



Whittier Regional Vocational Technical High School
115 Amesbury Line Road
Haverhill, MA

Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, January 26, 2010
8:30 AM

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Howard Allen, Joseph Bevilacqua, Patrick Blanchette, Thomas Casey, Michael Collins, Thomas Connors, Leonard Degnan, Leanne Eastman, Julie Gadziala, Susan Jepson, David Hartleb, Robert Ingala, Barbara Grant, Jeff Linehan, Michael Munday, Ann Ormond, Fred Shaheen, Michael Lynch, Stefanie McCowan, Peter Matthews, Donna Rivera, Michael Strem, Stanley Usovicz, Cal Williams

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Kimberly Abare, Pedro Arce, Lou Antonellis, Shirley Callan, Wayne Capolupo, James Driscoll, Paul Durant, Howard Flagler, Gary Hale, Robert Halpin, Atty. Robert LeBlanc, Charles LoPiano, Sal Lupoli, Maria Miles, John Olenio, Kevin Page, Cindy Phelan, Jason Pimentel, Jean Perrigo, Margaret O'Neill, William Pillsbury, Steve Salvo, Jeff Sheehy, Lester Schindel, Len Wilson

GUESTS PRESENT:

Mayor William Lantigua, CEO, Mayor Donna Holaday, Mayor Thatcher Kezer, Terry Allen for Dr. Champagne, Erin Bouchard, Beverly DeSalvo, Stephen DeSalvo, Dr. Lane Glenn, Patricia Demers, Kerin Hamidiani, Carmen Morales, Irene Chalek, Arthur Chilingirian, Odanis Hernandez, Dawn Beati, Gary Fountain, David Souza, Amy Weatherbee, Fran LaCerte, Ron Contrado, Juan Yopez, Superintendent William DeRosa

STAFF PRESENT:

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

1. Call to Order

Chairman Joseph Bevilacqua called the meeting to order at 8:40 am. He welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Mayor of Newburyport Donna Holaday.

Mayor Holaday said that she is in her fourth week as mayor of Newburyport and getting a handle on the schedule. She said that Newburyport has wonderful culture and arts. Mayor Holaday also said that getting together like this to form partnerships and address needs is good for everyone. She said that she is looking at the Whittier Bridge impact to her community and is going to DC to seek stimulus funds and earmarks for her city. Newburyport is also ready to move forward on a garage. Mayor Holaday said that she is pleased to be here and is looking forward to working with the WIB.

Joe Bevilacqua then introduced Whittier Regional High School Superintendent William DeRosa and thanked him for hosting today's meeting at this tremendous facility.

Superintendent DeRosa said that he is pleased to welcome the WIB to see what we are about. He said that not only do we have in school programs, but we also offer adult training. He said that he is happy to host today's meeting.

Joseph Bevilacqua said that this is the first decade with fewer jobs and problems in the worst recession since the great depression. Imagine how it would be without the WIB and the Career Center to help people. Joe then said that he would like to commend the Career Center on the job they do 365 days a year.

2. Approval of Minutes of October 1, 2009

Joe then called for a motion on the minutes of October 1, 2009 Annual meeting.

Motion by David Hartleb seconded by Mike Lynch to approve the minutes of the October 1, 2009 meeting as submitted. Motion passed.

Joe then asked Mike Lynch to come to the podium. Fred Carberry said that when he graduated from Central Catholic High School with Mike forty-five years ago, he didn't know he would be here today to present him with a token of appreciation on his retirement. He said that it has been an honor and pleasure to work with him.

Mike said that he has had a thirty-seven year affiliation in job training and thanked the WIB for this presentation.

3. Reports of Committee Chairs ***Planning Committee***

Peter Matthews reported that at the end of the second quarter, career center performance numbers reflect our struggling economy. Total job seekers served is at 57% of plan. Highlights include the number of veterans served (804), which is 86% of plan, and total employers served (1290), which is 93% of plan. Total entered employments, however, is only at 41% of plan which is down seven points from last year and indicates the difficulty in placing people in employment in this depressed economy.

Participants in all our Title I Programs are also experiencing difficulty in finding employment.

