



Planning/ Career Center Committee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, August 1, 2017

8:00 a.m.

255 Essex Street, 4th Floor

Lawrence, MA 01840

Members Present: Juan Yopez, Chairman
Ron Contrado, Andrew Herlihy, Karen Sawyer-Conard, Bob Wescott,
Abel Vargas

Members Present Remotely: Mike Munday

Staff Present: Rafael Abislaiman, Susan Almono, Corina Ruiz

Other: Lisa Remington

I. Approval of Minutes of the June 20, 2017 meeting

A quorum being present, Juan Yopez, called the meeting to order at 8:08 a.m. and then called for a motion on the minutes of the June 20, 2017 meeting.

Motion by Bob Wescott, seconded by Andrew Herlihy, to approve the minutes of the June 20, 2017 meeting as submitted. Motion passed.

Juan welcomed Karen Sawyer-Conard to the committee.

II. Performance Summary as of June 30, 2017

Rafael said the numbers are good and may improve. Bob Wescott questioned the high dislocated worker numbers and Lisa said it was due to the co-enrollment of Polartec customers. Rafael said the numbers reported in the employer services category are high due to a reporting change. The definition of employer services was expanded. Juan added that overall we are doing well. Lisa said that the youth numbers are good considering that VWCC has only had one WIOA youth counselor for long time. Rafael stated that numbers are higher with one than they were with two.

III. Budget Update as of June 30, 2017

Juan asked if the State still owed the MVWIB half a million dollars as it was discussed in the June 20th meeting and Rafael said yes. Rafael said everything is still the same and the biggest

issue is rapid response and NEG. This is a statewide issue and not just a local one. Juan asked if there is still a concern of not being reimbursed and Rafael said yes. Rafael said VWCC payouts were made but we still have some money left. The Mayor of Lawrence is aware of our situation.

Ron Contrado asked how much rent is paid to the City of Lawrence and Rafael said about \$180,000 a year. Ron asked how much \$500,000 represents. Rafael said that we currently have a monthly cash flow of about \$600,000. Ron asked if NECC has been paid and Rafael said no. He added that we do not yet have a Career Center Operator contract with NECC because the FY18 dollar allocation is unclear but can pay them without a contract when funds become available. The contract narrative will state that the contract started on July 1st.

Lisa Remington asked if this issue needs to be resolved before training can begin and Rafael said yes. We'll release WIOA formula funds for training once we receive those funds. In the past, we've sometimes waited till January to receive the annual formula allocation and used carry-in funds for training. This year we have very little carry-in because of delayed payments and separation pay. Susan Almono said that youth funds have been received. Rafael stated that youth funds cannot be used for anything other than for youth training and youth staffing.

Juan asked why we don't have a contract with NECC and Rafael said that it's a complicated document and we don't have clarity on funding yet. State and area allocations are formula based but we don't know when we'll receive formula funds. We also don't know whether there will be additional cuts and a fund rescission because the White House seems to want a further 20% reduction.

NECC also has cash flow issues, is aware of our situation, and has concerns. But Rafael noted that we work on a cost reimbursement system, NECC hasn't billed us and NECC's proposal states they can wait to be reimbursed.

Karen Sawyer-Conard asked when the funding figure is expected and Rafael said the final figure is unknown but we know that we currently have a 14% cut in formula funds- and that our total funds may be down by about \$2M. We hope to receive new National Emergency Grant funds that have formed a substantial part of our past budgets. But there Statewide and possibly nationwide problems with NEGs.

The state has apologized for the NEG issue but has also told us that we are working with NEG affected employees at our own risk. We are using Dislocated Worker funding to do so.

IV. Whether to use Discretionary or FY17 Youth Training Funds to cover \$42,898 in staff payout costs

Rafael said that not all FY17 youth funds were spent and mentioned that a portion can be used to cover a part of the payouts. Juan asked how much was the payout and Rafael said about \$262,000. Juan asked if the funds can be used for training instead and Rafael said that the FY18 youth training funds are available already and advised using some FY17 money to partially cover payouts.

Susan added that by using the FY17 youth funds, we avoid again tapping into discretionary funds that are running low. Rafael said he recommends using the FY18 funds for training. Andy added that he will support this vote but doesn't want to make this scenario a habit. Training dollars should be used for training but considering the uniqueness of this situation he is in favor.

Motion by Bob Wescott, seconded by Ron Contrado, to use FY17 Youth Training Funds to cover \$42,898 in staff payout costs. Motion passed unanimously.

V. MVWIB FY18 Annual Plan

Rafael said the annual plan budget is being worked on and asked the committee to approve taking an electronic Planning/Career Center Committee vote if necessary.

