



Whittier Rehabilitation Hospital
145 Ward Hill Avenue
Bradford, MA

Minutes

Tuesday, June 23, 2009
7:30 AM

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Howard Allen, Pedro Arce, Joseph Bevilacqua, Julie Gadziala, Barbara Grant, David Hartleb, Susan Jepson, Charles LoPiano, Michael Lynch, Peter Matthews, Cindy Phelan, Mike Munday, Karen Sawyer, Fred Shaheen, Jeff Sheehy, Mike Strem, Michael Sweeney, Leanne Eastman, Stanley Usovicz, Len Wilson

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Kimberly Abare, Mark Andrews, Lou Antonellis, Shirley Callan, Wayne Capolupo, Stephen Capone, Thomas Casey, Ronald Champagne, Thomas Connors, James Driscoll, Paul Durant, Howard Flagler, Thomas Casey, Jeanette Guevara, Gary Hale, Robert Halpin, Robert Ingala, Robert LeBlanc, Jeff Linehan, Stefanie McCowan, Sal Lupoli, Jeff Marcoux, Maria Miles, John Olenio, Ann Ormond, Kevin Page, Jean Perrigo, Margaret O'Neill, Mike Munday, Kevin Page, William Pillsbury, Jason Pimentel, Donna Rivera, Steve Salvo, Tom Schiavone, Cal Williams

GUESTS PRESENT:

Mayor James Fiorentini, James Jajuga, Theresa Allen for Dr. Ronald Champagne, Lisa Coy, Dawn Beati, Cynthia Key, Gary Fountain, Odanis Hernandez, Fran LaCerte

STAFF PRESENT:

Fred Carberry, Elizabeth Kirk, Deborah Andrews, Mary Kivell, Corina Ossers, Augustine Ambe

1. Call to Order & Welcome

Board Chair Joseph Bevilacqua called the meeting to order at 7:46 am and thanking the Haverhill Chamber of Commerce for arranging this meeting in Haverhill. He said that this is part of the collaboration between the chambers and holding meetings throughout the region. He then recognized James Jajuga, Haverhill Chamber President, and asked Leanne Eastman, Haverhill Chamber Vice President to make a few remarks.

Leanne said that the Haverhill Chamber is pleased to host this meeting of the WIB in Haverhill noting that the Whittier Rehabilitation Hospital president is the Chamber's incoming Chair. She said that Haverhill has three industrial parks and that the Chamber's Annual Golf Tournament is scheduled for September 14th. Leanne said that the Chamber is pleased with its relationship with the WIB and happy to be involved with their initiatives.

Introductions were made around the table.

2. Report of Chairman

Joe Bevilacqua said that the WIB is working on several new ventures. One is a partnership between Dr. David Hartleb of Northern Essex Community College with Dr. Carole Cowan of Middlesex Community College called Merrimack Valley Partners in Progress which is tied to linking education and workforce development.

Mr. Bevilacqua talked about the stimulus money targeting weatherization and how the Greater Lawrence Community Action Council, Inc. and the Haverhill Community Action Council's would be working on the weatherization.

Joe said that he will be convening a Green Jobs Committee to bring companies together. The Governor is very committed to the stimulus/ARRA initiatives around health care, green jobs and summer youth jobs.

Joe then recognized Mayor James Fiorentini who welcomed everyone to Haverhill stating that despite the recession, good things are happening in Haverhill. Haverhill was recently highlighted in the Wall Street Journal as a city that is on the move but impacted by the state budget. Mayor Fiorentini also said that we have added Southwick as a Haverhill company and have a new boardwalk downtown.

Mayor Fiorentini said that there are still many unemployed and he looks forward to working with the WIB to put those people back to work.

Joe Bevilacqua stressed the importance of the involvement of the area mayors and the fact that workforce development is part of economic development.

3. Minutes of the April 28, 2009 Meeting

Joseph Bevilacqua then called for a motion on the minutes of the April 28, 2009 meeting.

Leanne Eastman made a motion to accept the minutes of the April 28, 2009 meeting as submitted and Chick LoPiano seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Joe Bevilacqua then called on Planning Committee Chair Peter Matthews to give the Planning Committee report.

