



Newburyport CleanTech Center, Inc.
10 Mulliken Way
Newburyport, MA 01950

MEETING

Minutes
Tuesday, June 28, 2011
7:30 AM

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Howard Allen, Joseph Bevilacqua, Fred Carberry, Thomas Casey, Thomas Connors, Ron Contrado, Paul Durant, Julie Gadziala, Gary Hale, Susan Jepson, Jeff Linehan, Dahianara Moran-Liranzo, Michael Munday, Peter Matthews, Ann Ormond, Nancy Tariot, Fred Shaheen, Michael Strem, Cal Williams, Len Wilson

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Kimberly Abare, Patrick Blanchette, Pedro Arce, Wayne Capolupo, Rosemary Chandler, Michael Collins, Supt. William DeRosa, David Hartleb, Robert Ingala, Steve Kfoury, James Driscoll, Howard Flagler, Joe Gangi, Jr., Atty. Robert LeBlanc, Sal Lupoli, Eric Mane, Maria Miles, John Olenio, Margaret O'Neill, Cindy Phelan, Kevin Page, Donna Rivera, Andres Rodriguez, Steve Salvo, Jeff Sheehy, Lester Schindel, Evan Silverio, Stanley Usovicz, Ray Wrobel, Juan Yopez

GUESTS PRESENT:

Robert O'Brien, Barry Pett for Senator Bruce Tarr, Arthur Chilingirian, Dave Souza, Sheryl Scannell, Amelia Perez del Pulgar, Marie Pierce

STAFF PRESENT:

Rafael Abislaiman, Corina Ruiz, Mary Kivell, Deborah Andrews, Odanis Hernandez, Susan Almono

1. Call to Order

A quorum being present, Chairman Joseph Bevilacqua called the meeting to order at 7:45 a.m. He welcomed everyone to Newburyport and its CleanTech Center and then called on Newburyport Mayor Donna Holaday.

2. Welcome

Mayor Holaday said she was pleased to give an update on what is happening in Newburyport. She said that the City Council has approved two bond votes for two schools. One is a \$650,000 bond for a feasibility study to model a redesigned Bresnahan School and the other is a \$500,000 bond for a renovation redesign to the Nock and Molin School building. She went on to say that the city's paid parking plan is in effect and going well despite some early disagreement with paid parking. Mayor Holaday said that the city is working on a new event to celebrate the Custom House and past

shipbuilding in Newburyport. The City is also working with legislators to add the designation of "Birthplace of the U.S. Coast Guard" to the City of Newburyport.

Robert O'Brien, President of the CleanTech Center, Inc. welcomed the board to the Newburyport CleanTech Center and said that Mayor Holaday has been a supporter since day one. He said that they are a business incubator formed for the commercialization of sustainable products in the clean tech marketplace. The Center's services consist of flex space and operational services, funding strategies and advisor and professional support. The Newburyport CleanTech Center is a resource for emerging companies in various sectors within 'clean technology'. It assists start-up businesses with early stage challenges as well as existing businesses seeking new space. Mr. O'Brien said that after meeting with Joe Bevilacqua and Rafael Abislaiman, Ralph was able to research and identify a training program applicable to Solais Lighting.

Joe Bevilacqua said that Newburyport President Ann Ormond was also involved with promoting CleanTech. He said that making the WIB adaptable and helpful to new business is one of our goals and a growing reality. He continued by saying that our WIB has also found workforce training funds to be helpful with green initiatives. Joe said that the unions are also involved with promoting green through apprenticeship programs. If we all help green companies to reduce costs, they can be more productive.

3. Report of Chair

Joe recognized Barry Pett from Senator Bruce Tarr's office and thanked Mayor Holaday and Bob O'Brien. Mr. Pett said that these are trying times economically. We will be starting the new fiscal year this week and the state just passed a ten day budget yesterday. He said that folks can call the Senator's office with questions or for help at any time.

Joe then said that the goal is to hold our WIB meetings throughout the region to learn what is happening in all the communities under our WIB.

4. Approval of Minutes of April 26, 2011

Joe then called for a motion on the minutes of the MVWIB's April 26, 2011 meeting.

