



MERRIMACK VALLEY WORKFORCE BOARD

Greater Lawrence Technical School
57 River Road, Four Winds Cafe
Andover, MA 01810

QUARTERLY MEETING

Minutes
Tuesday, October 29, 2019
7:30 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Bob Wescott, Juan Yepez, Calvin Williams, Ron Contrado, Jeff Linehan, Fred Shaheen, Carol Riemer, Chris Brennan, Allison Dolan-Wilson (for Lane Glenn), Rosa Munoz, Supt. Lavoie, Marko Duffy, Josselyn Marte, Andrew Herlihy, Supt. Maureen Lynch, Calvin Williams

Staff: Mike Paglia, Sabrina Boggio, Abel Vargas, Corina Ruiz, Linda Roherer, Susan Almono, Cristy Gomez, Yeang Leng, Robin Del Negro, Rosangela Amaro

Guests: ?

1. CALL TO ORDER

A quorum being present, Chairman Yepez called the meeting to order at 7:55am

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE July 22, 2019 MEETING (VOTE REQUIRED)

Chairman Yepez called for a motion on the minutes of the July 22, 2019 board meeting.

Motion by Calvin Williams, seconded by Ron Contrado to approve the minutes of the July 2019 meeting as submitted.

Motion passed unanimously.

3. WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

Chairman Yepez thanked everyone for attending and thanked Supt. Lavoie for hosting our meeting.

Supt. Lavoie welcomed everyone to Greater Lawrence Technical School. Thanks to the WB and CC, our students and many others have gained the skills necessary to build a strong career and a strong community. 21 Vocational/technical programs. New program – Robotics, Automation and Mechatronics – where they are developing technicians to repair robots, automated equipment, etc. Seeking \$1.5million for a Photonic Program to train technicians in this upcoming field. Working to develop more programs in the STEM fields such as Advanced Fabrics, etc. where students will be able to move on to studying engineering or go straight into the field.

4. REPORT OF CHAIR

Update on the Essex Street building. The required air handler equipment has been ordered.

- Move in date is approximately mid-January.
- There is also a request to the state for a deep clean of the building.
- Once all of the work has been completed, the City will administer an air safety test.
- Fortunately, there has not been a drop in service and the WB and CC have continued work to our customers.

The state has made progress on a cross-agency tracking tool in Workforce Connect. For many years, there's been an effort to address the needs of our shared customers. This is a new tool that will allow such as DTA and ESOL providers to track referring services to and from the career center. There will be a pilot roll out later this year in December.

Our region will be participating on a pilot program in partnership with the Department of Housing and Community Development. This effort looks to deliver services to Section 8 Voucher recipients that will support them in their job search or increased wages. The model will allow for 1 full time staff person funded through DHCD that will split their time between Lowell and Lawrence. The program is paired with the ability of recipients to continue receiving benefits even if their wages increase.

Abel noted the progress being made to make sure all are comfortable when we return.

Rob W Q: is any of the cost recoverable?

Abel A: the state is contributing a portion and the city is covering the rest.

New Board Member – Juan welcomed Marko Duffy.

Marko – went through Lawrence Leads w Abel and Ann Marie previously, working in manufacturing in Lawrence for years, has had other partnerships with the WB. Breakout project from the Lawrence Leads program along with Brian Norris from NAMC, Lawrence Partnership, Lawrence CommunityWorks and MH to bring bilingual manufacturing to the area. Bring innovative ways to manufacturers to help solve their problems and fill their needs (ex: technical training, or translating job applications to attract worthy candidates who may just have a language barrier)

Abel there have been ongoing conversations around a Bilingual Manufacturing program.

5. REPORTS OF COMMITTEE CHAIRS

- ***Planning/Career Center Committee (Ann Marie Borges)***

One quarter in to the fiscal year and we are running on target. Thanked and recognized the work of the CC for staying on target despite the move to temporary space.

\$40K for the YouthWorks Summer Pilot for Weatherization Technician training for at risk young adults to fill employer demand; done in partnership w Columba Gas.

\$257k to train incumbent healthcare workers. GLFHC and LGH are working with MH to identify 30 incumbent workers at less than \$15/hr to participate in an evening program at GLTS with childcare to build their skills. Through the spring and then do an internship, upon graduation they will be given a full time position at the higher wage.

Abel echoed his excitement for the program.

Lavoie Q: involved w the apprenticeship by the governor?