4. Reports of Committee Chairs

i. Planning Committee

Planning Committee Chair Peter Matthews said our region's ARRA plan was submitted to the State on May 29th. A copy of the plan was provided in the meeting packets. As was previously reported to the board, approximately \$3,000,000 has been allocated to the Merrimack Valley WIB region under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. 60% of program funds for Title I Adults and Dislocated Workers will be used for training. Our training priorities, approved by the planning committee, will include group training, on the job training and customized training. Peter continued stating that the MVWIB staff has surveyed 1000 area employers regarding their training and employment needs. In addition, a focus group was convened with local employers on June 18th at the WIB offices to discuss their needs in

greater depth and the MVWIB will release an RFP for group training programs by September 1, 2009. Information gleaned from the surveys and the focus group will help to inform the RFP as to the type of training programs that are needed to meet the skills required to fill job openings of area employers.

Mr. Matthews said that Executive Director, Fred Carberry will also be convening a "green jobs" advisory council in late July or early August to be made up of board members, local employers, area educators and representatives for economic development. The council will be researching and reporting back to the MVWIB regarding local "green jobs" such as "green building," weatherization, "green manufacturing" and electronic medical records. With the influx of stimulus money for "green jobs" we will be researching the types of jobs that will be opening up and the skills that will be required to fill those jobs. This research conducted by the council will also inform the RFP. Before the RFP is released, we will schedule a meeting with training vendors and area educators to provide technical assistance regarding the types of training programs we will be looking to fund. Training programs focused on critical and emerging industries and "green jobs" will be given priority and collaborations between ABE/ESOL providers and occupational skills training vendors will be strongly encouraged. The key to a successful proposal, however, will be the partnerships developed with local employers in terms of input regarding training program curriculum.

Peter continued his report stating that in addressing the need for accountability and transparency, the ARRA plan is posted on the MVWIB web-site and the MVWIB will add a tab to its web-site for ARRA updates. ARRA updates will be an agenda item for all planning committee meetings and quarterly board meetings. The MVWIB is in the process of creating an e-newsletter that will inform stakeholders regarding our progress in implementing the ARRA plan.

The Planning Committee voted to approve the following staffing additions funded by ARRA: ARRA Implementation/Training Specialist for the MVWIB; 3 Summer Monitors for Youth Worksites for the Division of Grants Administration; 1 Youth Coordinator, up to 9 Summer Youth Counselors and 4 Career Service Advisors for ValleyWorks Career Center.

Peter reported that the Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Area took an 18.9% reduction in its FY10 allocation. WIA funding in FY09 for the region was \$4,467,768 and in FY10 funding is \$3,621,836, a reduction of \$845,932. WIA Dislocated Worker funding was especially hard hit with a reduction of 33.50%. WIA Adult funding was reduced by 15.30% and WIA Youth by 16%.

The Planning Committee voted to approve funding for the following Summer Work & Learning Proposals as recommended by the Youth Council: The Boys and Girls Club of Greater Lawrence; Counselors in Training Program (contingent upon successful budget negotiation and reduction); Lawrence Public Schools; Transition to High School for Grade 8 At-Risk Students Program for \$3,200; Community Action, Inc.; People of Destiny Program in

Haverhill, MA (contingent upon budget review); Community Action, Inc.; People of Destiny Program in Newburyport, MA (contingent upon budget review); Hoops for Hope; Referee, Coach & Facilitator Program (contingent upon significant program and budget reduction); American Training, Inc.; Starworks Program for \$6,839; Greater Lawrence Community Boating; Empowerment Academy Program for \$4,000.

The MVWIB also received official notification for funding of their Ex-offender Re-entry Partnership Planning Proposal. The award was for \$50,000. The planned start date for this grant is October 1, 2009.

Motion by Stanley Usovicz seconded by Michael Sweeney to accept the Planning Committee Report. Motion passed.

ii. Youth Council

Howard Allen presented the Youth Council report. He stated that Deborah Andrews, Youth Workforce Program Manager, and the Youth Council have been working with the Career Center on the summer jobs programs, both YouthWorks, which serves Lawrence and Haverhill, and ARRA, which will serve eligible youth throughout the entire valley.

