



**Greater Lawrence Technical School**  
**Andover, MA 01810**

**QUARTERLY MEETING**

**Minutes**  
**Thursday, March 16, 2017**  
**7:30 AM**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Rosalin Acosta, Francisco Brea, Ron Contrado, Evelyn Friedman, Dr. Lane Glenn, Andrew Herlihy, Supt. John Lavoie, Rosa Lopez, Joselyn Marte, Peter Matthews, Rosa Muñoz, Carol Riemer, Abel Vargas, Bob Westcott, Cal Williams, Juan Yepez, Edward Bartkiewicz, Kathryn Sweeney

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Brian DePena, Atty. Wendy Estrella, Supt. Maureen Lynch, Donna Rivera, Steve Salvo, Michael Strem, Stanley Usovich, Joseph Bevilacqua, Sr. Eileen Burns, Michael Fiato, Jeff Linehan, Michael Munday, Ann Ormond, Marianne Paley-Nadel, Fred Shaheen, Anita Worden

**GUESTS PRESENT:**

Dawn Beati, Lisa Remington, Amy Weatherbee,

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Rafael Abislaiman, Susan Almono, Corina Ruiz, Joe Eid, Brian Norris, Matthias Bohler, Beverly Stopyra

**1. Call to Order**

A quorum being present, Peter Matthews called the meeting to order at 8:03 a.m.

**2. Approval of Minutes of June 28, 2016**

Chairman Matthews asked for a motion on the minutes of the October 25, 2016 annual board meeting.

**Motion by Cal Williamns to approve the minutes of the October 25, 2016 meeting as submitted. Bob Westcott seconded the motion and motion passed unanimously.**

**4. Report of Chair**

Peter Matthews said that The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act required that WIBs issue request for proposals to select One Stop Career Center Operators. This was a nationwide requirement for this year. As a result of our RFP, we in the Merrimack Valley received two proposals, one from the current operator, ValleyWorks, and the other from Northern Essex Community College.

An eleven member proposal review panel that included Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, Department of Unemployment Assistance and Department of Career Services representatives, as well as all members of the MVWIB Executive Committee and three of our Board's private sector members, all unanimously agreed to recommend Northern Essex Community College to become this region's One Stop Career Center Operator.

Peter repeated the MA Departments that participated and unanimously agreed to recommend Northern Essex Community College. They were DESE, MRC, and Massachusetts Department of Labor's DUA, and DCS. He said that there are MRC and DCS representatives on the Merrimack Valley board and that the DESE and DUA ones are not on the board and we interacted with them for the first time during the proposal review.

Peter continued by saying that our fair and equitable process resulted in mostly highly advantageous or advantageous marks for both proposals but NECC's was unanimously found to be the better of the two.

On Tuesday, our Planning and Career Center Committee discussed the Proposal Review Committee's recommendation and agreed with it. To avoid Conflict of Interest accusations, Planning and Career Center Committee members who have a relationship with either the City of Lawrence, or the College, or Haverhill's Mt. Washington Neighborhood Association, abstained from voting.

A connection with the Mt. Washington Neighborhood Association was cause for VOTE abstention because a related successful proposal to the Federal Reserve included the desire for more career center access for the low-income and minority residents of that neighborhood. Both the current and past ValleyWorks Directors were concerned about the Haverhill Economic Development Director's, NECC's and MVWIB Executive Directors connection to that successful Federal Reserve proposal.

Chairman Matthews stated that MVWIB partners with area initiatives whenever it can. In part because of our partnership, the Federal Reserve is now allocating several hundred thousand dollars to Haverhill, especially to the Mt Washington Neighborhood.

NECC's proposal does not include services in the Mt. Washington neighborhood but it does include creating a Haverhill Career Center downtown and closing their Haverhill Campus One Stop Center. A downtown site will be closer to Mt. Washington residents but it will also be closer to other low-income or minority people who live in the downtown Haverhill area.

The NECC proposal also includes innovative services to Amesbury, Newburyport and other communities in the northeastern part of our region. In it, 255 Essex Street Lawrence, the Lawrence City Hall Annex, where the WIB and Career Center recently moved, will continue to be far and away our largest and busiest career center.

Peter said that if the Review Team and Planning recommendations are accepted by you at this quarterly meeting and by our CEO, the Mayor of the City of Lawrence, our career center operations at 255 Essex Street Lawrence, Haverhill and throughout the Merrimack Valley will be part of Northern Essex Community College.

More NECC marketing, data, physical plant maintenance, fiscal tracking and other resources will be available to our Career Center, including the professional services of the MA Department of Career Services former director, George Moriarty. Mr. Moriarty is included pro bono. Not one current NECC employee is included in their proposal's budget. Instead, they volunteer to employ all current ValleyWorks staff who wish to work for the college. No current college staff member is paid out of the WIOA budget submitted in their proposal.

