



PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday, April 19, 2006

8:00 a.m.

Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Board

Lawrence, MA 01840

Members Present: Peter Matthews, Chair
Pedro Arce, Charles LoPiano, Mike Sweeney

Members Absent: Sal Lupoli, Shirley Callan, Karen Sawyer, Donna Gambon

Staff Present: Betty Kirk, Mary Kivell

Guests Present: Arthur Chilingirian, Amy Weatherbee

1. **Approval of Minutes of 3/22/07**

Mr. Matthews called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. and called for a motion on the minutes of the 3/22/07 meeting.

Motion Pedro Arce seconded by Chick LoPiano to approve the minutes of the March 22, 2007 meeting as submitted. Motion passed.

2. **Recommendations for Funding**

a. In-School Youth Proposals

Amy Weatherbee explained that there were only two responses to the In-School Youth RFP and that they were both strong proposals. A staff review team consisting of Arthur Chilingirian, Megan Shea, Chris Shannon, and Amy Weatherbee provided their recommendations to the Youth Council who approved these recommendations at their meeting yesterday. Both programs deal with Lawrence High School and are in line with the WIB Blueprint. Students will come out with credentialing.

Amy said that the first proposal is for an Education & Electronic Certification/Manufacturing Program. The recommendation is for funding; increasing the number of slots to 12 and increasing funding to \$53,444 based on increased slots with a 5% negotiation leeway for potential increased hours for staffing, including supervision.

The second proposal is for an Education and Clinical Medical Assisting Program. The recommendation is for 12 slots and a potential increase in funding on a 5% negotiation leeway for potential increasing hours for staffing, including supervision. The review team strongly recommends documentation of connection with Lawrence High School's Health Tech

department and that the principal needs to be engaged and actively assisting in outreach, recruitment, and retention efforts.

Motion by Chick LoPiano seconded by Pedro Arce to approve the Youth Council recommendation for funding for the In-School Youth proposals as presented. Motion passed.

b. Current Program Funding Modifications

Amy Weatherbee explained that due to the increase in the minimum wage to \$7.50 per hour, she is requesting a modification up to \$3,000 to increase client salaries to be in line with the minimum wage.

Motion by Mike Sweeney seconded by Chick LoPiano to approve the request to add up to \$3,000 in current programming to comply with the increase in minimum wage. Motion passed.

c. CAI Inc.

Amy Weatherbee explained that due to later enrollment and additional time needed for outreach and recruitment, the CAI, Inc. WIA Out of School Pre-School Prep program has requested a modification to extend the program date from 6/30/07 to 8/31/07 and to use \$14,843 of the current budget to support staff salaries, overhead, payment for the Child Care Circuit CEU, and wages and fringe for subsidized employment customers.

Motion by Mike Sweeney seconded by Chick LoPiano to approve request to modify the CAI, Inc. budget to allow the program to extend through the summer as presented. Motion passed.

Mike Sweeney asked about the conflict of interest statements. Amy Weatherbee said she needed them today to include in the meeting package for monitoring. Committee members present and voting signed their conflict of interest statements and handed them to Amy Weatherbee.

3. Career Center Charter

Betty Kirk said that she had made the recommended changes from the last Planning Committee meeting where we went over the draft Charter page by page. She noted that the attachment on performance measures are the 2007 goals but when the 2008 Annual Plan is developed the new 2008 performance measures will be attached and updated annually for the term of the Charter.

There were some minor adjustments suggested and Mike Sweeney asked if the vote was required today as he would like time to further review the Charter for compliance with the MVWIB/CEO agreement and WIB by-laws. After discussion it was agreed that the vote of the Planning Committee could be delayed until the next meeting.

Motion by Chick LoPiano to table the Career Center Charter to the next Planning Committee meeting on May 24, 2007. Mike Sweeney seconded the motion and motion passed.

4. Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund Update

Betty Kirk reported that we submitted our grant on time to the state and had ten employer partners, including Raytheon and General Electric. She explained that we partnered with two other WIBs, North Shore and Lowell. We hired a consultant to complete the grant, who did an excellent job and sent out employer surveys which were extremely helpful. There were 66 proposals submitted, 41 implementation grants and 25 planning grants. The state is scheduled to announce funding by April 30th but that date may be pushed out due to the number of proposals received. Betty said she will keep the committee informed of developments.