The ARRA federal youth funds require that we disburse at least 60% of the funding this summer, and if we spend 100% in that time, that would be even better. Howard said that we plan to spend the entire youth allocation by September 30, 2009 as the federal government wants us to utilize these funds to stimulate the economy.

Mr. Allen continued saying that YouthWorks is the state program, funded through Commonwealth Corporation, that we provide each summer and serves Lawrence and Haverhill's neediest youth, with a small percentage going to other communities. Typically we have served about 200 youth per summer. We will still have the same YouthWorks money this year and serve similar numbers of youth through that program, but we will have additional federal stimulus funding to serve the whole valley, with the caveat being eligibility. We expect that up to 1,000 youth will be served through our summer jobs programs this summer.

Private employers, non-profit agencies and municipalities are offering jobs to 14-24 year olds who will earn \$8 per hour working 20-30 hours per week. Payment will be processed through the City of Lawrence Division of Grants Administration. This will put money in the youths' pockets and could lead to full-time employment for older youth when the summer is over.

Lisa Coy, Youth Program Manager at ValleyWorks and her staff have met with youth at schools, social service, community based, and other organizations to help youth fill out the application and determine their eligibility for the Summer Jobs program. ValleyWorks has taken close to 1,500 applications and have determined more than 1,000 youth to be eligible for ARRA funding and another 230 youth to be eligible for the YouthWorks program. Lawrence youth numbers through ARRA are 770 and Youth Works 177, Haverhill - ARRA 158 and YouthWorks 44, Methuen - 115, and Amesbury, Georgetown, Groveland, Merrimac, Newburyport, Salisbury - 35.

Howard explained that it is necessary to determine the eligibility of more youth than we are planning to serve because some youth will not follow through, others will leave the program, and we can fill those openings with other youth.

Under WIA regulations there are usually many required program outcomes, but this summer the only outcome required is *work readiness*. Employers are being asked to ensure that youth are placed in meaningful jobs. The youth cannot replace or fill the positions of people who have been laid off. Other caveats: They also cannot work in casinos, aquariums, pools, zoos and golf courses.

The positions will run for seven weeks, from July 6, until August 21. Some older youth work may be subsidized until September 30, depending on remaining funding at the end of the summer. Employers are encouraged to hire older/out of school youth at the end of the program, and may be eligible for tax incentives if they do.

Each youth is required to have a Work Based Learning Plan which will be developed with the youth, employers, and job coaches. The Learning Plan sets goals for the young person to learn or meet by the end of the seven weeks.

The Business Service Reps at VWCC have been very successful in combing the Merrimack Valley to sign up businesses to hire youth. We have presented the information to employers through radio spots, through the newspapers, at chamber meetings and at civic group meetings to inform employers about the program. As well, the business community has been spreading the word. At this time, we have approximately 795 work sites identified.

Many youth will also participate in summer jobs through programs offered by non-profit organizations. Howard reported that we released a request for proposals for work and learning programs to be held over the summer. Components include job readiness, academic skills, occupational skills, life skills and others. We received 11 proposals, had to eliminate one right away because it did not meet the minimum requirements, and reviewed 10. Seven were recommended for funding. Some of those required budget or program negotiation, but it looks like all of them will be funded. The three not recommended for funding were seen as more worksites than work and learning programs. They have been asked if they would like to serve as worksites and have or are considering filling out the application. The 7 potentially funded programs could serve as many as 215 youth. Both the Youth Council and the Planning Committee reviewed the recommendations and voted to fund the programs pending successful negotiations.

Motion by David Hartleb seconded by Cindy Phelan to accept the Youth Council Committee Report. Motion passed.

iii. Nominating Committee

Motion by Leanne Eastman to recommend and approve the nomination for membership to the board of Michael Collins, CEO, Merrimack Valley Hospital and Lester P. Schindel to the board. Michael Sweeney seconded the motion and motion passed.

