



MERRIMACK VALLEY WORKFORCE BOARD

Planning/Career Center Committee

Online Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87628113489?pwd=c21ka3BWRXBSc0pUdGdjdVJvczErUT09>

Meeting ID: 876 2811 3489

Meeting Password: 985943

Tuesday, August 25, 2020

9:00am

Meeting Minutes

MEMBERS IN PARTICIPATION:

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

MEMBERS NOT IN PARTICIPATION:

Ron Contrado

STAFF IN PARTICIPATION:

Abel Vargas, Corina Ruiz

GUESTS IN PARTICIPATION:

Linda Rohrer

I. Approval of Minutes of the June 16, 2020 meeting (vote required)

A quorum being present, Chairwoman Ann Marie Borgesi called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. and then called for a motion on the minutes of the June 16, 2020 meeting.

Motion by Carol Reimer, seconded by Andrew Herlihy, to approve the minutes of the June 16, 2020 meeting as submitted. Motion passed.

II. Performance Summary as of June 30, 2020

Abel Vargas presented the performance reports. He said that the performance numbers were not in the levels desired and it was mostly due to Covid-19.

Linda Rohrer added that it pains her to see those numbers. The career center had a couple of challenges as Abel mentioned, going back to the move to 78 Amesbury Street July 2019. Linda said she hired an Outreach Specialist and reinstated the Path to Training to help increase the training numbers.

Bob said that 1,006 entered employments seems good considering we are in a pandemic.

Abel said that the nature of how services are delivered is changing.

Andrew added that normally these numbers would not cut it, but he understands the challenges. He is happy to see the wage for Adults post training.

Ann Marie asked if other career centers are in the same situation and Abel said yes.

III. Budget Update as of June 30, 2020

Abel presented the budget report and said that because we did not administer trainings, we have extra funds.

Bob asked if the 81% of NECC expenditure is accrued and Abel said he had to check with Tracy. Bob asked if there are still issues with NECC billing and Abel said yes. Abel said that he will elaborate when they talk about the annual plan, which they are late submitting.

Andrew said that half the training money has been spent and wondered how much of the remaining funds can be carried over to FY21. Abel said everything can be carried over and Andrew added that he would hate to see training dollars allocated for something else.

IV. Recommend approval of the MMVWB FY21 Annual Plan to be submitted to City of Lawrence Mayor and DCS by August 10, 2020 (vote required)

Abel said that the annual plan is a series of charts anticipating goals for the upcoming year. He presented each chart; 1-4. He said that under the employer services, the number for new to career center was lowered a bit. Ann Marie asked if he felt comfortable with those numbers with the anticipated COVID-19 surge and Abel said that those numbers presented are business as usual.

Linda said that before Susan Almono left the WB, she did a comparison on regions. Linda said she felt a bit nervous about the goals because of customers with limited computer skills, English barrier and trainings being offered online.

Abel said that there a policy in the works on how the local area intends to engage with the public. Abel added that Lawrence is considered a red zone and that the City Hall is closed to the public.

Bob asked if the number of employers served include the number of employees and Linda said no. Linda said that the Adult training goal is higher than last year but that is because the funding is available. It's worrisome because this is the population they usually struggle with.

Ann marie asked if the State will be understanding of not being able to meet goals because of Covid-19 and not be a problem for FY22 funding. Abel said allocations are formula funding but we must also perform.

The Dislocated Worker new participant has less new participants and aligns with the funding available.

While discussing the Youth chart, Abel mentioned a possible group cohort.

Abel presented the annual plan budget summary and noted the following:

- A decrease in NAMC funding
- Budget shortfall and will be working with NECC and DCS staff
- Across the Board, a decrease in all WIOA programs

Abel said that they are not seeing a detailed budget because there are things still being worked on. He asked if the committee had any thoughts.

Abel said that there is a \$100K shortfall in the career center budget that they need to find the money for. The committee said they had the confidence the budget will be balanced and since the plan is already 15 days out, they will move with the budget as presented.

Ann Marie asked for a motion to approve the MMVWB FY21 Annual Plan to be submitted to City of Lawrence Mayor and DCS by August 10, 2020.

