



**PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING  
Minutes**

**Thursday, June 21, 2016**

8:00 a.m.

Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Board  
Lawrence, MA 01843

Members Present: Juan Yepez, Chairman  
Dennis DiZoglio, Andrew Herlihy

Members Absent: Rosalin Acosta, Ron Contrado, Mike Munday, Abel Vargas, Bob Westcott

Staff Present: Rafael Abislaiman, Susan Almono, Mary Kivell

Others: Arthur Chilingirian, Amy Weatherbee

**I. Approval of Minutes of May 12, 2016**

A quorum being present, Juan Yepez called the meeting to order at 8:10 a.m. Juan then called for a motion on the minutes of the May 12, 2016 meeting.

**Motion by Andrew Herlihy, seconded by Dennis DiZoglio, to approve the minutes of the May 12, 2016 meeting as submitted. Motion passed.**

**II. Performance Summary as of Third Quarter ending 5/31/16**

Career Center Director Arthur Chilingirian reported on the third quarter performance as of 5/31/16. He said that we are on par to meet our goals for labor exchange. He said that we are having difficulty with not getting as many Veterans coming into the career center. He mentioned a recent veterans grant given Career Resources and is trying to connect with them to bring more veterans into the career center. Chili said that the economy is getting better but is still tight. There are still discouraged workers looking for jobs. Chili and Amy spoke about a recent job fair where one employer was only offering \$11 per hour as a starting wage in manufacturing. Other employers spoke up and said to them they wouldn't get anyone at that hourly rate.

Chili continued stating that we are meeting our goals under Employer Services bring in new companies. The Adults category is fully expended and we don't see their numbers until 90

days after the last service. Staff have exceeded goals with DTA customers and Dislocated Workers have exceeded their goals. Youth recruitment is a problem across the state. Chili said that the LARE group electronics training may help with those numbers.

Andy Herlihy asked about carry over of funds and Rafael said that there would be some but that we have two years to spend WIOA dollars. Dennis DiZoglio wondered if there was a way to talk to the employer who was offering the \$11 wage at the recruitment event. Chili said that employers are worried about the increase in the minimum wage to \$15 and are talking about part-time positions. Amy said that some adults who completed the CNA manufacturing training have been hired at a good wage.

### **III. Budget Update as of 5/31/2016**

Rafael Abislaiman referred to the monthly budget update and said that the budget is looking good and his only concern is the low youth training number which will go up. In the past, Secretary of Labor Goldstein wanted 30% of money spent on training. He said that when we fold other programs into WIOA we reach 30%. There were no questions on the budget.

### **IV. Preliminary Discussion: Career Center Partner MOU Development Membership**

Rafael said that this is a transition year from WIA to WIOA and it will be used to consult with partners and develop processes at career centers nationwide. This means that we have to have frequent discussions with career center partners. Most partners deal with the physically challenged, people with poor work histories or mature workers. Rafael said that the only one he added to the list is Northern Essex Community College (NECC).

We need to decide what additional partners to add and to what end. Should it be for workforce and economic development? We now have two missions: one is to help those who most need help to get and keep jobs and the other is to help area employers become more competitive. Representatives focused on our second mission are missing from the list. Rafael said that our board is 51% employer driven but the career center MOU team is currently composed of social service people who work for non-profits or federal or state social service entities.

Susan Almono suggested industry associations and Amy said it is a function of the board to represent industry. Dennis wondered what besides Chambers could be considered associations. Susan mentioned Mass Recycle and Amy said that most industry associations advocate for their industry. Rafael said that the chambers may be the right vehicle as the four area chambers are board members. Dennis also mentioned the politics of the chambers and how each struggles to keep their own identity.

Rafael said that the 51% employer-driven board creates policy and the annual plan and budget. The MOU committee may be more hands-on and focused on career center processes. He recommended that the Board have a separate Career Center Committee and wondered in the Planning Committee should serve in that role. Rafael also said that all state ABE providers need to be included in the Career Center MOU Committee and there are six in our region.

Amy said that the board negotiates with regional partners related to shared costs to infrastructure. Dennis said that he has a full time economic development planner on staff and offered that person as a resource to help connect with business. Rafael said that he is not sure if partner obligations include actual contributions to cover Career Center overhead costs and wondered if something like Job Corps services constituted a contribution.