5. Report of Executive Director

Fred Carberry said that on behalf of the MVWIB, he would like to thank Mayor James Fiorentini for his welcoming remarks and also, for his continued involvement with the work of the Board. He also thanked Leanne Eastman, Vice President of the Greater Haverhill Chamber of Commerce, for her assistance in arranging this wonderful location, here at the Whittier Rehabilitation Hospital, for our Quarterly Meeting.

Fred said that, as reported by Planning Committee Chair Peter Matthews, the Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Board was awarded approximately \$3.7 million in economic stimulus funding under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. These funds will be utilized through our one-stop career centers in Lawrence and Haverhill to help put dislocated workers back to work, provide assistance to low-income adults, and provide summer jobs for up to 1,000 youth throughout the Valley. As required by the Commonwealth, the MVWIB, in collaboration with the ValleyWorks Career Center and the Division of Grants Administration, submitted our ARRA Plan electronically, by the May 29th due date. A fully signed hardcopy was subsequently delivered. Fred noted that a copy was included in the board's meeting packets.

Some of the main points of the ARRA plan include the following activities:

- Expend a minimum of 60% of Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Wagner Peyser allocations on training, with an emphasis on group training and on-the-job training programs.
- Work with area employers, particularly healthcare and manufacturing, to help inform our decision making toward the development of training programs that will provide the highest likelihood of job placement.
- Form a Green Jobs Advisory Council to better prepare for the anticipated rise in energy-related jobs, including alternative energy device manufacturing, renewable energy, and weatherization programs.
- Work with educators and training providers, including ABE/ESOL providers, toward developing a continuum of education, leading to the retention and creation of jobs that align with the economic growth and recovery of our regional economy and the sustainable expansion of our workforce development system.
- Develop youth employability skills through the implementation of a robust summer jobs program, which includes "work readiness" as a required outcome.

In addition, the plan calls for taking several steps to ensure the highest level of transparency as required by the Recovery Act, including the following measures:

- The MVWIB will add a tab to its website for ARRA activities with regular updates.
- The MVWIB will place a standing agenda item on Planning Committee and WIB meeting agendas to inform the committee/board of ARRA status.
- The MVWIB will convene focus groups with employers and training providers to determine current and future training needs as well as potential training opportunities that may be available or are under development. These meetings will be guided by LMI data and employer surveys, etc.
- The MVWIB will develop a monthly "e-newsletter" that will highlight activities and developments of the WIB, Career Center, and other regional workforce development stakeholders, including information on any ARRA funded activities.
- The MVWIB will develop an executive summary of the ARRA Plan, which will be posted on the MVWIB website. A legal notice will be published in the Eagle-Tribune, a regional newspaper, to invite public comment.

Fred then asked the Chairman to call for a motion to affirm the Planning Committee's approval of ARRA Plan as submitted.

Motion by Mike Sweeney seconded by Len Wilson to approve the ARRA Plan as submitted and approved by the Planning Committee. Motion passed.

Mr. Carberry continued his report stating, that in the FY2010 State budget released by the House/Senate Conference Committee last week, two of our most effective incumbent worker training programs, the Workforce Training Fund and the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund suffered serious reductions that will impact ongoing programs in the case of the WCTF, and the use of employer contributions for workforce training through the WTF. Fortunately, our region's WCTF grant was scheduled for completion at the end of this fiscal year, so it will not be impacted; however, the future of the WCTF remains very uncertain. There is mounting opposition to cuts in the Workforce Training Fund, which is entirely funded by employer contributions. In the past year, the Workforce Training Fund has provided approximately \$1.4 million to 19 Merrimack Valley companies to provide needed training to their incumbent workers, helping these employers maintain their competitive advantage in these trying economic times.

In addition to the WTF and the WCTF, two important youth training and work programs, YouthWorks and School to Career Connecting Activities were cut approximately 50%. YouthWorks was reduced by \$4 million and School to Career Connecting Activities was cut from \$4.1 million to \$2 million. Whereas our region has only received \$75,000 in Connecting Activities funding in past years, it is expected that the brunt of the budget cuts will be absorbed by larger programs in other WIB regions, such as Boston, which had been funded at about \$1.8 million. If the conference committee recommendations are upheld, Boston will lose about \$1 million.