The Northern Essex Community College proposal is full of other positive innovations. It includes the job-driven service approach stressed in our RPF and promoted by Governor Baker's Workforce Skills Cabinet and the Executive Office Labor and Workforce Development. The college proposes four principles to help implement this strategy:

- A Hire First/Train Later service option that does not abandon our current pre-employment training;
- Significantly expanding the number of Business Service Representatives employed at the Career Center;
- Creating an industry-cluster approach to ensure BSRs are knowledgeable about assigned job sectors; and
- Doubling the number of customers annually referred to jobs.

Although it hopes to engage more employers, the approach will focus on deeper-not-wider employer relationships. In other words, increasing the level of business engagement will be more important than increasing the number of companies touched.

The College's proposal also stresses extensive customer assessment to more quickly orient unemployed and underemployed customers to jobs. They look to make the career center wait room more welcoming and responsive. Staff will greet customers with iPads in hand to quickly check past visits, or enroll them as new customers and more quickly green light them for efficient services. As stated earlier, the College proposes to employ all ValleyWorks employees interested in being College employees. It is also encouraging the current ValleyWorks career center director to apply to become the College's One Stop Career Center Director directly reporting to George Moriarty, the former director of DCS and now the director of NECC's Center for Corporate and Community Education, a vice-president level position.

Peter said that their proposal's combination of positive innovations, more resources and the retention of some or all ValleyWorks staff - and the successful outcomes they've achieved - make NECC the right choice in an era likely to have many Federal discretionary budget cuts.

The NECC proposal best addresses the current and emerging challenges we face, including the Merrimack Valley's unique demographics and our continuing to help improve our education-based economy.

Their proposal has the eleven member review panel, Planning and Career Committee's and my full support. I ask for a motion to recommend NECC as MVWIB's OSCC operator to our CEO, Lawrence Mayor Dan Rivera. After the motion, we can have questions and more discussion before we vote.

Chairman Matthews asked for a motion to approve the MV One-Stop Career Center (OSCC) Proposal Review and Planning/ Career Center Committees recommendation to select NECC as the MV OSCC Operator.

**Motion by Bob Wescott to approve NECC as the next MV OSCC Operator. Juan Yopez seconded the motion.**

Peter asked if there were any questions. Evelyn Friendman asked if the organizational structure will change. Peter answered that the Career Center Executive Director will be supervised by George Moriarty. Rafael added that the WIB will remain the same in making funding decisions and the Career Center Director who is yet to be hired by the college, will report to George Moriarty. Currently the ValleyWorks Executive Director reports to the Mayor of Lawrence with oversight provided by the MVWIB. By having NECC as the operator, clearer lines of authority will be created.

**Chairman Matthews asked for a vote. Rosalin Acosta, Lane Glenn and Andrew Herlihy abstained. Motion passed.**

**5. Presentation: John Lavoie, Superintendent Greater Lawrence Technical School**

Greater Lawrence Technical School Superintendent John Lavoie welcomed board members and thanked board members for all you do to support economic development in the Merrimack.

Superintendent Lavoie said that we are all in the business of developing skills. Our economy depends on a workforce that is highly skilled. No one knows this better than everyone sitting here this morning and that is why this board plays such an important role in the economic vitality of the Merrimack Valley. Because we are using the hard earned tax dollars of our citizens to train a workforce that meets the needs of business and industry we must do this work as efficiently and effectively as possible.

The federal and state leaderships have found that the way to meet these two criteria is through partnerships between the private and public sectors. The Superintendent stated that as he looks at all the competitive grants Greater Lawrence Tech has applied for over the last seven years they all required some type of partnership and GLTHS is a better institution today because of them. Sometimes government gets it right. Because of partnerships, people have all come to the table to collaborate and pull resources together to provide the best training possible. Even more importantly businesses and industry are coming back to the Merrimack Valley because we can provide them with the skilled workers they desperately need.

He thanked everyone here today for either partnering on many of our grant applications or including us as a partner on yours. Our students and adult learners have more opportunities and a better life because of it. Most importantly, our collaboration has resulted in lower unemployment and a stronger economy in the Merrimack Valley.

Superintendent Lavoie shared information on some of the grants GLTHS has partnered on this year. He stated that they highlight some of the new initiatives they have been pursuing to better serve their

students and community and that they also demonstrate the partnerships it takes to deliver quality workforce training.