Motion by Bob Wescott, seconded by Karen Sawyer-Conard, to approve an electronic vote by the Planning/Career Center Committee for the MVWIB FY18 annual plan to be submitted to DCS by August 25, 2017. Motion passed unanimously.

Juan suggested a brief conference call to the vote and make sure everyone understands.

VI. FY18 MVWIB Local OSCC Certification Policy

Susan Almono explained that under WIOA there are new policy and procedures and the state is asking us to create a local OSCC Certification policy. Susan went over the proposed policy and procedures with the committee.

Aside from the required State standards, the MWIB developed two additional local standards. Local Standard 1: An efficient customer flow where job seekers are welcome, understand options, and expeditiously receive services focused on customer strengths and goals. Local Standard 2: Comprehensive "demand driven" employer services including an emphasis on "Hire First / Train Later" opportunities and increased job placement.

Susan finalized by going over the certification timeline and tools 1 and 2. Juan suggested identifying the acronyms on attachment b and referencing titles versus names. Susan will make the changes and a final version will be sent to the state.

Rafael said this policy may be a significant improvement. Major changes to it will need to be voted by the committee.

Motion by Bob Wescott, seconded by Juan Yopez, to approve the FY18 MVWIB Local OSCC Certification Policy. Motion passed unanimously.

VII. MVWIB-funded Training under WIOA

Rafael said there is no perfect system. The proposed change in our training policy is an attempt to create recruitment flexibility for pilot training programs know to be clearly beneficial even they are not yet on the State approved trainer list. With a new operator in place, we want to start off on the right foot and support them in their innovating approach.

Lisa said we should hold off on the vote until the new career center director has a chance to review the proposed changes. Lisa continued by saying that we have an approved procurement

process for contracted training services and suggested consulting with DCS to see if the proposed changes are ok. She asked for the agenda item to be put on hold and to instead return to an ITA policy that does not have WIB imposed minimum academic standards. She would also like to see more vendor options for ITA training. The policy change can be positive but she doesn't feel comfortable with this much flexibility.

Rafael said those are excellent points but that he disagrees. We should take advantage of good, innovative programs when they are available and we shouldn't miss out on them for bureaucratic reasons. That's also a good way to build the approved vendor list. He went on to explain that the Youth Council had long wanted to be able to refer area youth to the AFL-CIO sponsored SkillsBuild program in Hopkinton for many years. The program has been in existence for years and does a fine job. It is funded by the Metro Southwest WIB as a work experience program and it is not approved for ITAs in the MOSES system. The MVWIB recruited two youth and created a group program referral for that training. The youth didn't work out because one failed a drug test and the other lost his childcare but MVWIB staff also spent too much time trying to persuade Career Center staff to cooperate. If the Career Center had been more flexible, we may have been able to send two youths to the program.

As it is now, we'll work to get the Hopkinton onto TrainingPro and the State approved vendor list for next year. But we can't focus on just process, our goal is to get people jobs. We need innovation and less process to deal with budget cuts. Susan said WIOA allows funding for '14 elements' youth programs and not just ITA's and State approved group programs.

Juan asked if we can prescreen customers for drug use. Mike Munday said that his company prescreens and job applicants knowing that screening will happen but they still have 20% who fail the drug test.

Juan asked if we are paying for youth who did not work out for the SkillsBuild program. Rafael said no we aren't because they were never enrolled.

Juan asked when payment is issued on an ITA and Lisa said after 30 days. Rafael added that some payment are prorated depending on time in the program.

Juan asked if ValleyWorks has helped with the creating of the ITA policy and Rafael said yes. Rafael added that the Career Center needs to be on notice that we have to be innovative. We want to consult and work collaborative but ultimately, the MVWIB is the policy maker.

Juan said that in lieu of a vote the committee agrees that a spirit of innovation and change is coming. The committee will give the new Career Center Director a chance to review the policy and will table it for another meeting.

Lisa asked if there is a possibility to include HiSet training in ITAs for youth and Rafael said yes, especially with the low unemployment rate. Lisa asked about including occupational skills with ESOL and Rafael said that DESE/ACLS partners must provide the ESOL component. There system receives as much money as we do for workforce development to provide ESOS services.

Juan asked Rafael to sit down with the Career Center Interim Director and/or George Moariarty, to explain that the committee is looking for innovation and different methods of improving our training policy. He also asked that the message be passed down to Career Center staff as well. The committee will revisit the training policy in the future.

VIII. Career Center Report

No Career Center report.

IX. Grants Update

No grants update.

X. Other Business

Juan asked the status on naming the conference room after Mary Kivell and Rafael said we will be hanging the plaque now and in the upcoming months there may be a room naming event.

XI. Adjourn

Having no further business Bob Wescott made a motion to adjourn the meeting seconded by Andy Herlihy, and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Corina Ruiz

Recorder