



YOUTH COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Wednesday, October 11, 2017
Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Board
255 Essex Street, 4th Floor
Lawrence, MA 01840

Youth Committee MEMBERS PRESENT:

Francisco Brea, April Lyskowsky, Tom Raiche, Lisa Remington, Howard Allen, Cal Williams, Brad Howell, Katherine Sweeney

MVWIB Youth Committee MEMBERS ABSENT:

Michael Bevilacqua, Irene Chalek, Kelly Conlin, Beverly DeSalvo, Sonia Morales, Ed Warnshuis, David Tagliaferri, Ellen Weinhold

MVWIB Staff Present:

Rafael Abislaiman, Cristy Gomez, Matthias Bohler

Guest Present:

Jackie Romero, Linda Rohrer

I. Call to Order & Introductions

Cal Williams called the meeting to order at 12:05 p.m. Introductions were made around the table.

II. Approval of the June 14, 2017 Minutes

Cal Williams called for a motion to approve the minutes of the June 14, 2017 meeting.

Motion by Francisco Brea, seconded by April Lyskowsky, to approve the minutes of the June 14, 2017. Motion passed unanimously.

III. Guest Speaker

Rafael Abislaiman introduced Matthias Bohler, current MVWIB program and monitoring manager, as the guest speaker. Matthias introduced himself and spent a few minutes talking about his previous job in the private sector and how he transitioned to the MVWIB due to its workforce development mission. It can have a really positive impact

on the on underemployed / unemployed. Matthias continued with a slide deck presentation that provided background on the Skills Training for Transportation and Equipment Operation (STTEP) job training program funded by Commonwealth Corporation. Matthias spoke about the need for the program, both from the perspective of the employer as well as from the job seeker.

Lawrence currently enjoys low unemployment but its residents are still saddled with a 29% poverty rate. Matthias spoke about how many Lawrence residents are stuck in menial, low paying, dead end jobs. He explained how the STTEP program provides residents with CDL B training, OSHA 10 Construction Safety, Hoisting 2A / 1C license, job readiness skills and mentorship. He went on to highlight key program successes and outcomes. Including coverage by the Boston Globe for which CommCorp interviewed participants as well as their employer Boston Sand and Gravel.

IV. Program Update

Cristy Gomez gave an update on the Summer YouthWorks program and emphasized that it was truly a terrific this year. Cristy mentioned that the Summer team was expanded and relied on external facility space due to limited capacity at the new 255 Essex Street location. Lawrence High School, Lawrence Public Library, Silver Hill Charter School of Haverhill and the YMCA of Lawrence were all used for training. Fortunately, none of these venues charged fees.

Cristy discussed the nature of the triple funding streams for the program. In addition to Youthworks, there was an additional \$20K from Mass Housing to place youth from housing projects. We placed 11 of these youth in jobs. Career readiness training was not required for this cohort, but orientation sessions on safety were provided.

Overall, Youthworks staff was very busy. There were 521 good application during the span of a short duration six week window. 375 were from Lawrence, 48 from Methuen, 97 from Haverhill and 1 from Salem, MA. The 20% pool included DYS, DCS, Homeless and Court involved youth. Partner agencies were helpful in referring the youth they serve to our program.

241 youth were trained. 235 completed 15 hours of the Signal Success curriculum. 227 youth were placed in subsidized jobs [186 (from the 80% pool and 41 youth from 20% category)]. 8 new BOG youth participated. Overall, the youth performed very well and made a very positive impression on employers per the feedback gathered from the team. CommCorp performed announced site visits at four job sites (two in Lawrence / two in Haverhill) and were very pleased with what they observed.

Companies / organizations like Heavenly Donuts, YMCA, Pentucket Medical, Greater Lawrence Health Center and Dairy Queen ultimately hired our Youthworks youth.

MVWIB is applying for Youthworks year-round. Only 5 in the region will be awarded. We are eagerly awaiting CommCorp's ultimate selection. MVWIB received an extension on the Amp it Up initiative. The new end date for the grant has been extended to December 31st, 2017.

This month is manufacturing month and Brian Norris from NAMC, as well as connecting activities staff, are collaborating to familiarize high school youth to advanced manufacturing field through career awareness seminars and worksite activities. Tours are underway to engage 15 youth from the Lawrence High School Learning Center to visit and experience manufacturing facilities in the Merrimack Valley. One company of note is a local manufacturer that makes small components used for dental implants.

V. Partner's Information

Cal made mention that Linda has been with VWCC for 2 months and asked Linda how things are going. Linda informed the group that things are going well and she's finding a lot of value in getting out to meet community partners. Linda continues to organize her team by business sectors, making slight organizational improvements that focus on customer flow.

Linda is working very closely with the Northern Essex Community College and their students. She envisions placing some of their students into jobs posted at VWCC.

Francisco provided an update on the Summer Rapid Response Summit that took place in Boston. Francisco characterized the conference as a great success and emphasized also the success of apprentices that participated and graduated from this Summer's Hopkinton Trades Apprenticeship program. Francisco mentioned that about 19 youth completed the program.

April provided an update on the Lawrence Family Development Education Fund – Youth Build has moved to their new location on Canal Street. They are housed with the Lawrence Public School Rise Up Program. They have also re-secured the safe and secure streets grant. They are very happy with the new location and the build out was a great experience for all.

Kathleen from MRC informed the group that MassRehab staff was awarded a grant to increase the number of students that they work with. They are working with Lawrence high School and Newburyport High School students in need of employment assistance. They are working closely with Career Resources.

VI. WIOA Update

No update.

VII. Other Business

The STEM Summit is coming up Nov 14 at the DCU Center in Worcester. There is a \$50 fee.

VIII. Adjourn

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

Respectfully submitted,

Matthias Bohler

Matthias Bohler
Recorder