Motion by Fred Carberry seconded by Tom Casey to approve the minutes of the April 26 2011 meeting as submitted. Motion passed unanimously.

5. Reports of Committee Chairs

- *Planning Committee*

Peter Matthews began by reminiscing about Bob O'Brien and a championship baseball team he played on in the past. Peter said that the MVWIB's Planning committee is endeavoring to ensure that effective service and positive outcomes remain our focus and that quality is not compromised in the wake of budget cuts and very high demand. We plan to approach these issues in a variety of ways that include the following: eliminating approximately six (6) WIA-funded positions; helping staff solicit additional and separate funds. We currently have approximately \$4,000,000 in outstanding proposals to the U.S. Department of Labor and look for several of these proposals to be successful. We will all work hard to qualify for other funds that are in keeping with our workforce development mission. Peter said that we hope to improve our client screening processes and reduce the average number of visits per client. Although working with fewer WIA staff, we should be able to serve more people who can bring WIA- required eligibility documents without inordinate prompting. We also

plan to increase services to low-income youth who are better prepared to obtain and keep a job. This year we will undertake an ongoing and quantifiable analysis of the cost and benefits of training as compared to intensive career center based services. This will require that we use various new information technology-based tools to capture service information. Peter concluded his report stating that, in accordance with our High Performing WIB plan, we will continue to focus on jobs in health care, advanced manufacturing and green companies and other sectors requiring Science, Technology, Engineering and Math skills. We will strive to continue making headway on our youth employment pipeline.

Joe Bevilacqua said that Peter is very familiar with questions related to funding and the continued discussion on WIA authorization. This discussion has trickled down to the state WIB office which is requiring every WIB to look at operations and functions and ways to reduce costs without sacrificing the delivery of services. He said that funding will never come back to former levels.

Rafael Abislaiman said that WIB Annual Plan submittals were delayed and that at present State FY 2012 funding is still unclear. He requested that the board consider approving the draft Plan Summary of changes from FY2011 to FY 2012 and that it authorize the Planning Committee to approve the final plan for submission. In the past, the Planning Committee has reviewed the Annual Plan and made their recommendation to the entire board. Joe Bevilacqua said that the Planning Committee is involved in the development and planning of our programs and is equipped to evaluate the Annual Plan for submittal to the state.

Motion by Fred Carberry seconded by Cal Williams to authorize the Planning Committee to approve the final Annual Plan on behalf of the WIB. Motion passed unanimously.

- *Youth Council Report*

Youth Council Chair Cal Williams reported that the Career Center collected 600 complete and 200 incomplete youth applications for summer jobs. Those that were complete were entered into the lottery and 120 participant names were pulled. Eligible youth selected are from Lawrence, Haverhill and 10% from Methuen. We subsequently received more funding to serve another 85 young people from Lawrence, which brings the 2012 summer jobs to a total of more than 200 youth. Because of the generous cooperation of scores of area employers, we have more than enough jobs for all subsidized youth participants.

Different from past years, and in no small part due to MWWIB efforts, virtually all youth must still meet the low income requirement, but only 15% of the youth served from each community now need to have another barrier to success. Those barriers are defined as performing at below grade level, being Court-involved or DYS-committed, on juvenile probation, gang-involved, CHINS, under juvenile arrest; homeless or being a runaway; in foster care or being close to aging out of foster care; having aged out of foster care. In the past, all subsidized youth summer job participants had to be both low-income and have one of the above mentioned additional barriers. This year, a full 85% of participants only need to meet the low income criteria.

This WIB was instrumental in making that change. The change allows low-income, academically average or high performing low-income youth without court involvement to participate in subsidized summer employment. In the past, youth had to be both low income and experiencing another barrier.

The VWCC YouthWorks staff has contacted and informed youth about the program, collected information, determined completeness of applications, and eligibility. Staff organized the lottery and informed each person whose

name was pulled that he/she will have a summer job. Staff fielded hundreds of question calls from youth, parents, organizations and others. Many were disappointed because they were not selected, through no fault of their own. Notifying youth that they were not lottery winners is always difficult for staff.

WVCC staff has established long-lasting relationships with employers who offer us a large selection of jobs from many sectors. Our career center and WIB are known throughout the state as the area with the largest number of engaged private businesses.

