the MVWIB is willing to talk to other partners.

The WIB is starting to work on a regional plan. WIOA asks us to do a larger regional plan that includes the MVWIB, Greater Lowell WIB and North Shore WIB. In addition to that we are bringing together education and economic development. A big part of regional planning is economic development and how businesses can be attracted to the region. We are training our job seekers to receive certifications to fill positions in these businesses. There will be a regional planning kick-off on April 19<sup>th</sup> and we'll be working on this over the next year. April asked who will be part of the regional planning and Susan said staff from the three WIBs and economic development agencies from the mentioned regions. Susan said the process is being defined and how the planning will take shape hasn't been decided yet.

The WIB goes through a certification process and there are certain requirements that we have to fulfill to be certified as a WIB. At this point, we continue to do what is asked of us to be certified by the state. The day may come when we hear from the state that sixteen regions will be consolidated into seven regions. But that is years away if it were to happen at all. Brad asked if the chambers are involved and Susan said they are a part of the Board. At time Amesbury Chamber is not on our Board but they have been in the past.

## **VII. Other Business**

Tom Raiche said he went to the United Way meeting this morning and saw a young adult he knew from 2001 who was in and out of trouble. This person was riding the T going to the painters union where he has been working for the past 16 years. We talked about apprentice programs and this is the success stories we want to hear.

Susan added that from the first cohort of the STTEP program, five of the six graduates are working. One of them is a person who had been working part-time during training at a gas station making \$11.00/hr. and now has a union job with Boston Sand and Gravel making \$25/hr. He now has a foundation to build an economically stable life.

Cristy said that for the YouthWorks year-round program the enrollment number was met and out of the 26 enrollees, five youth found full-time employment.

**VIII. Adjourn**

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

Respectfully submitted,

*Corina Ruiz*

Corina Ruiz

Recorder