- Vocational Assess Grant - to build a partnership with Lawrence High School to promote opportunities to assess vocational education/career awareness. NECC dual credits will be offered through this grant.
- Capital Skills Grant – GLTS applied for grant. He recently found out they will be given funds to start a new landscape and horticulture program. They are partnering with Groundworks Lawrence, UMASS Amherst and Griffin Nursery
- Capital Skills Grant – Partnering with NECC and Lawrence Partnership to start a day and evening Mechatronics Program.
- Connecting Activities Grant – Partnering with the MVWIB and VWCC to have guest speakers and shadowing visits to Holy Family Hospital
- CommCorp Planning Grant – seeking funding to start a Mechatronics Program. Partners in this proposal are: MVWIB, Lawrence Partnership, NECC, VWCC, New England Die Cutting, Solectria Renewables and Arc Technology
- CommCorp Planning Grant – seeking funding for a CNA Program. We have a need for CNAs in our area. Partners in this proposal are: MVWIB, VWCC, Lawrence Partnership, NECC, Home Health Foundation, Mary Immaculate, Health Care, Lawrence Family Works
- Life Science Grant – received funding to provide new equipment for Biotechnology and start our new Innovation Academy called STEAM Academy (BioTech, Engineering Electronics) in September 2017. Partners for this grant are MIT, UMASS Lowell and High Tech High

Superintendent Lavoie concluded by saying that GLTS is a community school that provides services to the citizens of the areas it serves. They are open 5:30am to 10pm providing an array of programs.

## **6. Reports of Committee Chairs**

Peter then called on Juan Yopez to give the Planning Committee report.

- ***Planning Committee***

Planning Committee Chairman Juan Yopez reported that the Planning and Career Center Committee has met more than monthly over the last few months. There were delays to our One Stop Career Center RFP because the Department of Career Services strongly opposed an indemnification clause in our original RFP. We had tried to protect the City of Lawrence's and tax payers investment in 255 Essex Street, our new Lawrence career center and WIB office site, by including a \$2 million dollar indemnification clause if a bidder wanted to move us from that location. We dealt with that and other issues, including moving about 55 people, offices, about ten year years of paperwork, and about one hundred computers to a new site.

Instead of the indemnification clause, our modified RFP made clear that any site move or redevelopment costs needed at another site would need to be match funded. As we learned from Chairman Matthews, both the City of Lawrence ValleyWorks and Northern Essex Community Colleges proposal has us staying at 255 Essex for at least the next four years.

Juan said that by moving to our new site, we will save about \$60,000 annually and be more accessible to low income pedestrians. Our new occupancy costs are about \$60,000 less than they were at 439 South Union Street. Over the life of a four-year contract, we will save about \$240K.

The move to the new site occurred over four days at the end of January. We were open for business on February 1<sup>st</sup>. If you haven't yet visited, you'll find that we're now located in a beautiful and lively part of the city, directly behind Lawrence City Hall and across the street from a nice park. There are many restaurants serving delicious food in the area and plenty of public and street parking.

Juan urged everyone to visit and park at a public parking lot at a charge of one or two dollars per hour. Parking enforcement officers will quickly ticket you if you over extend your time at metered on-street parking. One of our Planning Committee members received two tickets one morning during a two-hour meeting – and she had put money into the meter!

But our new offices look great and all of the space glitches involved in any move are being worked out. Most are now resolved. Mayor Rivera has been great at moving things forward.

As you can see in the performance report included in your package. Amy and her staff did not miss a beat during the transition from the old to the new building. We are ahead of schedule in almost all categories.

Juan continued by saying that although the Planning and Career Center Committee recommends NECC as our next one stop career center operator because of the innovations and additional resources that they bring to the table, VWCC has done an excellent job and he encourages all employees to agree to work for the College.

In our judgement, the college's inclusion of our career center into their broad menu of activities will protect and build on the very positive outcomes already achieved. The College's participation in our system is needed during these very uncertain times when we are likely to see continued budget cuts and erratic employment cycles.

- ***Youth Committee***

Youth Council Chair Cal Williams said that youth workforce programs are divided by those that occur during the school year and those that take place in the summer, with the exception of WIOA Youth programs which are on-going all year. We've made good progress in all the school year programs since our annual meeting in October. During this period we've also been awarded two grants for STEM related activities, and are now gearing up for our summer youth employment program.

Connecting Activities staff continue to assist students, administrators and guidance counselors at seven local high schools through school to career opportunities. Students are participating in career

awareness, exploration, and immersion activities in order to gain better understanding of career pathways and work opportunities. In addition, work readiness workshops are being offered to provide students with essential skills to meet employer's expectations. Staff are also collaborating with partner agencies to help youth complete the process of applying for college and financial aid, and transitioning to college. So far, 264 students have participated in Connecting Activities, which is 92% of goal.

Our YouthWorks Year-Round program provides subsidized employment to 26 out-of-school youth. A fall cohort completed the program, and the spring cohort has successfully completed the 20 hours Signal Success Work Readiness workshops and has been placed at various worksites.

