



PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, August 19, 2009

8:30 a.m.

Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Board

Lawrence, MA 01840

- Members Present:** Peter Matthews, Charles LoPiano, Karen Sawyer, Shirley Callan, Michael Sweeney
- Members Absent:** Pedro Arce, Sal Lupoli, Robert LeBlanc, Mike Lynch
- Staff Present:** Fred Carberry, Betty Kirk, Deborah Andrews
- Guests Present:** Barbara Zeimetz, Amy Weatherbee, Arthur Chilingirian

I. FY'09 Fourth Quarter Performance

Peter Matthews called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m. and called on Betty Kirk to present the FY'09 Fourth Quarter Career Center Performance.

Betty said that Page one shows the comparison of program activity and employer services between the plan and the actual numbers to date. There are no concerns with these numbers. Page 2 has the participant characteristics; page 3 is the residency and Betty noted that the numbers for New Hampshire residents is a bit higher. Page 4 is the WIA Adult Title I Program and Betty said that there are some concerns with the percentage of exiters (46%) which was 95% last year and entered employment (48%) which was 91% last year. This is evidence of the difficulty in finding jobs.

Dislocated workers are at 192% of plan and we are doing a little better with these placements, as they are a little bit more educated. Under WIA Title I Youth Betty said that a large number are basic skills deficient. We wanted 36 youth to get their GED, of the 18 who exited 11 got their GED). Chili explained that a lot of youth get into GED training and get jobs. They either don't complete the course or do not with the timeframe for us to capture the numbers. Betty also noted that that the Latino population is up 6% from last year. The Lucent/Alcatel NEG is at 123% of plan with another year to go.

II. ARRA Update

Deborah Andrews distributed the ARRA Youth Update as of 8/14/09 which has been distributed via e-mail. There are 692 youth enrolled in a project out of a goal of 905. There are 165 worksites and 48% of YouthWorks Funds have been expended and 33% of ARRA.

An ARRA waiver has been granted that expands summer youth employment. In-school youth paid through ARRA funds can work part-time until September 30. ARRA and out of school youth can work through March 31, 2010. Deborah said that with a 50% cut in the state YouthWorks funding for next summer, we can possibly carry over whatever ARRA monies are left for summer jobs.

Our YouthWorks program has been extended until September 4th, although we have asked for an extension to September 30th so there is no confusion between the YouthWorks and ARRA in-school youth programs. She said that we are trying to avoid youth working at the same site having different timetables depending on the funder.

The five Work and Learning projects have 112 of our youth enrolled. CommCorp has gathered surveys from about 30 of our participants who have learned a lot from their experiences.

There was discussion on the Byrne Grant for Methuen youth 18-24 and whether they can continue on the Byrne Grant. Fred Carberry said that ARRA youth can continue through March 31st and the Byrne grant runs through December 31st. It would probably make more sense to have YouthWorks participants move to the Byrne grant.

Motion by Karen Sawyer seconded by Shirley Callan to allow the Career Center to move eligible YouthWorks participants in Methuen to the Byrne Grant. Motion passed.

III. Approval of Minutes of June 12, 2009 and July 28, 2009

Peter Matthews then called for a motion on the minutes of the June 12th and July 28th meetings.

Motion by Shirley Callan seconded by Chick LoPiano to approve the minutes of the June 12th and July 28th meeting. Discussion followed.

Discussion followed with Mike Sweeney mentioning that he feels that the minutes regarding the agenda item on the ABE/ESOL Advisory Council do not accurately reflect the fact that the frustration of the ABE/ESOL providers was the inability to gain a meeting with the WIB Executive Director and that is what precipitated this item.

Fred Carberry stated that focus of this agenda item is on the creation of the ABE/ESOL Council and the fact that some members of the committee felt that it was adding another layer of bureaucracy.

Mike Sweeney said that, as Title I administrator, he would be happy to meeting with them.

