



# MERRIMACK VALLEY WORKFORCE BOARD

Holy Family Hospital - Haverhill  
140 Lincoln Ave, Haverhill Auditorium  
Haverhill, MA 01830

## QUARTERLY MEETING

Minutes  
Thursday, July 18, 2019  
7:30 a.m.

### MEMBERS PRESENT:

Ann Marie Borges, Juan Yepez, Calvin Williams, Karen Conard, Jeff Linehan, Ron Contrado, Carol Riemer, Joseph Bevilacqua, Joselyn Marte, Supt. John Lavoie, Marianne Paley Nadel, Robin Hynds, Francisco Brea, Andrew Herilhy

### MEMBERS ABSENT:

Edward Bartkiewicz, Christian Brennan, Evelyn Friedman, Rosa Muñoz, Bob Westcott, Supt. Maureen Lynch, Stanley Usovich, Steve Salvo, Dr. Lane Glenn, Beverly Donovan, Ellen Weinhold

**Staff:** Abel Vargas, Susan Almono, Linda Roeher, Brian Norris, Mike Paglia, Sabrina Boggio

**Guests:** Pam Price (Assistant Economic Development Director)

### 1. CALL TO ORDER

A quorum being present, Chairman Yepez called the meeting to order at 7:44 a.m.

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

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

**Motion by Joseph Bevilacqua, seconded by Juan Yepez to approve the minutes of the January 22, 2019 meeting as submitted. Motion passed unanimously.**

### 3. WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

Chairman Yepez thanked everyone for attending and thanked Paul Smith for hosting our meeting.

Paul Smith welcomed everyone to Holy Family Hospital.

### 4. REPORT OF CHAIR

Chairman Yepez started with the status of 255 Essex Street.

Career Center has been moved to 78 Amesbury Street. Workforce Board is a Riverwalk.

Since moving in 2015 concerns about the air quality have persisted. Localized instances of mold and leaky pipes around duct work. Deemed not a threat if handled quickly. Mold found in basement has yet to be determined. The biggest cited issue was the lack of air circulation.

The city is in the process of designing the fix and will work on the issue as soon as possible. It could be 60 days until the fix has been made.

Chairmain Yepez opened it up to questions. Abel Vargas mentioned that whatever fixes and installations need to be made, the City will cover the cost. MassHire has requested to put a hold on the rent until the issue can be resolved. Attempts to make fixes along the way have been made.

Linda Roeher added that it “was almost miraculous what happened over the weekend” with the IT staff working Saturday and Sunday to get the Career Center set up in the new location to continue service smoothly into the next business day on Monday.

Ron asked about the costs that have been incurred and also if anyone has been sick due to the issue. Abel Vargas mentioned that people have submitted complaints for respiratory issues but it has not escalated to a legal matter. Linda Roeher mentioned that individuals have cited instances of respiratory issues and pneumonia but it is unclear if the building is the exact cause to the issues.

Joseph Bevilacqua inquired if people will not be allowed in until there is environmental clearance. Abel Vargas confirmed.

Karen Conard asked if a vote is needed to acknowledge the minimum expectations of the city in terms of cost for the rent and repairs. Chairmain Yepez mentioned there may be a clause that the tenant is responsible for any repairs to the building but this is a pre-existing issue. Supt. Lavoie noted that the city does own the building. John motioned to vote to support the Secretary’s recommendation, Joseph Bevilacqua seconded. Motion passed.

Supt. Lavoie asked if there is a facilities manager. Chairman Yepez answered Glenn Gary on behalf of the City. Abel Vargas answered that there is a 3<sup>rd</sup> party custodial staff that is separate. Supt. Lavoie asked about the responsiveness – Linda Roeher

Joseph Bevilacqua mentioned the involvement of the Secretary – potential filing with the EP to have an air quality specialist to come in. the air quality was agreed upon by the state and the college. Dept. of Labor Standards are project managing the response. It has not gotten to the point of EP.

Marianna Paley Nadel asked if there is a time limit for the two sites that MassHire has been moved to temporarily. Abel Vargas and Juan mentioned that one of the buildings is Northern Essex so that is internal to them. Riverwalk is to be determined.

#### **4. REPORTS OF COMMITTEE CHAIRS**

- ***Planning/Career Center Committee***

We are running at about 74% of goals for adults and 45% for youth. Some of the goals do exceed some of the metro area goals and hope to have more realistic goal for the future. Fortunately, the funds can be carried over into the next fiscal year.

Abel Vargas noted that we have to do better at identifying individuals in the community. Recognize that there are challenges meeting those numbers but also recognize that there are people out there that have a need. Linda Roeher mentioned that CC is working collaboratively with WB.

- ***Youth Committee***

Connecting Activities received additional funding to recruit 3 GLTS STEM teachers for teacher externships. The teachers will need to work for 50hrs and upon successful completion, will receive a \$7,000 stipend. Managing the program is Fitchburg State University and our employers are Crystal Engineering, GLFHC, and Straumann. This will enhance the students’ classroom experience.

The YouthWorks Summer program had 214 youth completed 15 hours of Signal Success curriculum to prepare them for subsidized employment. This is a comprehensive curriculum designed/tested by education and workforce development partners to help young people develop the skills that are essential for future success.

Calvin Williams thanked Supt. Lavoie of GLTS for his involvement.

Mass Housing received funding to provide meaningful work experience to youth who are residing in the local housing courts. These youth will be able to work 125 hours at \$12 per hour.

