



**Planning/ Career Center Committee  
Meeting Minutes**

**Tuesday, February 20, 2018**

8:00 a.m.

255 Essex Street, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor

Lawrence, MA 01840

Members Present: Juan Yepez, Chairman  
Ron Contrado, Andrew Herlihy, Abel Vargas, Bob Wescott

Staff Present: Rafael Abislaiman, Corina Ruiz

Other: Dawn Beati

**I. Approval of Minutes of the January 16, 2018 meeting**

A quorum being present, Juan Yepez, called the meeting to order at 8:08 a.m. and then called for a motion on the minutes of the January 16, 2018 meeting.

**Motion by Bob Wescott, seconded by Ron Contrado, to approve the minutes of the January 16, 2018 meeting as submitted. Motion passed.**

**II. Performance Summary as of January 31, 2018**

Rafael said that Linda Rohrer was not able to join them today. Overall the numbers of clients seen at this site has increased since we moved from our previous location. The Mayor was correct in saying that the move would increase access.

Rafael said that Susan Almono had indicated some issues with the NECC unions at the previous planning meeting. Rafael said that the DCS staff kept the Career Center running on two different occasions when there were almost no NECC staff present because of union requirements. Both Lane Glenn and George Moriarty are aware of the situation and are trying to work out a long-term solution. The NECC leadership is thinking of re-classifying some staff to non-union status. Currently, most VWCC staff are part of a union. There's a possibility that some of the low numbers in the performance summary are due to this situation.

Unfortunately, the non-NECC, DCS staff has few and maybe only one Spanish speaking member.

Juan said that at the last MVWIB quarterly board meeting, one of our board members who represents unions said that it may just be a language issue and that they would be willing to help. But Juan doesn't think it's that simple. Rafael mentioned future concerns for the YouthWorks Summer Jobs program. It has historically been supported by VWCC staff. But the program requires some Saturday and evening work hour to recruit and pre-train kid. Those hours may be found unacceptable by the NECC unions. Rafael is concerned that the unions will

require that union staff be paid time and a half. Most of the program's money goes to pay youth and the MVWIB may need to change staffing to operate the program within very tight financial margins. We probably can't change staffing this year but other organizations that work with youth would gladly take on the program. Juan asked if we can farm out the program now. Rafael said it's not a good idea because it would create more problems if we don't at least try to work with current staff.

Dawn Beati suggested flexing the staff's schedules to meet the needs of the program. It's doable but you would have to look at the union contract to see what it says about the notice required for flex. She currently does it with the DCS staff without problems.

Juan asked who the union contract expert is. Rafael said that it wasn't until recently that the WIB got a hold of the contract. Ron suggested establishing a committee to look into Rafael's suggestions to incur good will by keeping on VWCC staff. Abel asked if getting another YouthWorks operator would require a RFP and Rafael said yes. Abel then said that it seems hard to manage an RFP process in so short a time. But we could release one now and say that it is in preparation for the future. Bob asked if it's too late to RFP and whether it's a complicated process to set-up. Rafael said that the employer portion of the summer jobs program is mostly on auto-pilot but the youth recruitment and screening component is more complex and it would be difficult to set up quickly with another organization. Abel Vargas asked how much outreach the WIB does for summer job employers and Rafael said about half.

### **III. Budget Update as of January 31, 2018**

Rafael said that the college's income is not the original contract's \$2.5M or the original plan distributed at this meeting. It is currently \$2,666,257 and the figure is always being amended. We are looking at \$2.8 million rather than the original amount of \$2.5 million. All funds are funneled through the MVWIB except for job fair funds which are about \$30-40K annually. Those funds go directly to VWCC. The MVWIB gets at least a 5% fee for administering all other program funds.

### **IV. MVWIB Monitoring Policy Draft (vote required)**

Rafael said that in the past the State monitored both WIBs and Career Centers but now MA WIBs will monitor career centers. We are a pilot site towards that end. The document presented is an effort to formalize our policy. We took the state policy and integrated parts of it into ours.

Abel asked who monitors and Rafael said Corina Ruiz does most of it but all other program managers also have monitoring responsibilities. Bob asked who answers the questionnaire included in the package provided to the committee and Rafael said VWCC does and then WIB staff uses the questionnaire answers as a guide during monitoring. Abel asked what happens if VWCC is found to be underperforming. Rafael said we first give them time to respond as to their perspective on the issue. Then, if the issue is insufficiently addressed, we provide technical assistance to solve what we consider a problem. If the problem is then still not resolved within a month or two, we can put them on a conditional status pending resolution. If problems persist, the MVWIB can ultimately pull part or all of their funding.