Rafael asked whether our only customers should be those in most need of help for jobs or whether we should also consider employers' needs. Susan said that in the FY'17-18 MA Combined State Plan, economic development, education and workforce development shared service strategies. We may want to model ourselves on something akin to their plan. Amy said that the MOU partners are not relevant to the work we do with business. She said that first the MVWIB should weigh in and second comes our conversations with partners to explain the role of the career center in business engagement. That way we can streamline roles and responsibilities.

Rafael said that the state is currently striving to centralize business services. We in the regions need to keep as many activities as possible so we can articulate regional business needs. There are 17 partners on the MOU now with the 5 ABE partners. Juan suggested leaving membership as is and adding members after we see how things go. Chili said that NECC won't pay to come in and is not a required partner. He also said that possible partners are missing. Amy wondered if DTA would allow their local person to negotiate.

Susan said that we don't need a comprehensive list of all who we share customers with and we can talk with partners in a different forum. Rafael said that his concern is the mandated preference given to listed agencies and wondered why community colleges aren't mandated when they were such important partners till this year. For decades, the federal government has promoted them as the solution to workforce development issues. Amy said that the community colleges in Massachusetts are different from the community colleges nationally. Juan said that this is just a preliminary discussion and we can add others going forward.

Rafael said that, speaking of community colleges, he wanted to mention that we hoped to again work with them on an H1B visa funded proposal that will allow for tuition reimburse for students who are doing a good job. He said that we are looking into the possibility of being a part of two proposals – another manufacturing one and a health technician one with NECC.

**V. Preliminary Discussion: Should Planning Committee serve as the Career Center Committee or should another committee be created**

Rafael said WIOA mandates that we have a Career Center Committee and asked if the consensus is to have the Planning Committee assume that role. Amy said that we could include a broader base of board participants on the Planning/Career Center Committee. It would have to be a business based committee doing strategic planning and looking at Career Center performance and structures. It would allow for a broader buy in by board members. Rafael said that there would be value to adding people and having them keep abreast of

things. We could have structured time for each role and not include vendors who may have a conflict of interest.

Juan liked the idea of merging the Planning and Career Center Committee and asking for any new members. Rafael said that we could officially vote on this item at the next meeting. He said that board chairman Peter Matthews has the discretion on who to appoint to committees.

## **VI. Site RFP & WIOA Update**

Rafael reported that the RFP for a new site was cancelled and we will be moving into a city building. Work is in progress on the building which involves taking down walls and making it ADA compliant. There is some water damage and the HVAC system and roof are being replaced. Juan said that they should do an air quality test on the building and Amy said that everything will be up to code.

Juan asked when the move would happen and Rafael said hopefully in the fall. He said that we will recoup any lease payment losses caused by the move delay. The city will forgive rent payments to balance out the hold over charges and that a City Attorney is working on a MOU to codify that. Amy said that a team has been meeting working using the RFP as a source document that an attorney is working on.

There was discussion on whether RFPing the career center space should take precedence over an agreement with the City. Amy said that RFPs always allow for the refection of all proposal, and for lease expansion and contraction based on funding and needs. Juan said that we could have probably managed a better deal with the current landlord in the past. At the end of the day we need something in writing from the city that they will absorb the 50% rent penalty. He also said that he is concerned with the state's opposition to the move. Rafael said that they may oppose it but the City is offering a good bargain below any RFP cost per square foot.

Juan asked to be kept updated at the monthly meetings. Rafael said that the city receives \$5m from WIOA and takes no money to administer it. He said that MVWIB and Career Center municipal employees may end up costing the city in the future because of increasing retirement costs. This move helps balance out that possibility.

## **VI. Other Business**

Andrew said that Haverhill has received a grant for the Mt. Washington area to connect people to jobs and training. The Mt. Washington Alliance will bring services to the Mt. Washington area with some career center related services or better access to services. People in the Mt. Washington area are not close to NECC nor do they have transportation to get there. Rafael said that George Moriarty, Chili and he discussed providing some classes in the neighborhood and getting more Career Center classroom space at NECC while also having a van run through downtown and the Mt. Washington neighborhood. Dennis DiZoglio said that the MVRTA runs 2m trips and could also be a connection.

Andrew also said there has been discussion on possibly doing a YouthBuild RFP in Haverhill in the future to increase training opportunities in Haverhill for Youth. Amy mentioned that the LARE OSY Electronics program will be offering transportation from Haverhill.

**VII. Adjourn**

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

Respectfully submitted,

*Mary Kivell,*

Recorder