



# MERRIMACK VALLEY WORKFORCE BOARD

## YOUTH COMMITTEE

### MINUTES

Wednesday, December 12, 2018  
MassHire Merrimack Valley Workforce Board  
255 Essex Street, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Lawrence, MA 01840

#### **MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Howard Allen, Francisco Brea

#### **MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Brad Howell, Sonia Morales, Tom Raiche, Lisa Remington, Linda Rohrer, Katherine Sweeney, Ed Warnshuis, Elizabeth Bennett, Michael Bevilacqua, Irene Chalek, April Lyskowsky, David Tagliaferri, Ellen Weinhold, Cal Williams

#### **Staff Present:**

Abel Vargas, Cristy Gomez, Beverly Stopyra

#### **Guest Present:**

Jackie Romero, Odanis Hernandez, Beverly DeSalvo, Tia Roy

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

In the absence of chairman Williams, Abel Vargas called the meeting to order at 11:50 a.m. Introductions were made around the table.

#### **II. Approval of the October 10, 2018 Minutes**

Approval of the minutes were tabled for due to no quorum.

#### **III. Guest Speaker: Beverly DeSalvo, Vocational/Technical Coordinator, Whittier Regional Vocational Technical High School and Tia Roy, Community Services, Post-Secondary/Early College Programs Advisor.**

Abel Vargas introduced Bev DeSalvo and expressed that we are very happy to have them come in to tell us about Whittier.

Bev began by saying that this coming Friday they are completing the Allied Health Center at and now will be offering Dental Assisting and Health Assisting where they can become CNA Certified and a Medical Assistant Program which is more the intake and the person who is taking the history of the direct patient care not so taking care of the patient. It was supposed to be completed in September, but they could not get the funding. The first time they put it out to bid they didn't get any response. They still have to do Labor Market information for what the district needs. Dental assistant was one that was identified. They are very excited about this. Bev said they still have to submit paperwork to the State and become certified.

Bev gave out a folder filled with information on Whittier Services available to students, graduates, the public. and the Adult Continuing Education brochure for spring 2019.

Bev wanted to talk about the Post Secondary program where they now offer Cosmetology, Dental Assisting and Advanced Manufacturing where students can go to school in the evenings. They want it for the whole Merrimack Valley not just Haverhill. As far away as Ipswich. They are looking for more opportunities for kids who didn't think of going to a vocational school at age 14, 15, 16. Whittier is now looking at LPN as post-secondary opportunity. Bev mentioned that it is important that Whittier has the facility available.

Abel mentioned that we hope to have an Advanced Manufacturing program that will probably run for a three-year period on January 28<sup>th</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup>. We will send out RFP's so all training providers can bid for it.

Francisco wanted to know where exactly we are at with Advanced Manufacturing. We hear a lot about it. Tia said they are contacted constantly about this program. That's why they are looking to do this so student can come in the evening for Advanced Manufacturing program.

Tia mentioned that this will be happening in September as post-secondary. Currently their current students have machine technology program, but the participation rate is low. She referred to the sheet they had in the brochure. That is why they see this post-secondary program so important. The school will remain open after the regular school day which will be more attractive to 18 to 28 year olds. It's hard for 13-14 years old to know what they want to do.

Abel asked if they needed help with this. They have to wait until approval from the Department of Education and they just have to wait until the process goes through.

Tia mentioned that they have a great exploratory program. Two years ago, they totally redid their Machine Shop. It is the State of the Art. As a freshman they will see all the programs Whittier has to offer.

Two years ago, Governor Baker's office gave them a \$500,000 capital skills grant and they totally re-did their Machine Shop over. It was already in good shape but now it's just State of the Art.

Bev mentioned that Whittier has two phenomenal instructors. She continued by saying that they are also running summer programs for kids and adults. Connections are great. Students who are participating in co-op are earning anywhere from \$14-\$18 per hour.

