



MERRIMACK VALLEY WORKFORCE BOARD

Planning/Career Center Committee

Online Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87620164053?pwd=Vm1rK3lRYU1pbFRXUUY5WU9MMjdwZz09>

Meeting ID: 890 7388 9773

Meeting Password: 087297

Thursday, May 20, 2021

9:00am

Meeting Minutes

MEMBERS IN PARTICIPATION:

Ann Marie Borgesi, Andrew Herlihy, Carol Riemer, Bob Wescott

MEMBERS ABSENT

Ron Contrado

STAFF IN PARTICIPATION:

Brian Norris, Corina Ruiz, Varsha Gandhi, Tracy Myszkowski

GUESTS IN PARTICIPATION:

Linda Rohrer

I. Approval of Minutes of the February 16, 2021 meeting (vote required)

A quorum being present, Chairwoman Ann Marie Borgesi called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m. and then called for a motion on the minutes of the February 16, 2021 meeting.

Motion by Bob Wescott, seconded by Carol Reimer, to approve the minutes of the February 16, 2021 meeting as submitted. Motion passed.

II. Performance Summary as of April 30, 2021

Ann Marie Borgesi said we should be at 83% of plan. We are on schedule on the total number of job seekers served and job seekers unemployed. We have served 4,484 UI claimants, which brings us at 99% of plan. As previously reported, we continue to see low numbers for the WIOA programs, especially the Adult and Youth categories.

Linda Rohrer said indeed we are still struggling with the WIOA Adult and Youth numbers but there are other special funding programs in the region, and we are putting people into training using those funds, like the CTI initiative. Linda said she hopes the WB can go out for bid with youth training money in FY22.

The job seekers served is at 88% and that is due to the number of people on unemployment who come to the career center to participate in the Career Center Seminar.

The entered employment rate is at 35% and that is due to people being reluctant to enter the workforce. On June 15th, the UI job search requirement will be reinstated, and we hope to see an increase in entered employment.

III. Budget Update as of April 30, 2021

Ann Marie said the budget update is as of March 31st not April 30th.

Tracy Myszkowski said that they are now caught up to with the Career Center's billing and have paid them through March 2021.

Tracy echoed what Linda said about the Youth training funds, once FY22 allocations are released, we will be talking about an RFP for youth training since we will have FY20 and FY21 lag money.

Tracy said Linda continues to work with the team on the budget needed to reopen. The state will be paying for the security guard, and we are procuring for deep cleaning before the center opens.

IV. Updates

- a. OSCC RFP:** Brian said the Career Center Operator/Service Provider Request for Proposal (RFP) was issued on April 28th. The proposal was published in the Lawrence Eagle Tribune and the Boston Globe. Notice was also sent to several dozen potential bidders, and the RFP was available for download by all vendors with access to the City of Lawrence's procurement processes. Bids are due by June 9th. We are currently assembling a Review Team to read and score the bids beginning on June 9th. We expect to submit a recommendation to Mayor Vasquez on June 17th and to issue our Notification of Decision on June 18th.
- b. 2021 Career Center Certification:** Corina stated that the Career Center Certification was completed in early May. A team comprising of Corina, Brian, Ann Marie Borgesi, and Andrew Herlihy reviewed and approved the Certification documents on May 21st and submitted the findings to the state. The OSCC Certification Policy and Procedures will be revisited once a new operator is in place to update, as necessary. Corina thanked Linda for putting the certification packet together.
- c. ESOL Program Design Grant:** Brian said the MMVWB received a Senator Kenneth J. Donnelly Workforce Success Grant for ESOL-Enhanced Training and Placement Program in manufacturing. The grant will support workforce programming that better serves individuals for whom English is not their first language and/or have limited English proficiency, resulting in improved job access and financial stability for individuals and their families while meeting employer demand for talent. Mike Paglia is leading the efforts and we will be convening partners soon, to help design an occupational skill and ESOL training program.
- d. Healthcare HUB:** Brian said the Northeast Regional grouping of the MassHire Merrimack Valley, Greater Lowell, and North Shore Workforce Boards completed the planning stage for a new Regional Healthcare HUB. We expect to receive a contract from Commonwealth Corporation to start a regional training initiative to help increase the supply of Certified Nursing Assistants and Medical Assistants in the region. The program will also offer training assistance to incumbent CNAs and MAs to help them earn higher level nursing credentials.
- e. Virtual Manufacturing Training:** Brian explained that this virtual training funded through CARES Act to assist unemployed jobseekers who have been permanently separated from

their jobs due to COVID-19. Participants will use the Tooling U platform to provide flexible and self-paced curriculum modules including access to a content expert who will provide technical and academic support to ensure a successful learning experience for the participants.

V. Career Center Report

Linda Rohrer presented an update for career center.

Round One Career Technical Institute (CTI) Training Programs. This round will be completing end of May and early June. Trainings are being held at GLTS and Whittier. The MMVCC is:

- Delivering a Job Readiness Curriculum on site at both schools (resumes, interviewing, behaviors that promote job retention and advancement)
- Virtual job fair for Advanced Manufacturing/CNC and Welding on May 25th
- Virtual job fair for Carpentry, Plumbing, HVAC, and Biotech Lab Technician on May 26th

There are two National Dislocated Worker Grants:

- Southwick/Philips/3 M Touch Systems Dislocated Worker Project
 - Development of local capacity for ESOL instruction for Southwick workers
- Massachusetts COVID-19 Disaster Recovery Dislocated Worker Grant
 - Food insecurity placements
 - Will provide support for hiring security guards for our centers

As many of you know, Amazon is opening in Haverhill. We are working closely with Amazon staff to recruit workforce.

Linda said they have been planning return to in-person services at the Career Centers. Staff will be returning on June 28th on a staggered schedule. Half the staff will work Monday and Tuesday; Wednesday all remote; Thursday and Friday the other half. Customers will be served on-site by appointment as of July 12th and the schedule is predicated upon having security guards.

VI. Other Business

Bob Wescott informed the committee of the North Andover Field of Honor 2021, which will be held May 22nd – June 13th, 2021.

VIII. Adjourn (vote required)

Having no further business, Chairwomen Borgesi called for a motion to adjourn.

Motion by Andrew Herlihy, seconded by Bob Wescott to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Corina Ruiz

Recorder