



# **YOUTH COMMITTEE**

## **MINUTES**

**Wednesday, April 11, 2018**

**Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Board  
255 Essex Street, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Lawrence, MA 01840**

### **Youth Committee MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Elizabeth Bennett, Francisco Brea, Irene Chalek, April Lyskowsky, Tom Raiche, Linda Rohrer, David Tagliaferri, Ed Warnshuis, Ellen Weinhold, Cal Williams

### **MVWIB Youth Committee MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Howard Allen, Michael Bevilacqua, Brad Howell, Sonia Morales, Lisa Remington  
Katherine Sweeney

### **MVWIB Staff Present:**

Rafael Abislaiman, Cristy Gomez

### **Guest Present:**

Mark Kampert, Neil Silverston

### **I. Call to Order & Introductions**

Chairman Williams called the meeting to order at 11:45 a.m. Introductions were made around the table.

### **II. Approval of the February 14, 2018 Minutes**

Cal called for a motion to approve the minutes of the February 14, 2018 meeting.

**Motion by Ellen Weinhold and Francisco Brea seconded, to approve the minutes of the February 14, 2018. Motion passed unanimously.**

### **III. Guest Speaker: Neil Silverston, Co-founder and Executive Director of SparkShare.** Cal introduced Neil.

SparkShare empowers young people, ages 15-19, to be change agents in their community and in their own lives. Their community work involves core teams of youth

and adults at youth-serving organizations who have a positive vision for change. SparkShare facilitates skill building for youth to be problem solvers in their community, and connects them with resources and organizations that they can leverage to solve the problems they identify. Through Youth Summits, SparkShare brings youth together across urban and suburban communities to learn, build relationships, and discover solutions.

SparkShare successes include the launch of two youth-driven community partnerships for change: A Stronger, Safer, South Boston, and the Dorchester Youth Employer Roundtable. In 2015, teen organizers from Fourth Presbyterian Church in South Boston, came to SparkShare's inaugural Youth Summit with the goal of reducing violence in their community.

Following the Summit, SparkShare helped them build partnerships with organizations such as the Boys and Girls Club, ABCD Action Center, and the Tierney Learning Center. Together they help create more connected, supportive communities. Their goal is to reach 1,000 teens in South Boston as a connected community that will actively encourage young people to make healthier decisions and thrive. In 2018, teens and adults are working to achieve this goal. Their activities expand the circle of South Boston youth connected to each other, to adults, and to organizations that serve youth.

At SparkShare Inaugural Summit, Dorchester youth stated that finding employment was a challenge so, in May, 2017, SparkShare launched the Youth Employer Roundtable. It brings together employers such as CVS, Spaulding Rehab, Boston Federal Reserve, and Primark, along with young people from organizations such as I Have a Future, Teen Empowerment, and The Boys and Girls Club. They facilitate groups of teens and adults work together to explore barriers to youth employment. Roundtable members committed to continue working on specific, measureable actions to improve employment outcomes for Dorchester youth.

The partnership is now moving forward with a two-pronged plan: 1) engaging youth organizations and employers to share their resources in a coordinated, focused effort to offer training and skill development for youth – by leveraging employers as trainers, and engaging young people as teachers of their peers, and; 2) using these ongoing training opportunities to facilitate connections between Dorchester teens and employers.

Neil states that young people can be changed for the better but not by themselves. Adults are needed to help them get skills, connections, and partnerships.

In Dorchester, agencies and employers like Brigham and Woman's and CVS are partnering to assist youth to attain work related skills and work experience. Employers and other partners work together to assist youth obtain employment. Neil is hoping to partner with youth servicing organizations in Lawrence to provide the same opportunities

to Lawrence youth. They have a summit planned in November and he hopes to get a group of Lawrence youth to attend.

When they join his initiative agencies get access to employers and to their activities. SparkShare looks for youth to become change agents. More information is at: [www.sparkshare.org](http://www.sparkshare.org)

#### **IV. Program Update**

Cristy gave an update on the youth programs.

Connecting Activities (CA) program staff continued to implement School to Career activities at area schools. They supported and collaborated with Lawrence High and their students to provide job shadow day experiences to 63 juniors.

LHS students visited 23 regional companies in the Healthcare, Business & Non-profit Administrations, Communications, Education, Environmental, Manufacturing, and Science & Technology fields. Career exploration activities provide students exposure to careers of possible interest to them. Students got firsthand knowledge of job opportunities, career education requirements, and general information on what particular jobs entail.

Cristy stated that over fifty people attended the MVWIB STEM@Work roundtable. The theme of the meeting was '**Growing our STEM Talent Pipeline from the Employers' Perspective**'. The conversation focused on the creation of STEM Internships opportunities for area High School students.