Calvin Williams thanked the staff at CC WB for helping the youth.

- ***Nominating Committee***

Karen Conard – nothing to report

- ***Finance Report***

In the absence of the Treasurer, Abel Vargas presented the Finance Report.

Abel Vargas mentioned that we are underspent in many areas.

Hired an Administrative Assistant for the Workforce Board – Sabrina Boggio, Lawrence community member.

There are a few positions that have not yet been hired for – note

PolarTech funds – lay off meant that a lot of people needed a lot of services with case management, rapid response, etc. Abel Vargas mentioned that we have been advocating to get those funds for a while now and we have not been successful but it is starting to become more promising.

Services rendered by the CC and WB but have not been compensated for yet.

Abel Vargas reviewed the work in regards to Columbia Gas disaster and helping to find new employment

Budget is still not ready due to the allocations from the state being stalled. Still have to go through the process with NECC to go through the numbers. In the past the WB has voted for the Planning Committee to review.

**Motion by Joseph Bevilacqua, seconded by Juan Yopez to approve the budget as submitted. Motion passed unanimously.**

## **5. REPORT OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Abel Vargas explained that they continue to figure out ways to manage the coordination between employers and job seekers. Brian Norris has done a lot of great work to set up apprenticeships and training for 83 individuals in manufacturing. There about 3k job postings out in the market so we are making a small dent but continue to work to find job seekers and prepare them for this area.

Healthcare issue still continues to be a big thing in regards to reimbursements and billing rates for CNAs for example. There are a lot of HHAs and CNA positions vacant but has not been as attractive to fill due to the compensation issue.

The population MH primarily serves with limited language skills or a limited aptitude compared to what is needed for the roles. Hard to fill some of the numbers mentioned earlier due to the limitations to those with barriers to entry. Could be a conversation for trainers.

Could we tie the test rate to the unemployment rate? Test rate is 6.9. Can we lower the test rate to meet the needs of the job seekers? Jeff Linehan asked about the Amazon project in Andover with 1500 employees. There would be opportunity for Amazon to train but that it is soon in the process. Linda Roeher explained that the CC will be connecting with Amazon when the time comes to learn what exactly they will be doing at that location so they can train and prep the job seekers. Abel Vargas' Q: are the position within Amazon that people can "train up" for. Jeff Linehan thinks it will be higher than \$15/hr. Joselyn Marte mentioned the math skills that her org can help train for. Abel Vargas talked about adding to occupational skills programming teaching English for that particular workplace. Supt. Lavoie spoke about the math and language skills and teaching beyond that – funding for training for additional opportunities to train and prep for higher level within Amazon. Pre and post assessment to reach the higher standard. Joseph Bevilacqua has the concern of lowering the requirements but then bringing the trained individuals to the company at a performance level below what is needed for the workplace. John Supt. Lavoie noted similar work between the Voke training and Brian Norris. Supt. Lavoie mentioned that there isn't an IT training in the area and it is a growing field. Abel Vargas mentioned meeting with Liz and New Balance –

Brian Norris noted the positions and training available. Supt. Lavoie mentioned that GLTS has been adapting their curriculum to match the needs of area employers like New Balance. Marianne Paley Nadel mentioned once this is developed, to promote the customization of the training programs towards each company. Brian Norris explained his program in creating apprenticeships and tying in academia, business, and workforce development – working with the tech school and the comma college. Brian Norris is trying to get everyone who has an interest to the table.

Susan Almono went into some of the programs that we have currently:

- Reintegrations to Construction Pathways Program where we have 4 cohorts graduate from the program and training is done partially with the labor unions.
- We also have SkillsBuild where we are recruiting youth for this pre-apprenticeship program that covers the construction trades.
- EPA grant CDL-B drivers to go into remediation and waste management – working with the Teamsters Union.

Joseph Bevilacqua noted that we should consider the construction industry as more of a priority due to some of the mandates that are now in place within the city. The unions have been vital in creating the apprenticeship model.

Francisco Brea – SkillsBuild and the AFL-CIO applied for funding to bring at least 20 students to the apprenticeship program. Last year there were over 20 and 19 were successfully employed. There are many people that live in the area that have the skills but may not have the specific license or the language skills needed for the position.

Joseph Bevilacqua the key is to be flexible to adapt to the industry trends.

Jeff Linehan – noted that the state is aging and retiring, we need to be prepared to replace them in the workforce. And do need more nursing staff. Abel Vargas mentioned partnering with LGH and GLFHC to obtain the funding.

Francisco Brea offered the AFL-CIO to help.

Susan Almono – noted the programs available.

## **6. OTHER BUSINESS**

Be sure to submit your signed Conflict of Interest forms if you have not done so already.

Supt. Lavoie – follow up question to previous statement regarding needing more staff in the medical field.

Ann Marie Borgesi – mentioned that GLFHC does provide internal training. There aren't specific grants from fed or state so there is a dedicated internal training and they partner with MH when applicable. GLFHC does also have the residency program for MPs, doctors and pharmacy. LGH rep explained their training opportunities. Supt. Lavoie mentioned the popularity of their programs in the health field and that students some times are turned away due to being filled.

Ann Marie Borgesi – worked with LARE to offer specific classes for MAs

## **7. ADJOURNMENT**

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

**Calvin Williams made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Francisco Brea. Motion passed, and meeting was adjourned.**

Respectfully submitted,

*Sabrina Boggio*

Recorder