The Governor now has until the end of the month to decide on possible vetoes and then the legislature will determine its veto override options.

On Tuesday May 12th, ValleyWorks Career Center and the MVWIB participated in the Greater Lawrence ABE/ESOL Career Fair at Northern Essex Community College in Lawrence. Over 200 Adult Basic Ed and ESOL students came to explore career options and get advice from educators and workforce professionals. Fred said that he would like to thank Assistant Career Center Director, David Souza, for his outstanding presentation.

Additionally, on May 15th, at the American Training 12th Annual Business Awards Breakfast held at Andover Country Club, we were very pleased to learn that two MVWIB Board Members were recognized for their efforts and contributions toward fostering improved occupational opportunities for Merrimack Valley residents: Associated X-ray Imaging Corporation of Haverhill and Raytheon Company of Andover both received special recognition awards as "Employer of the Year".

Fred also said that he is pleased to announce that on June 5th, the following MVWIB members were recognized with special awards at the Merrimack Valley Chamber of Commerce, Annual Small Business Recognition Breakfast at DiBurro's in Haverhill:

- Joe Bevilacqua, MVCC 2009 US Small Business Administration District Director's Award
- Sal Lupoli, Lupoli Companies - 2009 US Small Business Administration Entrepreneurial Success Award
- Paul Durant, Sr., Techprint, Inc. - MVCC Manufacturing Award
- Phil Laverriere, GLCAC Headstart - MVCC Discovery/Education Award
- Dr. David Hartleb, NECC - MVCC Discovery/Education Award
- Arthur Chilingirian, ValleyWorks - MVCC Business Assistance Award

On behalf of the MVWIB, he congratulated all the award recipients on this well-deserved honor.

On Tuesday, June 9th, the MVWIB joined the ValleyWorks Career Center and the Haverhill Commission on Disability Issues, in sponsoring our fourth annual Transitional Information Fair at the Haverhill Citizen's Center. Fred said that he would like to thank Haverhill Mayor James Fiorentini; Youth Council Member, Vinnie Ouellette; ValleyWorks staff David Souza, Terrence Throwe, and Lisa Coy; for their collaboration in presenting this important event for youth with disabilities, their parents, and their teachers. Nearly twenty governmental and private agencies presented valuable decision-making assistance on educational, skill-training, and career options as these youth transition from the relative safety of the public school environment into young adulthood.

Yesterday, we received word that Jane Oates has been confirmed as the Assistant Secretary of Labor for the Employment and Training Administration. The MVWIB looks forward to her leadership as head of the DoL's Employment and Training Administration.

Fred said that we traditionally schedule our last meeting of the fiscal year near the end of June to allow the Board to vote upon the following year's annual plan and budget; however, this year, due to the significant impact that the Recovery Act has had upon the state's planning processes, we have not yet received our planning guidance for FY10. It is scheduled to be available tomorrow, June 24th, with a tentative due date in mid-August. Therefore, our Chairman may be calling a special meeting of Board sometime in early August for your vote to approve our FY10 annual plan and budget. We will provide you with as much notice as possible.

In closing, Fred said that he wants to convey the sense of urgency that he feels regarding the proper and timely spending of our ARRA training funds. As you are aware, over the last year, the unemployment rate has been extremely high. The good news is that the free-fall of the economy seems to be over, but there are still nearly 10 jobseekers for every job opening. We are being charged with putting people back to work by providing skills training, which will increase their employability. However, we are measuring new job opportunities by the hundreds, while we are still measuring lay-offs by the thousands. The problem, as he sees it, is obvious...no amount of skills training can guaranty a job if the jobs don't exist. He said that he is hopeful that the stimulus funding, actions taken to stabilize financial institutions and the housing market, and the eventual renewal of consumer confidence, will help to bring about a steady recovery of our national and regional economy, and the creation of new jobs to support it.

Motion by Chick LoPiano seconded by Fred Shaheen to accept the Executive Director's Report. Motion passed.

6. Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund Final Report

Fred Carberry said that we are coming to the end of a very successful grant. The Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund was a two year grant that ends this June 30th. He introduced the grant coordinator Augustine Ambe to give his final report.

Augustine said that in spite of the economic crisis, good things are happening. He said that he has directed several projects in Africa, South America, and the United States, but the collaboration in this project has been extraordinary. He also said that his colleagues at the WIB have been most cooperative. He particularly mentioned that Fred Carberry has been supportive and always available to provide guidance.

Augustine then reported on the goals and actual numbers. The Participant goal was 170 and the actual was 369; number of youth goal was 20 and actual was 58; number of unemployed was 45 and actual was 80; number of incumbent participants goal was 125 and actual was 289; number completing training goal was 155 and actual was 367; number attaining skilled credential goal was 120 and actual was 284; goal receiving wage increase was 60 and actual was 72; goal for promotions was 40 and actual was 42; and goal for attaining new employment was 34 with actual 49.

He said that at once company, Arwood Machine Corporation, error rates improved 9% and employees learned new skills or improved existing skills which enable the company to break into new industries. The MVWIB also conducted an exit survey and some respondents noted that productivity had increased, lead time improved, work in progress was reduced, organizational capacity improved, employees' skills were upgraded and others were retained, and finally, the quality of products and services improved.

Mr. Ambe concluded his remarks by stating that this was a very successful grant.

Fred Carberry then asked Augustine to come to the front of the room and he and Joseph Bevilacqua presented him with a certificate of appreciation for his work on this project.

Joe Bevilacqua then asked former chair, Pedro Arce to come forward. He said that Pedro led the WIB up until the onset of the economic crisis. He said that he helped identify troubled areas. Pedro's guidance and ideas recognizing what was coming helped to define a strategic plan. Joe said that Pedro is also a lead member of the WIB and attends the state strategic planning meetings.

At that time, Joe, Fred and Mayor Fiorentini presented Pedro with a plaque for his tenure as chairman of the MVWIB.

Joe then said that we need to work with Stan Usovich who will be instrumental in the high tech community as we need to be able to transcend the high level of ethics from the mature worker to the younger workers. We now need to be teaching soft skills where in the past we needed to teach the hard skills. He said that we all play an important role.

7. Revision to MVWIB Bylaws

Fred Carberry explained that a copy of the revisions to the bylaws were sent to all board members in their meeting packets. He said that in our High Performing WIB submission to the

state they said that we were not in compliance with our bylaws as we have several members from one entity. Fred explained the corrected wording on page 4 which the state said was acceptable. Fred was then prepared to go over each individual revision.

Joe Bevilacqua asked if they wanted Fred to go over each revision or if, having received the information in their meeting packets, were prepared to vote to accept the revisions. He asked if anyone had any questions or concerns. Hearing none he called for a motion on the bylaws.

Motion by Fred Shaheen seconded by Len Wilson to approve the revisions to the MVWIB Bylaws as submitted. Motion passed.

Mike Lynch raised that issue that some people are appointed to the board and are not longer able to participate, especially at the committee level. He asked that if this matter could be reviewed in the future.

Joe said that he intends to send a letter to every board member encouraging them to attend meetings.

8. Other Business

Joe asked board members if they want to keep the meeting time at 7:30 a.m. or would rather move to 8:00 a.m. There were no objections to meeting at 7:30 a.m. and the consensus was to keep the meetings at this time.

Joe said that we have been in discussion with our local legislative delegation who are doing the best they can for us. He said that he sees the end of this free fall and we need to be ready to meet the needs of employers. He did say that is difficult if there are more people without jobs than job openings.

Joe said that this WIB meets or exceeds every criteria and he thanked the WIB and Career Center staff for their work. He said that he may be calling on board members over the summer for a variety of new initiatives. Joe said that he may need to call a brief emergency meeting in early August and he is trying to get Secretary Bump for the annual meeting in October.

8. Adjournment

Having no further business Barbara Grant made a motion to adjourn and Mike Lynch seconded the motion. Motion passed and meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Kivell

Recorder