Howard mentioned that machine shops are all going away from this area. But Bev mentioned many manufacturing companies are still in the area and right in our back door. She said they are right in Merrimack and Newburyport in Machine Technology. A lot of them that they do business with that are very supportive to education. These companies are willing to do whatever it takes to partner with them. They just have difficulty with enrollment with the younger population that's why this post-secondary program is so important.

A lot of the students are interested in computers. Tia said that Machine Technology is not something they grew up with.

Bev said they have the parents come in so they too can hear all about these programs so they can maybe break down the misconceptions of Advance Manufacturing. Bev said they added engineering. They have twenty students enrolled which is a great number but then other areas go down.

Howard mentioned the industry is changing very rapidly particularly in the carpentry industry. It's taking a while to convince people. He continue saying that everything is so automated today. For example in machine shops employees did everything. Now everything has robots that support twenty tools and employees aren't needed as much. Now one piece of equipment does 28 jobs.

Abel said that LHS has 23 students that have a late start for machine shop training. Odanis said it's just a pilot program. These LHS students have a late start and go to GLTS for these classes. LHS and GLTS are still having conversations about the future of this pilot.

Jackie asked if the LHS students have the core classes att LHS What's the value added to the LHS students if then they go to the GLTS? Odanis responded that a lot of the students end up in public education because GLTS didn't have the space for them. These LHS students were interested in attending GLTS but were not accepted then. Now these enrolled students are bussed to GLTS and will graduate from LHS with gain knowledge and internship experience. from the GLTS program. This is a two year program. Why recruit from a wider area when we have students that couldn't get into the Vocational school. Bev asked if they applied to GLTS and couldn't get in. Odanis answered that they are focused on the students who wanted to attend GLTS and couldn't get in. They looked at the data of who couldn't get into GLTS. Odanis said that was one criteria they looked at. They did look at other assessment tools as well.

Bev mentioned that Whittier does not have a waiting list but they do track students that didn't get in their freshman year for whatever reason. Very few reapply. Jackie asked if they knew enough to reapply. Bev said they do a big outreach.

Howard asked if perhaps they are looking at a younger group who doesn't have the maturity and said that ten years ago was different. He mentioned that kids are not educated and mature enough to do the work of a typical ninth grader. Bev said they finding that. Bev said that now kids have so much information and more instant gratification now.

Odanis said that her parents would never had recommended advanced manufacturing to her because they didn't know enough about it. The program they have has five females now.

Bev brought up the Portsmouth Ship Yard. They are now are recognizing that their hiring process was taking so long. The people who applied started getting other jobs. The Shipyard is now looking at other ways to recruit. It's a wonderful opportunity up there. Abel asked if they have a contact they could share and Bev said she does and would share it.

Cristy asked if they are interested in becoming an approved training vendor for individual training account (ITA) for some of these students who might be eligible for WIOA services. There are might be some Career Center customers who might be interested in theses program. Bev believes that there is a population that would benefit from this post-secondary program. They are developing those partnership as we speak. Cristy said we can give her the information on becoming an approved training vendor. Bev said that they are interested. The other question Cristy had is going to the 8<sup>th</sup> grade for recruitment she suggests they start even earlier like the seventh grade so when it comes to making HS vocational school decisions students as well as parents will be ready with so much information. Although Connecting Activities services is for high schoolers, we visit parents' nights and fairs hosted by some of our region's elementary schools.

Bev said Whittier offers a program in the summer called Project Discovery. This is for incoming 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders. They do exploratory research. They offer free transportation. Bev said not to quote her on this but she thinks it's \$75 for the two week program. They mail open house invitations within their district. Now she is thinking of reaching out to the 5<sup>th</sup> graders too. They put notices on their report cards, a direct ed, they call their houses, they do whatever they can regarding choosing a career. For a class of 330 freshman they probably had 75-100 parents who came an hour prior to listen about choosing a career for their kids. Bev said she thinks that society is crushing us. No one has the time.

