



**Salvatore's (Caesars Room)
354 Merrimack Street
Lawrence, MA 01843**

QUARTERLY MEETING

**Minutes
Thursday, July 19, 2018
4:00 PM**

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Ann Marie Borgesi, Joseph Bevilacqua, Francisco Brea, Eileen Burns, Karen Conard, Ron Contrado, Evelyn Friedman, Lane Glenn, Supt. John Lavoie, Joselyn Marte, Marianne Paley-Nadel, Carol Riemer, Fred Shaheen, Abel Vargas, Bob Westcott, Cal Williams, Juan Yepez

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Edward Bartkiewicz, Christian Brennan, Michael Fiato, Supt. Maureen Lynch, Andrew Herlihy, Jeff Linehan, Rosa Muñoz, Ellen Weinhold, Stanley Usovicz,

GUESTS PRESENT:

Mayor Daniel Rivera, Ralph Carrero, Elizabeth Bennett, Judy Marley, Mike Bevilacqua, Kate Reilly

STAFF PRESENT:

Rafael Abislaiman, Susan Almono, Brian Norris, Corina Ruiz

1. Call to Order

A quorum being present, Juan Yepez called the meeting to order at 4:20 p.m.

2. Welcome & Introductions

Juan Yepez welcomed everyone.

3. Approval of Minutes of April 24, 2018

Chairman Yepez asked for a motion on the minutes of the April 24, 2018 board meeting.

Motion by Cal Williams to approve the minutes of the April 24, 2018 meeting as submitted. Ron Contrado seconded the motion and motion passed unanimously.

4. Report of Chair

Chair Yepez said for brevity's sake, he'll be presenting both the Chairman's and the Planning Committee's reports.

With a new career center operator, this has been a transition year and we are ahead in some performance categories and not in others. This is at least in part due to definition changes. For example, previously, all career center referrals of job seeking customers to employers were counted. Now, the only employer referrals that count are the ones where an employer and a job seeker make actual contact and that contact must be confirmed by career center staff.

Moreover, our entered employment numbers may be a little lower because we are now working with people who are more difficult to employ. Many Polartec job seekers are older and some are deciding to retire, or they don't want to quickly go back to work. As usual, exact employment placement information will be delayed until the State does wage record matches within the unemployment insurance system.

This year, our WIOA cuts were much less than in prior years. Over the last three years, Massachusetts and we have had about a 35% cut in WIOA due to our low unemployment rate. This year, perhaps because we have the largest number of people in the State coming in for unemployment insurance services, we didn't get hit as hard in WIOA as some other areas did. As in the past, we'll manage cuts by raising income from non-WIOA resources.

At the last quarterly meeting, Secretary Acosta mentioned how both the State and its regions are dealing with our changing economy and Massachusetts' low unemployment rate. Here locally, for example, we have contracts where new well-paid teacher externships are being funded by the State Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and another funded by Economic Development. The hope is that high school teachers will incorporate lessons learned in STEM related industries within their classrooms and that some recent high school graduates will work at their sites right out of high school.

People are starting to realize that it's not best for all graduating high school students to become full-time college students. Instead, some young people can make more progress and save themselves, their parents, and tax payers money by working in well-paid jobs that don't require a college degree. They can also attend college part-time and make gradual progress toward college degrees.

On another subject, some of you know that we have been owed about \$250,000 in Polartec dislocated worker services for about two years. When we asked if we should remove that expected income from our FY 19 carry-in numbers because we will never be paid. The Department Career Services said no, we will get paid. That's good news in this ever-tightening work force development climate.

This year, only about \$700,000 will have been spent on training. But when one factors in our Polartec situation, it makes more sense because the State is holding the Polartec training money and our career center has provided case management to almost 400 laid-off Polartec workers.

New apprenticeships and OJTs are also more labor intensive. They require a lot of groundwork before training starts. As you may remember, NAMC is a four WIB consortium. The WIBs take turns receiving contract funds and those contracts are increasingly to interest employers and unemployed people in internships. Smaller parts of those grants are going to pay for training.

This region has been selected to train other regions on manufacturing-related apprenticeships. Those efforts will be led by Brian Norris at the MVWIB. In recognition of his role, Brian's job was reposted pending the new funding commensurate with his increased responsibilities. Brian has been instrumental in giving the MVWIB the largest number of manufacturing apprenticeships. Board member Carol Riemer has been key to having the majority of them be at Magellan Aerospace.