Abel A: we participated in those meetings but not sure they are 100% ready (healthcare? Vs IT)

Ann Marie A: healthcare apprenticeship issues have to be certified and have not overcome that obstacle to have an uncertified apprentice working in the field. How to enable an apprentice that doesn't have that

- ***Youth Committee (Calvin Williams)***

WB worked with local employers to provide area youth with the opportunity to gain invaluable work experience through YouthWorks, LEAD and MassHousing Summer programs.

248 youth were placed in subsidized jobs:

179 from Lawrence

50 from Haverhill

18 from Methuen

1 from Lowell

Hosted by 66 partner employers

\$158,000 was generated in unsubsidized wages for our region's youth

Recently piloted a career pathway YouthWorks program in Weatherization Retrofit Installer Certification Training, thanks to funding from the Commonwealth Corporation. 8/10 of the youth are currently working out in the field in Green Jobs with opportunities for advancement and a livable wage.

As we continue to align our youth programs, through a 2nd YouthWorks pilot, 12 co-enrolled YouthWorks/Connecting Activities participants were retained by their summer host employers or gain subsidized employment. We will continue to grow our college and career readiness resources, unsubsidized employment and internship opportunities, especially in the STEM fields to link classroom learning to the world of work.

The YouthWorks Year Round program has been granted to train eligible youth as Automotive Services Technicians. Training is scheduled to start in January.

Thanks MH for their outstanding work with the youth this year

- ***Nominating Committee (Karen Conard)***

Absent - Nothing to report

- ***Finance Report (Bob Wescott)***

Noted that one of the indicators of quality of the Workforce Board and the operations of the Career Center is the range of projects and the amount of grant money that has been able to be brought in. It is a sign of partners' willingness to work with us and the quality of our operation in the Merrimack Valley.

Great to know that when you spot a need, you can apply for the money needed to put it into place.

Thank you to Tracy and the Fiscal team for the quality of the accounting.

- ***Election of Officers (Juan Yopez)***

Proposing the same slate.

Karen does have a new job and we have not yet received a resignation letter from her. Will need to hold off election of the Nominating Chairperson.

Motion by Fred Shaheen, seconded by Maureen Lynch to table the nomination for the Nominating Committee. Motion passed unanimously.

Joselyn Q: what are they responsible for?

Abel A: screening the candidates

6. REPORT OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Northeast Regional Planning presentation – covers our service areas to show where are the jobs, where are the training resources, and who are the people in this area?

Main areas: manufacturing, healthcare and IT.

Northeast Manufacturing has heavy concentrating in Lawrence, Lowell, Newburyport and in Peabody, Beverly/Danvers and Gloucester (business parks). Here public transportation within the city is very low.

Healthcare employment concentration is closely aligned with our major hospitals – smaller healthcare facilities everywhere – same issue with transportation.

In regards to IT – there are more jobs in Lowell than Lawrence. Question in regards to how many are transporting to these jobs.

NE Region Workforce Demographic Indicators

- Downtown Lynn, Lowell, Lawrence, Haverhill and a small portion of Salem have the highest % of population with less than a high school diploma. What part does the community college and technical high schools play where there are opportunities to train people.
- Under 65 are clustered near Lowell
- Poverty centers are in the larger cities

Yepez Q: further conversation regarding transportation – the medical course that we will be offering, it includes childcare so that more have the opportunity to participate. The other question will be transportation – will there be grants to take them to and from classes.

Susan A: it is often included but then the issue is once they are hired, how will get to help. So the focus is more on how to get them living wage jobs so they can afford their own transportation. Second Chance Cars takes donations of cars and then screens people to see who has the need to give them the cars.

Joselyn:

Abel: housing is also an issue – areas where the rent had been cheaper, they are no longer or they are further away – adding to the cost of transportation, leading to unintended consequences.

Juan: some employers in the City have noted that the rent has gone from \$900 to \$1300 and many are subletting rooms to make up for the increase. And there are other apartments in the newly refinished mills that are \$2,000 and up

Jeff: comment about the retirement rate or age? Florida, New Hampshire

Abel: the incentives of working in Boston vs MV. In terms of age – are people aging out? People are working longer. In manufacturing the average is 61 and it has gone up over the years.

W Greater Lowell and North Shore, we are going to have more conversations

“Last mile” transportations solutions

Andrew Herlihy – greater Haverhill transportation group came to an innovative idea to utilize the Uber-style transportation to solve the “last mile” transportation issue.

7. OTHER BUSINESS

8. ADJOURNMENT

Having no further business Chairman Yepez called for a motion to adjourn.

Bob Wescott made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Fred Shaheen. Motion passed, and meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Sabrina Boggio
 Recorder