Fred Carberry said that there was a recommendation by Chairman Joe Bevilacqua and himself to have this group meet as a council, but there were objections to the creation of this group.

Mike Sweeney said that he is glad to discuss this again but doesn't know why, as we have a representative of that group here on the Planning Committee. That person also serves on the board. Mike wondered who would be next. We can't have every sub group here. The fact is that the representative here repeatedly asked for a meeting and this was not acknowledged. He also said that the Planning Committee spoke as one voice.

Barbara Zeimetz said that they are a group of vendors looking to access resources through ARRA. They are vendors like any vendors and to establish a separate committee is not the best interest of the board.

Chick LoPiano asked Shirley Callan if she had regular ABE meetings and Shirley said 'no' but stated that she objected to an e-mail that went out that she felt implied that she was against the formation of the council.

Barbara Zeimetz said that DESE recommended ABE/ESOL providers request a meeting with WIB staff and Shirley wanted to meet with Fred who didn't see that as a problem.

Fred Carberry explained that the delay was that he was trying to determine what we could do with ARRA funds without agreeing to go into a meeting unprepared with a blank slate. Initially everyone was trying to understand the parameters of this funding.

Mike Sweeney said that on page 5 of the June 12, 2009 minutes the last sentence does not portray what he said and that the fact is that the frustration of the ABE providers related to the inability to convene a meeting with WIB staff. He asked that he minutes be amended to add the word "staff" to the end of the final sentence on page 5 of the June 12, 2009 minutes.

Motion was then amended to add the word "staff" to the end of the final sentence on page 5 of the June 12, 2009 minutes. Motion passed as amended.

IV. FY2010 Annual Plan

Fred Carberry said that we usually receive instruction on the Annual Plan in May and it is due in June but this year we didn't receive guidance until July and a due date of August 25th. The Plan includes a narrative, budget, performance plans and charts.

Question 1 relates to Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Wagner Peyser. The Governor's vision for the workforce development system, as described in the existing state plan, includes the statement that "all Massachusetts residents will have the competencies, employment skills, and education to support themselves and their families and to live a quality life."

To that end the MVWIB has identified four top priorities for FY2010. They are 1.) Meet the skill needs of existing and emerging employers as well as the needs of under skilled adults; 2.) align workforce investment services (especially training services) with high-growth, critical sectors in the region; 3.) assure that One-Stop Career Center front-line staff are trained to be knowledgeable of high-growth occupations and critical job vacancies; and 4.) work to develop a demand-driven system that will close the skills gaps in the local workforce and align strategies to economic sectors that hold the greatest post-recovery potential for job creation and growth.

Fred continued stating that we have also convened a new Green Jobs Advisory Council comprised of board members, local employers and area educators and training providers. Feedback from area employers and the Green Jobs Advisory Council will be shared with area training and education providers, including ABE/ESOL providers, at a special vendor meeting to be convened in late summer 2009.

Fred said that the goals and objectives of the FY'2010 Annual Plan are very much in line with the goals and objectives articulated in the MVWIB's High Performing WIB Strategic Plan Initiative; building the capacity of the workforce system and addressing the region's skills gaps in key industry sectors being two of the three major priorities.

Question 2 – The LMVWIB area partners, with the MVWIB in the lead, made the determination to co-enroll all WIA Dislocated Worker and Adult participants with ARRA Adult and Dislocated Worker Grants. To ensure that we are not supplanting resources, the ARRA training funds will be used for group training, OJTs, and customized training activities only.

Fred then addressed Question 3 related to initiatives specific to green industries and occupations researching ITA and LEED Exam Prep courses. We are also

reviewing state-level policies in Massachusetts related to distance learning in both Section 30 Program and the TRADE Adjustment Act Program.