Cristy said that, through Connecting Activities, the MVWIB received a small grant to recruit 3 teachers from Methuen Public Schools and employers to participate in STEM teacher externships. This grant ends in June.

VWCC staff have been working hard at getting the students of Lawrence High School ready for their 3rd annual Job Fair to be held at the Lawrence High School Campus on April 26, 2018. The ValleyWorks Business Services team has recruited over 20 employers for this event.

Cristy said that the Summer YouthWorks funding will allow us to place 229 Youth into subsidized employment - with 148 for Lawrence, 58 for Haverhill, and 23 for Methuen. This year, youth will be allowed to work up to 30 hours per week at \$11.00 per hour for about 6 weeks. Youth will also attend 15 hours of Signal Success workshops. These workshops teach youth core employability skills and provide them with career and employment future planning.

Cristy said the MVWIB is recruiting teachers for the AMP It Up! Teacher Externship program. We are hoping to enroll 4 teachers from Haverhill High School and 6 from

Lawrence High School. The 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 grant ends in November 2018. The 2nd cohort of YouthWorks Year Round program at Haverhill High School is going well. 12 students are currently enrolled. Cristy concluded by inviting the committee members to the kick off YouthWorks Summer Program Employer Breakfast to be held at the Greater Lawrence Technical School Four Winds Restaurant on Friday, May 8th at 8:00 am.

#### **V. Partner's Information**

Rafael summarized his trip to Washington. Massachusetts is ahead of the game with WIOA. Many other States have yet to begin making efforts to comply with WIOA requirements.

The MA House is voting on a state budget with increased workforce development money. It will be excellent if the Senate also approves a budget containing an increase in Connecting Activities funding. US DOL funds is likely to again be less next year. The President's budget initially zeroed out workforce development but it was put back in the budget by Congress. Unemployment in this region was slightly less than the State average relatively lower so our WIOA budget cut was lower. We've been able to fund raise about one million dollars in discretionary funding to lessen the \$2M cut.

We are developing proposals for a youth reentry and an anti-opiate activities in the Lawrence area. President Trump mentioned Lawrence as a center of the opioid drug trade when he visited NH. WIB, the Career Center partners will work together on this initiative.

Ed reported that Lawrence HS has partnered with Edgewood Nursing facility to provide health field career experiences. This partnership is simultaneously benefiting students and the elderly. Students are learning firsthand about aging, health, loss of memory and Alzheimer's. This initiative is providing the LHS students with actual career exploration opportunities. The health careers employment outlook looks favorable in Lawrence.

David reported that DMH has just completed a restricting procurement for services. There will be a change in clinical services for both adults and youths. Behavior health consortium partners will provide fewer mental health services. Vin-Fen will be the Lead Agency for the department of mental health activities. The Vendor Procurement process will end in June.

MRC is looking for high school students ages up to 22 who have an interest in providing career counseling services. MRC is looking for referrals, for more information please contact MRC.

David answered that the Lawrence Police Department have a program called HUB where they meet each week to clear rehab plans for anyone who has been arrested for drugs or who have survived an overdose. April mentioned that the Lawrence/Methuen coalition is mimicking the Chelsea's efforts to fight against the Opioid epidemic. We are the second community in the US using this model. Rafael mentioned that the grant they are writing will help Police employees use new surveillance cameras possibly useful against the opioid drug trade.

Liz from GLTS stated that they continue with their partnership with Lawrence High School. They're helping 11<sup>th</sup> grade students who are not pursuing college to attend advanced manufacturing classes at GLTS. The students will leave LHS in the afternoon to go to GLTS. LHS and GLTS administrators hope to pilot the program in the fall. Liz and the superintendent visited the State House and met with Representative Sanchez with hope to receive Chapter 74 funding in advance. They will be the first tech high school in the State to have such a partnership with a public high school.

Francisco stated that the AFLCIO is putting together their apprenticeship program to educate youth on construction related careers. Their SkillsBuild program takes place in Hopkinton during the summer. Youth must be 18 – 24 years of age and must pass a CORI and drug test.

Irene has vacancies in most of her classes. She updated the committee on NECC's ESOL, HI-SET and other courses for immigrant professionals and teachers.

#### **VI. WIOA Update**

No WIOA update.

#### **VII. Other Business**

Mark Kamper, Executive Director of Youth Development Organization, Inc. (YDO) stated that the YouthWorks Summer program has been of great support to YDO and to youth.

Tom invited the committee members to the legislative breakfast to be held at the Greater Lawrence Technical School Four Winds Restaurant on May 11 at 7:30 am.

#### **VIII. Adjourn**

**Having no further business Chairman made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Tom Raiche and Francisco Brea. Motion passed and the meeting was adjourned.**

Respectfully submitted,

*Beverly Stopyra*

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Recorder