Motion by Bob Wescott, seconded by Ann Marie Borgesi, to approve the MMVWB FY21 Annual Plan to be submitted to City of Lawrence Mayor and DCS by August 10, 2020. Motion passed unanimously.

V. Career Center Report

Linda Rohrer presented the career center report.

Providing Services Remotely Since April 1st

Job Seekers

- Information on unemployment
- Employment counseling (phone and Zoom)
- Access to ITAs/Training
 - Barriers: vendors closed, remote math and reading assessment testing
 - Beginning Mid-June: Path to Training Webinar
- Webinars using Zoom: Resume Essentials, Interviewing Essentials, (English and Spanish), MS Word Essentials
Beginning Mid-June: Computer Essentials, MS Excel, LinkedIn Essentials, Marketing Your Maturity, Behavioral Interview Questions: Telling Your Story, Compelling Cover & Thank You Letters, Interview Mastery 2
- Job matching
- Virtual recruitments

Employers

- Information on unemployment
- Job postings
- Recruitments using Zoom
- Information and connection to resources for businesses due to COVID-19

Reopening Planning

- Planning Committee comprised of management and direct service workers
- Planning and implementing all that needs to be done to reopen to the public safely for customers and staff
 - Occupancy restrictions
 - Security
 - Customer flow and acrylic barriers

- Cleaning and disinfecting
- Supplies and PPE
- New center policies and procedures (example: temperature checks)
- Staggered staff schedule
- Unsure when center will be open to the public; security guard is needed and will be provided though grant – state is still working on the hiring process – also a committee has been formed at the state to work on creating a consistent opening schedule for centers across the state

Massachusetts COVID-19 Disaster Recovery Dislocated Worker Grant

Massachusetts awarded \$6.9 million for the following projects:

- Humanitarian Food Service Relief Project - temporary jobs for unemployed individuals in local organizations that are working to address food insecurity; training funds also available through ITAs for participants in this project
- Security guard support for MassHire Career Centers

Southwick/Brooks Brothers/Golden Fleece Closing

- 413 workers affected: 200 Limited English Spanish, 100 Limited English Vietnamese, 113 English speaking
- Closing US operations – moving offshore – will file Trade petition – National Dislocated Grant application
- Workers are coming into the center for services; currently using WIOA Dislocated Worker Program funding for training; using Rosetta Stone to help some workers improve English

Urban Agenda Grant – City of Haverhill

- Intensive business services support to HR to recruit workforce for:
 - Joseph's Pasta
 - Cedar's
- Southwick was originally one of the employers to be served through this grant; we are currently serving their workers to become re-employed; need to have conversation with Andrew about other work under the Urban Agenda Grant

Haverhill Satellite

- We have moved out of the HOW Building and into the new Haverhill Heights location
- Waiting to open to the public which is based on decisions related to reopening the career centers

SkillBase – Pilot Project with Harvard University

- We're one of a few career center sites across the state selected to participate in this project (project will be 6-8 weeks)
- Harvard has created a learning platform, called SkillBase, to help people develop skills to enhance their ability to become employed
- Through SkillBase, online learning material content has been curated and organized into 3 content areas:
 1. ESOL
 2. Digital Skills
 3. Job Search Skills
- We are using the ESOL content with Southwick dislocated workers

- As a pilot site, we're guiding customers to use the content and then providing feedback on user accessibility and value of the content to our learners

Andrew added that under the CARES ACT, the City of Haverhill is reimbursing for PPE purchases and for cleaning.

VI. Other Business

Abel said that Susan is no longer at the WB. Susan took on a lot of things and it is a big loss for the board. The good thing is that we still have her around at GLTS. Bob asked if the position will be filled and Abel said yes. He's working on slightly changing the job description but plans to post in the coming weeks.

VIII. Adjourn (vote required)

Having no further business Ann Marie called for a motion to adjourn.

Motion by Andrew Herlihy, seconded by Bob Wescott to adjourn the meeting. Meeting was adjourned at 10:15am

Respectfully submitted,

Corina Ruiz

Recorder