Tia said that Whittier has been doing this year they have college fairs and have a continuing education table and she referred us to a pamphlet that has the Spring 2019 course guide in the brochure on Whittier's HS continuing education, evening education and post-secondary programs such as personal enrichment, professional enrichment and on-line education courses. They ask students to look at these programs as a possibility. Bev said that welding is huge especially with the Portsmouth Ship Yard.

It's been Tia's job to reach out to the community to reintroduce these careers about these programs. Tia said in the past years (4-5 years) they had a huge alumni panels where they reintroduce seniors who went off to college and those who did not. They looked specifically at the gender roles. Those jobs that traditionally were of the male gender. Or those graduates who chose a trade after graduation rather than choosing to do something very non-traditional after that.

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

Cristy handed out a info page on youth programs. Our Connecting Activities staff continue to visit our local high school to assist student's link classroom learning to careers and jobs. We are currently working with our local high schools - Haverhill, GLTS, Lawrence main campus, Learning Center, and International, Methuen, and will start working with Newburyport. During the month of October, we celebrated Advanced Manufacturing Month and STEM week. We sponsored few company tours and a college visit. Students from LHS visited Product Resources. Other LHS students visited GLTS and toured their machine shop and learned more about the new program piloted between both schools. Haverhill HS students visited WPI and Wilcox Industries to learn more about careers in STEM/IT/Web-Development.

Staff continue to work with partner programs at LHS to support their FAFSSA and College Applications events.

We currently have a job posted for the Youth Counselor position in order to fill the vacancy left by our great Jessie Abramson who is now working with the Lawrence Public Schools as the Work Based Learning Coordinator. A copy of this job posting has been forwarded to all YC members.

The Amp It Up! Grant ends December 31<sup>st</sup>. We were able to coordinate career awareness and exploration activities for our high school students. We used the funding to cover the cost of transportation and meals for the company tours and college visits. Our last company tour is scheduled for tomorrow. Students from Lawrence High School Learning Center will visit Salem Metal, Inc. and Vicor.

We continue to plan FY'20 YouthWorks Year-Round program. Commonwealth Corporation provided us with minimum funding for this. We are planning a program with Sisu to provide training/subsidized employment to eligible participants.

There are WIOA youth Individual Training Account (ITA) slots available for eligible youth. 15 of these slots are reserved for youth interested in Medical Assistant and Pharmacy Tech programs. Any youth enrolled in WIOA youth need to have the goal to seek unsubsidized employment and or to enroll in college.

WIOA prioritizes work experiences for both in-school and out-of-school youth and mandates that a minimum of 20% of local area funds go towards work experience. The focus is aimed towards improving the educational and employment outcomes for youth.

We will start recruiting out of school youth for the WIOA work experience to provide subsidized work experiences so that they explore various career opportunities. We will pilot the Commonwealth Corporation's WIOA Signal Success initiative by facilitating this work readiness curriculum prior to placing youth into subsidized employment opportunities. The outcome for enrolled youth must be unsubsidized employment, training, or college enrollment.

The Bridging the Opportunity Gap (BOG) program currently have about 12 active participants. Last month there were about 17 active participants, however, few of them were either revoked or terminated. Out of the 12 participants 5 are currently placed with different employers throughout the city of Lawrence and Haverhill.

Special thank you to our wonderful employers: Product Resources, Salem Metal, Inc., Wilcox Industries, Vicor Corp. and the academic institutions: GLTS, and WPI for honoring our requests to expose our local high schoolers to these wonderful career development education activities. Also, we would like to thank Brian Norris, Director of Northeast Advanced Manufacturing Consortium, for contacting these employers on our behalf.

Lisa Remington could not attend but gave us a handout about Information Sessions coming soon on training in Robotics & Automations and a second sheet on CNC Training Opportunity; NAMC Manufacturing Technology Training. Lisa instructed anyone who has any questions to contact her directly.

Cristy asked committee members to please share the job posting with their network.

**V. Partner's Information**

No partner information shared.

**VI Other Business**

No other business.

**V. Adjourn**

**Having no further business, the meeting adjourned.**

Respectfully submitted,

*Beverly Stopyra*  
Beverly Stopyra  
Recorder