Staff provided six workshops for Lawrence and Methuen youth and four workshops in Haverhill. Youth received work readiness training, health and safety information, career information, and prospective employer information. They could indicate a preference for particular employers or business fields. Businesses received their paperwork at the employer orientation breakfast, which was hosted at ValleyWorks on June 17, where they received information about their youth employees. DGA readies and implements payroll for all of the participants, as the youth are paid through the city.

Each summer youth employee will work up to 25 hours per week for six weeks at \$8.00 an hour. Participants use their earnings to help their families, to buy their own clothes, and other uses. In addition to earning the money, youth increase their self-sufficiency and self-respect while earning important new skills that they will take with them into the future.

Cal continued stating that we have written applications for a 2012 Connecting Activities program but that we are still waiting to see if it will survive budget cuts. For 2011, Connecting Activities funding came in late through a supplemental budget. Hopefully, the same thing will occur this year and the program will continue to be able to provide school-to-work resources for students. Pathways to MCAS Success funding, which helps youth pass the MCAS and earn their diploma, is also expected but uncertain.

ValleyWorks Career Center was contacted by the Commonwealth Corporation to submit a proposal for a Summer Bridging the Opportunities Gap (BOG) program. If funded, the Career Center will offer subsidized employment to fifteen (15) youth who are in the custody of the Department of Youth Services. The youth will attend eight (8) hours of work readiness workshops and then work twenty (20) hours per week for six weeks.

Cal reported that the Teacher Externship program was a big success! Howard Allen facilitated the program. The teachers have developed curriculum that will bring the workplace into the classroom. We want to thank Mike Strem and Strem Chemicals for his contribution of time, expertise and funding. He is a wonderful advocate for youth and for education. We also want to thank Cal and UPS for their time, expertise and funding. Because of our board members, our Teacher Externship program was successful.

Howard Allen then reported on the externship program and how the extern who partnered with Strem Chemical learned what employees at this company need to understand. Howard said that many such skills are MCAS requirements and that the participating teacher is looking to incorporate MCAS related OJT examples into his class curriculum. The other extern was a teacher from Haverhill High School who partnered with UPS. She plans to incorporate her experience into her Algebra I and II classes. Overall, Howard said the program was very successful. Howard said that he attended a Governor's Council meeting in Fall River last week and was pleased to see the STEM initiative gaining traction and strong support.

Mike Strem agreed that STEM is gaining momentum but it remains to be seen how it develops roots in the school system.

Joe Bevilacqua said that the Governor has brought together the Secretaries of Labor, Education and Economic Development and that his administration is attempting to reduce departmental silos so that youth can better understand the importance of STEM.

6. FY2012 Preliminary Budget

Fred Carberry, Title I Administrator, explained his role and position as Title I Administrator for the City of Lawrence. Under WIA the lead municipality (in this instance Lawrence) is responsible and liable for US DOL funding and oversees fiscal and budgetary matters. Fred said that he serves at the pleasure of the Mayor on a part-time basis.

Fred then went over the Summary of Changes from FY2011 to FY2012 which was included in the meeting packets along with a list of the funding allocations from the state. He mentioned that DTA funding has been eliminated for FY2012 and re-employment assistance is down as well, as is virtually every other category of funding. New funding is listed with most coming from NEG grants. The State Energy Sector Partnership Grant includes \$180,000 in direct training benefits. WIA Customer Training and Support Funds for FY'11 WIA Youth was 35%, WIA Adult 35%, and WIA Dislocated Worker 31%. For FY'12 the percentage reductions for WIA Youth are 8%, WIA Adult 13% and WIA Dislocated Worker 13%.

Fred continued stating that in '09, '10, and '11 we had \$1,850,000 in ARRA stimulus funds and youth benefited the most. One new expense that we must assume he said is the GIC health insurance costs for retirees. In the past, all retirees were picked up by the City. With the state overseer in place the various city departments need to assume those health costs. For FY'13 the cost to us is \$90,000.