5. Youth Works Update

Arthur Chilingirian reported that there is an increase in funding which will allow us to add 41 more slots than last year. The grant asks us to serve older youth. He is meeting tomorrow with Megan Shea, Chris Shannon, and Amy to look at how to proceed with Youth Works.

Amy Weatherbee said that this was discussed at the Youth Council meeting yesterday and the consensus was that, since the WIB is encouraging private sector participation through our area Mayors for the 18-24 year olds, we should target the 15-17 year olds whom many employers will not hire in an effort to keep them engaged to prevent dropping out and retention issues.

Chili continued saying that they are going to look at changing the percentage rates for Lawrence and Haverhill possibly to 55/35, after they speak with Vinny Ouellette from Haverhill, since there have historically been more youth than we could serve in Lawrence and difficulty placing the numbers allotted to Haverhill. We have 10% of funding for the other communities.

Chili said that there will be a 2007 Mayors' Summer Jobs for Youth Fair on May 1st in Lawrence and May 3rd in Haverhill. He is looking for sponsors. Betty Kirk said that the ValleyWorks Business Services Representatives were sending out the Mayors' letters to employers.

Chili also said that the Governor is allocating \$1M for an RFP from the office of Public Safety to work with DYS youth and they will be checking on that grant and may send a letter of intent. He also said that if there is any lag money in the Summer Program they can now use it up to 12/31/07 to possibly subsidize after school jobs for youth and that there is \$70,000 available from Mass Housing Projects.

6. Career Center Quarterly Performance

Amy Weatherbee then talked about the Career Center Quarterly Performance through the third quarter citing difficulty in retrieving timely statistics from the MOSES system. Amy said that we are at 84% of Plan with job seekers and 73% of Plan in entered employment placements. She did note that typically entered employment placements spike up in the fourth quarter. We are at 112% of Plan for total employers served. Amy also provided a regional resident's demographic through 3/31/07 and said that she would update it for the next meeting including out of region demographics so we can take a look at it against last year.

Peter Matthews asked if other area residents are aware of services since 70% of services are for Lawrence and Haverhill area residents. We had talked about the possibility of a satellite in Salisbury or perhaps utilizing space in town hall.

Chili said that we belong to all the area Chambers of Commerce and have Business Services Representatives that contact area businesses. We are waiting to hear what our allocations will be and could possibly provide some part-time presence in the north of the region. It is a question of funding and staffing and the fact that we can't provide the full services that the Career Center can offer at other locations.

Pedro Arce also suggested looking at a partnership with Northern Essex Community College and the municipality.

Peter Matthews also raised the question of seasonal workers and how we should consider training for transient workers. Chili said that he feels we should try to focus training dollars on Massachusetts residents since the Governor has indicated he wants to create 100,000 jobs for Massachusetts.

Amy continued with her report and corrected the female enrollment in the Title I Adult Program to 217 actual participants at 86.5% of plan. The Title I Dislocated Worker Program is at 114% of Plan. The Title I Youth Program report was presented to the Youth Council yesterday and Amy noted that 37% of youth participants are drop-outs and 77% are basic skills deficient. Amy did remind the committee that we target youth with multiple barriers.

Discussion then followed on Lucent and the uncertainty of what is going to happen with their two facilities in North Andover (700 employees) and Westford (400 employees). Chili explained that, if needed, we will apply for a financial extension and have done quite a few National Emergency Grants (NEGs) in the past including Sanmina, Merck-Medco, A-Plus, Smith and Nephew and Lucent (2). He also said we need to watch what may happen with IRS employees if there is a reduction in their workforce.

7. Other Business

Betty Kirk said that she had spoken with Beth Segal from Mt. Auburn on the progress of the Blue Print. They are on target and are going to conduct employer interviews and are utilizing the employer interviews from the Workforce Competitiveness grant. Betty said that she and Fred Carberry are also meeting with Northern Essex Community College in May to discuss workforce needs and that meetings will be commencing on the Annual Plan next week.

8. Adjournment

Having no further business Chick LoPiano made a motion to adjourn seconded by Pedro Arce. Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Kivell
Recorder