Chairman Yopez introduced the guest speaker, Ralph Carrero. Mr. Carrero moved to the City of Lawrence with his wife and children in 1967. His professional career stands for 30 plus years providing services, counseling, social work, criminal justice, and education to residents in the City of Lawrence. In 1992 Ralph became the first Hispanic ever elected to serve in public office in Lawrence, serving three consecutive terms in the Lawrence School Committee. He has served in many youth serving non-profit organizations in the City and is the Superintendent, president and co-founder of the Lawrence Family Development Charter School.

5. Guest Speaker: Ralph Carrero, LFDCS Superintendent & SISU Program Executive Director

Mr. Carrero said it has been a pleasure serving with Mr. Abislaiman. Mr. Abislaiman served as Board of Directors for the LFDCS.

Mr. Carrero talked about the comprehensive proposal the MVWIB and SISU submitted to DOL and were awarded. The proposed was a workforce development re-entry program using a strength-based approach and 'jobs first' model. The project will include workforce focused social-emotional skills development, as well as pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship training and new employee pre-apprenticeship opportunities for various jobs.

MVWIB/SISU will use specific strategies to achieve the specified WIOA measures and REO specific outcomes. At least 95 young people will be enrolled in the program and have the opportunity to receive the full menu of services prior to the end of the 24-month period of operation and receive the full 12 months of follow-up. The WIB/SISU project will work with local community partners, including the Lawrence Police Department, the Essex County Sheriff's Department, the Lawrence Court Probation Department, the Department of Youth Services, and the Committee for Public Council Services, to execute its outreach and recruitment strategy.

The program goals is to have no fewer than 76 participants, who were in or returning from a juvenile or adult correctional facility or on probation prior to enrolling in the program, will not be convicted of a new criminal offense within 12 months of their release from a juvenile or adult correctional facility or from placement on probation; no fewer than 57 participants will enter occupational skills training and all training completers will attain at least one employer recognized credential or certificate, and no fewer than 67 participants will be placed into one or more of the following: unsubsidized Apprenticeships, Unsubsidized Employment, or Post-Secondary Education.

The program will be broken down into three phases. Phase 1 will be SISU subsidized employment with a focus on social-emotional skill development with High Need/ Low

functioning/ Intensive Services. Phase 2 will be SISU subsidized jobs with a transition to unsubsidized employment focused on soft and hard skills development with Mid-functioning/ less intensive services, and phase 3 will be Higher Functioning Training and Education with a Job Focus.

Superintendent Lavoie praised Mr. Carrero for the great work he's doing and thanked him for the opportunities he's offering to the community. Mr. Carrero mentioned that he's a graduate of Greater Lawrence Technical School and was happy to hear about GLTS opening their doors to welcome ex-offenders for evening programs.

Mayor Rivera added that he ventures to say this is how the work will look in the future. We don't become second chance programs. Most of our people will have some type of interaction with the court system. If we are not prepared to accept all those people in and get them into a process to get them into these programs to support them, we are not going to see success.

Rafael Abislaiman commended Mayor Rivera for pushing the workforce board to do these types of activities. This program clearly is directed at men and women who have made significant or not so significant errors and were caught. However, we know that the quality of life of all intercity people is grievously affected by the opioid trade, narcotraffickers and by the perception that somehow all their neighborhoods are directed towards servicing drug dealers and drug users. We all know that no one works harder than immigrants and new Americans. I commend the mayor because he represents those folks.

Juan thanked Mr. Carrero for his commitment to the City, the kid and the community for the last thirty years. You've made a significant change in many people's life.

6. Reports of Committee Chairs

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

The Board chairman presented the Planning/Career Center Committee report in the Chairman's report.

- ***Youth Committee***

Chairman Williams thanked Rafael on behalf of the Youth Committee.

He went on to say that one of this quarter's highlights was the third Lawrence High School (LHS) Youth Job Fair for graduating LHS seniors. In order to prepare students, ValleyWorks Career Center conducted "How to Work a Job Fair" and "Resume" Workshops. Total event attendance was 66 students and 24 employers.

Another highlight was our receipt of a small DESE Connecting Activities grant to recruit three (3) Methuen Public Schools STEM teachers for teacher externships. The teachers are now working with three area companies – Straumann USA LLC, Greater Lawrence Family Health Center, and, possibly Magellan Aerospace. Fitchburg State University is managing the program and will ensure that teachers participate in meaningful externships that enhance their students' classroom experience.