ValleyWorks, through the Lawrence Working Families Initiative (LWFI) and the Urban Agenda Grant, has been working with Lawrence High School (LHS) piloting an internship program. ValleyWorks staff matched students with local employers based on their career interests. Students participated in Connecting Activities job readiness workshops prior to internship placement.

Cal said that the performance summary included in your packet shows we're making good progress on our WIOA Youth participant goals this year, though our out-of-school youth program may need some changes. The BOG program done with the Department of Youth Services is also advancing.

During this quarter the MVWIB was awarded an \$18,000 MA DESE Connecting Activities STEM Career Vocational/Technical Education (CVTE) grant. Our focus will be on expanding awareness of healthcare careers for 96 Greater Lawrence Technical School and 13 Haverhill High School students, all enrolled in healthcare technical education programs. Students will be Hispanic or other minorities who are under-represented in both healthcare and other STEM professions.

Cal reported that we were also awarded a \$10,000 MassDevelopment *AMP it Up!* grant to conduct outreach and educate primarily high school students and guidance counselors about career options in advanced manufacturing. We'll also be educating the public with this grant – you might see MVRTA bus signs advertising advanced manufacturing careers funded with this grant!

Cal concluded by saying that we're ramping up for our summer YouthWorks program which will offer subsidized summer employment for 229 youth in Lawrence, Methuen and Haverhill. If you are an employer interested in hiring youth this summer, please talk with Cristy our Youth Workforce Program Manager.

- ***Nominating Committee***

There was no nomination of officers or nominating report for this meeting.

- ***Finance Report***

Treasurer Bob Westcott said that now that the move is completed he will be meeting the DGA staff to have more notes to present at the next meeting. We are going to save money this year. Its good news that the College will use the current premises since we incurred moving costs.

## **7. Report of Executive Director**

Rafael said that the US President's preliminary budget is out and it is cutting 21% of US DOL and 31% of EPA funding to increase \$53 billion in funding to support the military. You can expect this type of budget for the next four years. Because of Massachusetts low unemployment rate, funding for our workforce development system here in has been cut by 25% between last year and this year. That is without the additional 21% cut just mentioned. This type of situation necessitates that we build more partnerships. WIOA was created to foster partnerships between entities that do workforce development. In the future, the MA administration may want to reduce the number of workforce development areas from 16 to some unknown number.

Given the tremendous innovation offered, by Northern Essex in their proposal, the review committee and the planning committee unanimously recommended them for funding to the Board and the Mayor of Lawrence. The board today has also concurred in that estimate. We don't have a clear time line for mayoral response but it will happen soon. There is a likelihood of an appeal and that is sensible for no other reason than to gather information about the process.

Rafael said that he seconds the executive committees desire to encourage all VWCC employees to apply and work for the College. In the majority of the instances, only enrollment paperwork and not an application will be required. The college overtly states that they will hire all line and managerial staff at ValleyWorks but for one, who will need to apply.

As you may remember, the City of Lawrence budget director addressed us five years ago insisting that all our grants be approved by the City Council and all of our fiscal activities follow City processes. We saw that as problematic given that we are a regional entity with very reliable fiscal processes. We were able to avoid that by the MVWIB assuming fiscal agent status and by explaining to the City Council that its best that fiscal arrangement stay as they are. But we are all currently City of Lawrence employees and the issues presented by the Lawrence Budget Director are not going away.

At the time of his request, the Planning Committee considered the possibility of privatizing the WIB and career center. The WIB became 501C3. But if we all became private, staff would lose their public sector retirement benefits. In the NECC proposal it clearly indicates that career center staff will be public sector employees moving from the City of Lawrence to the State system. The City of Lawrence and all municipalities in the commonwealth participate in the state system. The reimbursements that we expect when we retire are all set by the State.

Staff will need to complete some some paperwork but I anticipate that the transition to NECC as the employer of record for career center staff will incur smoothly.

Rafael concluded by thanking all proposal reviewers for their hard work. It was a lot of work to read and consider two very fine proposals. But we are not trouble free, there will be changes and not all of them will be good. But overall the review team, the planning/career center committee, and now the general board are absolutely right in the recommendation you are making because NECC is better able to shape and ride out what are likely to be difficult years.



Bob Wescott added that looking forward and considering the constraints of future budget cuts, there was no flexibility to facing the future without significant change. Region wide services and clear lines of authority and communication are the only ways to build support and deal with growing constraints. That probably speaks to why we only had two proposals submitted. Anyone looking at the future success of ValleyWorks and how it can be a better ValleyWorks, chose the college. The College is the only entity with the flexibility and systems in-place to allow us any growth at all.

**8. Other Business**

There was no other business.

**9. Adjournment**

**Having no further business Rosalin Acosta made a motion to adjourn and Bob Wescott seconded the motion. Motion passed and meeting was adjourned.**

Respectfully submitted,

*Corina Ruiz*

Recorder