Dawn asked if the monitoring policy will be submitted to DCS and Rafael said yes, once the committee approves.

Andrew Herlihy asked why an employer policy was not included and Rafael said that was an oversight but will be added.

**Abel made a motion to approve the MVWIB monitoring policy with the understanding that an employer policy will be added, seconded by Andrew Herlihy. Motion passed unanimously.**

Abel asked how much funding is received for WIOA out-of-school youth and Rafael said about \$700K. There was discussion about youth programming, its cost per participant, who receives funding, and who provides services and administers the program.

Juan asked how many kids drop-out from high school and Rafael said about 30-40%. Abel added that the Lawrence HS has about 3K students. Abel asked if \$10K of funding can be used to pay outside agencies for outreach services and Rafael said yes. Juan asked if we work with high schools to identify kids before they drop-out and Rafael said we have a Connecting Activities staff that works closely with Lawrence and Haverhill high schools. Rafael said the MVWIB applied for a grant about 5-6 years ago to have a career center in the high school but the feds didn't fund it. The biggest thing we can do is help youth stay in school.

Andrew said he would like to connect some Haverhill kids with summer work to get or keep them out of gangs.

#### **V. Grants Update**

Rafael said there are no additional grants since last reported.

#### **VI. Career Center Report**

Linda Rohrer was not able to attend but provided the committee a hardcopy report that included the below. Dawn Beati was present representing VWCC.

#### **Employer Events**

- Successful on-site information session and recruitment on February 6<sup>th</sup> for IndusPad and Beyond Organic
  - Entrepreneurs from California that have purchased the Polartec building
  - 17 customers attended and screened
  - 11 scheduled for interviews
  - Company "surprised" and impressed with quality of candidates
- Job Fair scheduled for March 14<sup>th</sup> at Lawrence Training School – Health and Human Services
- March 27<sup>th</sup> co-branded event (AJH, NECC Health Care Programs, ValleyWorks) to promote healthcare careers and to recruit candidates for open positions at Anna Jaques Hospital
- Clipper City Job Fair scheduled for April 10<sup>th</sup> at Elks Club in Newburyport
- Organizing Job Fair at Lawrence High School for April 26<sup>th</sup>
  - During school hours before seniors graduate
  - Target 1 – Seniors with no plans for college – full time job in a company with learning opportunities
  - Target 2 – Seniors going to college, juniors, sophomores – summer jobs

## **Work with Hurricane Evacuees from Puerto Rico**

- Currently about 55 Puerto Ricans being served at ValleyWorks, several have found jobs
- USDOL National Emergency Grant will soon be available to support career services and training
- February 8<sup>th</sup> - convened Greater Lawrence organizations who are serving evacuees to share information about our services, challenges we're facing, and to determine if there is something we should be doing together – 12 organizations attended – Decided to:
  - Create group email to keep each other informed
  - Organize a community-wide event with the purpose of promoting all services available to hurricane evacuees
  - Create a single database that identifies hurricane evacuees in the Greater Lawrence region

## **Veterans Event**

- Planning to sponsor another event for veterans
- To be held in April or May at the Technology Center at NECC Haverhill campus
- Focus: federal employment opportunities and community resources for veterans
- Will collaborate with NECC Veterans Services

## **CNC Advanced Manufacturing Training Recruitment**

- Program Dates: January 16, 2018 – June 15, 2018
- 12 students – no problems

## **Industry Sector Team Development Progress**

- Business Service Reps organized by sector
  - Reports from MOSES by industry sector of companies that ValleyWorks has previously served
  - Dawn is running reports using new tool (Burning Glass) provided by the state that will help us to identify companies in each sector to target that we have not previously worked with

Dawn Beati was present and said that Raytheon is hiring. They will be hiring about 120 people and the BSR working with them is Eric Nelson. Dawn added that Raytheon takes about one year to hire someone because of their clearance.

Dawn said the US Postal Service is also hiring and it is the first time that they've reached out to the career center for recruitment help.

The BSR team has been busy. UPS was at VWCC recruiting and hired 50-60 people. Bob suggested recruiting at gyms, perhaps setting up a table with information.

Rafael asked if staff has had any push back about the industry sector teams and Dawn said yes. But everyone will be cross-trained.

## **VII. Other Business**

Rafael said there will be a grant to support Hurricane Impacted people. Hampden County will be administering the vouchers. We so far expect 55 vouchers for families impacted by Hurricane Maria.

**VIII. Adjourn (vote required)**

**Having no further business Andrew Herlihy made a motion to adjourn the meeting seconded by Ron Contrado, and the meeting was adjourned.**

Respectfully submitted,

*Corina Ruiz*

Recorder