The Youth portion of the narrative addresses enhancing the youth pipeline. It also addresses the extensive work and planning by the Youth Council and other stakeholders engaged in P21, Connecting Activities and other youth initiatives to identify the workforce needs of the region's critical and emerging industries. They are also working with NECC to explore existing green job career mapping. We are working to explore linkages with unions and apprenticeships for local youth. Fred said key employers in our region have expressed strong interest in developing a career awareness campaign in the machine tool and customized manufacturing industry.

We will also be developing a marketing campaign to engage more youth in our programs with a special emphasis on engaging more males in career center activities and programs. We will focus on ensuring that opportunities for future success exist for all Merrimack Valley youth.

Betty Kirk explained that that Chart I contains data reflecting the last three years and the planned numbers for FY2010. Chart 5 shows the FY2010 state goals compared to the FY2010 local goals. Betty explained that we are allowed to take an adjustment on local goals from state goals based on participant characteristics and unemployment figures.

Mike Sweeney said that he understands how the numbers work but hopes that internally we have a mindset that our percentage is higher than state goals. Setting up Lawrence to be lagging behind the state will never close the deficit and says that 'we are what we are and what we will always be.' We need to internally hold the bar higher while meeting the statutory and legal requirements.

Betty Kirk said that we can choose to take the adjustment or not.

Chili said that he felt we should accept the adjustments, but added that we do shoot for higher goals and meet and exceed our numbers every year.

Fred Carberry said that he agrees 100%. In his experience, the Career Center makes every effort to exceed state goals. Mike Sweeney said that we should philosophically strive to exceed state goals.

Fred said that we received the first draft of the budget yesterday and it is our intent to bring this to the Commonwealth noting that some modifications may be necessary. This budget does not include a COLA for the union for 2010 and no new staff. There will be no reclassification of existing positions. 60% of ARRA funds must be spent on training and the number coming in for services has

never been higher. We need to divert WIA formula funds to provide for the infrastructure.

Peter Matthews said that we are asking this committee to approve the FY'2010 Annual Plan contingent to some possible tweaking to submit to the state on August 25th.

Amy Weatherbee said that there are 37 funding streams as outlined in the charts. The grant budgets are fixed and the primary infrastructure support is from WIA and Wagner Peyser. The baseline is to preserve the functions of the Career Center. We have had a loss of DTA funds from the Supported Work Program. We made strong decisions based on last year and collective bargaining may have some impact.

Motion by Mike Sweeney seconded by Chick LoPiano to accept the FY'10 Annual Plan with agreement that additional adjustments may be needed as discussed and presented to the full board for adoption with the budget clearly marked draft. Motion passed.

V. Green Jobs Advisory Council Update

Fred Carberry said that we had an initial meeting that developed into an interesting dialogue with five employers. We are just starting to get to the tip of the iceberg. We will have a second meeting in September that includes the economic development representatives in our region.

Fred also said that the MVWIB hosted a Green Jobs Round Table with MIT students, staff from the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission and Merrimack Valley Economic Development Council. This is basically a social networking group.

VI. Other Business

Betty Kirk handed out the employer survey summary to committee members.

Fred Carberry said that the stated monitoring report found that the Career Center files did not have high school dropout criteria. The Youth Council voted to recommend adoption of Mass Workforce Issuance 09-20.

Chick LoPiano made a motion to approve the recommendation to adopt Mass Workforce Issuance 09-20.

Mike Sweeney said that there is no information on this item and he is not prepared to vote. Having no second, the motion failed.

Mike Sweeney also asked how the weekly summer staff meetings are going and Fred Carberry said that he has been meeting regularly with Chili and he and Deborah Andrews have been having continuous meetings with staff.

Mike also asked that the High Performing WIB and 501©3 be on the Planning Committee agenda.

Chick LoPiano asked about the Pathways out of Poverty initiative and Fred said that there has been discussion with American Training who is exploring this opportunity.

VII Adjourn

Having no further business Shirley Callan made a motion to adjourn the meeting seconded by Mike Sweeney. Motion passed and the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Kivell

Recorder