There are no staffing changes to WIB positions; DGA is reduced one executive assistant; ValleyWorks Career Center (VWCC) added/reassigned one Executive Assistant and one Job Developer. VWCC reduced/eliminated one IT Data Entry Clerk, one Business Services Representative, and one Administrative Assistant. The Division of Career Services has reduced/eliminated three RES Job Specialists. Fred said that this is not the entire picture as staff have been reassigned to specific grants but about ten people have been lost to core WIA services. The WIB, Planning Committee, DGA and VWCC have been meeting to come up with a plan to share fairly and maintain as many services as possible. Our career center has been one of the highest performing in the state and has received incentive money for excellent performance. The numbers of clients coming in still remain high. Fred also said that the vendor base needs to adapt just as the Career Center and WIB face changes in funding.

Fred then said that he would like the board to vote to approve the preliminary strategy for the Annual Plan and the Summary of Changes from FY'2011 to FY'2012.

Jeff Linehan asked if our funding was from the state. Rafael said that about 10% was from the state. Joe Bevilacqua said that watching Washington, these cuts are going to continue to come down. He said that once the economy stabilizes funding will not go back to prior levels.

Jeff mentioned that unemployment costs are hurting companies and places a burden on employers still in business. Joe said that unemployment in Massachusetts has dropped and the state has reduced benefits. Jeff asked if there were more cuts to adults and Fred said that the emphasis from

the federal government seems to be on the unemployed and not on AFDC recipients. Looking at WIA adult there are other resources. He said that the workforce system deals with retraining instead of education.

Joe said that with funding going away they are looking at individuals who were part of the workforce and want to go back to work. Gary Hale asked if there were any ARRA carryover funds and Fred said not after June 30th. Cal mentioned the reduction in funding for youth and Ralph said that the formula is dictated by DOL based on demographic information which often lags behind reality.

Discussion having ended Joe Bevilacqua called the question.

Motion by Mike Munday seconded by Ron Contrado to approve the preliminary FY2012 Summary of Changes from FY'2011 to FY'2012 as presented was approved unanimously.

Joe then mentioned that the Mass WIB met in our region at Whittier Regional High School in Haverhill and the State Energy Partnership Group met in Lawrence.

7. Report of Executive Director

WIB Executive Director Rafael Abislaiman said that he wished to clarify one point and that is that our budget doesn't include funding to pay unemployment checks. Unemployment checks are funded by employers, individuals, the state and the federal government and those funds comes from other accounts.

Raphael said that these are difficult times for workforce development. He reported that our region suffered the third largest cut in the state behind Worcester and New Bedford. He said that he feels that the formula the state uses is flawed and sometimes behind by as much as two or three years. Going forward, he said that we need to become clearer on the need for changes in WIA reauthorization. The Senate bill currently on the table still holds to training for the hardest to serve. It does not flexibly respond to today's condition of high unemployment and increasing global competitiveness.

He wondered if the old 'hardest to serve' approach is the best approach. In Massachusetts, we recently responded to a 'hardest to serve' RFP. Our proposal was rejected because we proposed to train unemployed youth without high school diplomas. But those services were not considered as hard enough and a program to serve homeless mothers without GEDs was funded instead. Given today's high unemployment, Rafael wondered if that was the best choice.

Going forward, he said that we need to make workforce development decisions on how to balance spending on intensive case management against training. We need to try to address this in order to ensure that increasingly limited resources are use to most effectively used to put people into good jobs that they can keep for the long term.

Rafael mentioned that he recently attended a conference at which a knowledgeable individual stated that, in his opinion, we are going through the worst and that things should soon stabilize and start getting stronger economically. Ralph expects this is so but wondered how global competition will play out if we don't change our approach to national workforce development.

Joe said that Ralph and the staff do a tremendous job and that we will continue to make progress and achieve a high level of performance.

Jeff Linehan mentioned that he appreciates the good work that we are doing but said we need to also address the burden on employers of health insurance costs. He also referenced a new solar farm near his company and said that it costs him \$.08 for electricity produced the old way and that it would cost him \$.12 for solar.

Joe said that he has heard that we have the current expertise to move to solar energy but that we need an infusion of federal dollars to reduce energy costs.

Susan Jepson also opined that it seems that we are looking at workforce development to address what are really social problems that should not be solved through workforce development.

8. Adjournment

Having no further business Cal Williams made a motion to adjourn and Tom Casey seconded the motion. Motion passed and meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Kivell

Recorder