YouthWorks Year Round ended in June. 15 students from Haverhill High School successfully completed 80 hours of CompTIA A+ prep classes and are taking exams to work at entry level jobs in IT.

We started YouthWorks Summer employer outreach at an Employer Orientation Breakfast at the Greater Lawrence Technical School – Four Winds Restaurant. Attending employers also participated in an one hour training facilitated by MassMentoring in which they learned about mentoring youth and developing relationships with youth.

Our 2018 YouthWorks Summer program will place 229 Youth into subsidized employment - with 148 for Lawrence, 58 for Haverhill, and 23 for Methuen. Youth will be allowed to work up to 30 hours per week at \$11.00 per hour for about 6 weeks. We received 374 applications from Lawrence, 86 from Haverhill, 50 from Methuen and 1 from Andover.

The YouthWorks Summer staff have already trained over 220 youth using the CommCorp's Signal Success work readiness curriculum. We also received a Mass Housing Grant to help Lawrence Housing Courts youth.

MVWIB also has a smaller Mass Development AMP It Up! Teacher Externship program. With that we're externing 3 teachers from Haverhill High School and 3 from Lawrence High School. Teachers will receive stipends to familiarize themselves with manufacturing procedures at various manufacturing plants with the hope that they'll be able to take lessons learned and include them as contextual matter in their classroom curriculums. The externships will take place during July and August. The grant ends in November 2018.

Our various youth programs express our commitment to providing high quality services for youth and young adults. Services begin with career exploration and guidance, continued support for educational attainment, opportunities for skills training in in-demand industries and occupations. Services culminate in a good job or in post-secondary education, or hopefully both along career pathways that reinforce upward movement to better jobs via both experience and education.

To conclude, on behalf of the Youth Committee I would like to thank Rafael for his leadership and great support of our youth programs for the past eight years. We wish you all the best on your retirement. You will be missed by all of us.

- ***Nominating Committee***

Karen Conard said there was no report and wished Rafael a great retirement.

- ***Finance Report***

Bob Wescott said there is no report that there will be a finalized FY19 budget for the next Planning/Career Committee meeting.

He added that he has worked with Rafael for many years and one of the reasons this WIB is so successful and attracted a lot of the grant money is because of the straight up, honest Title I Administrator, who doesn't weaken the principles. It has been a pleasure working with Rafael.

7. Annual Plan Update – Planning Committee to act on behalf of the board with regards to the annual plan and budget (vote required)

Chairman Yopez said that as we've done in past years, he'd like to request a vote to allow the Planning Committee to act on behalf of the Board for our annual plan and budget.

Motion by Joe Bevilacqua to approve the Planning Committee to act on behalf of the board with regards to the annual plan and budget. Bob Wescott seconded the motion and motion passed unanimously.

8. Report of Executive Director

Chairman Yopez echoed Mr. Wescott's words regarding Rafael. As the Title I Administrator Rafael has had 8 years of flawless audits. Under his leadership, the Lower Merrimack Valley has consistently had the highest percentage of Labor Exchange jobs attainments throughout the State.

Rafael cannot express how grateful he is to the both Mayor Rivera and Mayor Lantigua, the Board, partners and specially the staff who made whatever success we had possible. We built a wonderful team which he is grateful for. He has had a tremendous run in the city and very grateful that he's been here for 31 years. Rafael said he's had a fine experience and thanked everyone very much.

9. Other Business

Mayor Rivera said he first met Rafael Abislaiman when he was working at the International Institute and the work that they were doing there could only be described by him, a kid who grew up in Lawrence with immigrant parents. The hand holding that needs that needs to go on to help people like his mom navigate citizenship and anything in general. Mayor Rivera said that to have leadership there, where you know residents can go and navigate the craziness that is the bureaucracy of the American system, it warmed his heart. Like any Naval Captain, Rafael was unflappable and never reserved crisis and even when there was crisis, he always remained calmed. That is a characteristic of leadership you hardly see.

Mayor Rivera presented Rafael Abislaiman with a gift and proclamation on behalf of the residents of Lawrence.

10. Adjournment

Having no further business Bob Wescott made a motion to adjourn and Abel Vargas seconded the motion. Motion passed, and meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Corina Ruiz

Recorder