Total participants enrolled in the Title I Adult program stands at 228, which is 66% of plan. However, only 60 new participants have been enrolled, which is only 32% of plan and indicates an increase in carry-ins from the previous fiscal year. This again is indicative of the difficulty in placing these individuals. Total exiters is only at 12% of plan, and entered employments stands at 13% of plan. Of those we have placed, the average exit wage is \$13.48, which is good for this population. The wage retention rate is 121% of plan.

Peter continued stating that the Dislocated Worker Program has enrolled 426 participants, which is 85% of plan. We have carried in 320 participants. Last year we carried in 166. Last year at this time, total exiters stood at 39% of plan, as opposed to 23% for this year. Last year entered employments were at 46% of plan. This year we are at 24% of plan. This indicates that the dislocated worker population is also having difficulty finding employment. Additionally, the average exit wage is \$15.49, down from \$19.17 at this time last year. The wage retention rate is down 9%

which reflects the fact that this population is, for the most part, finding employment that pays far less than their previous jobs.

There are 192 customers enrolled in the Title I Youth Program; 164 carry-ins and 28 new participants (22% of plan). Total exiters and total entered employments stand at 24% of plan and 31% of plan respectively.

The Lucent/Alcatel-Haverhill Paperboard NEG has enrolled a total of 290 participants; 201 are still active with 76 in training under the TRADE Act. Peter said that we have exited 89 participants and 78 have found employment, which is an entered employment rate of 92%. The average pre-wage for these participants was \$22.12 and the average wage at placement is \$15.71, which is a wage retention rate of 71%.

Peter continued stating that it is clear from these statistics that jobs are scarce, wages are lower and people are really struggling.

Peter continued his report stating that the Planning Committee continues to monitor ARRA funded activities, and we are hopeful that innovative group training programs, funded under ARRA, will help to provide the Adult and Dislocated Worker populations with the employer- identified skills needed to obtain employment in our region, in this economy.

- **Update on High Performing WIB Initiative**

Peter reported that the Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Board plans to re-submit their application for high performing WIB certification by the end of the month. A meeting of the High Performing WIB Advisory Board took place last Friday, January 22, 2010 at the career center.

- **Update on ARRA**

Peter also reported that the Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Board has received sixteen (16) proposals to provide group training, to be funded under the American Recovery and Re-investment Act, for Adults, Dislocated Workers and Older Youth. Training vendors were urged to develop new and innovative programs that provided training in critical and emerging industries and demonstrated a strong collaboration with regional employers with a commitment by employers to interview or hire successful trainees. We are in the process of reviewing the proposals and hope to begin contract negotiations in February.

- **Revision of Supportive Services and Needs Related Payments Policies (Please see policy in your packet-vote required.)**

Since July the career center has seen a high volume of customers who are enrolled in training and receiving supportive services. Due to funding cuts, there are currently not sufficient funds to assist all the dislocated workers enrolled. Therefore, the planning committee voted to recommend approving the following changes to the supportive services and needs related payment policies.

1. Eliminate needs related payments for WIA Title I Adults for the remainder of this fiscal year.
2. Eliminate supportive services for WIA Title I Adults and Dislocated Workers enrolled in intensive services and post training services.
3. Institute a cap of \$500.00 for supportive services for customers in occupational skills training.
4. Reduce the round trip mileage scale by 50% for all WIA Title I participants.

Peter then asked for a motion to approve the revision of the Supportive Services and Needs Related Payments Policy.

Motion by Bob Ingala to approve the revision of the Supportive Services and Needs Related Payments Policy seconded by Cal Williams. Discussion followed.

Tom Connors asked how much it would cost for the remainder of the year. Arthur Chilingirian said that last year it cost \$33,000 and this year the first six months cost \$47,000. The only way is to move dislocated workers services under trade to WIA. Tom then asked how much money is in the reserve fund and Chili said that he didn't know. Tom then pressed, asking how much and if it is a million dollars or half of that, and Chili said not a million but he didn't have a figure.

Tom Connors then said that given the economy today people really need help. If this isn't the time to use the funds, then when is. Chili said that only one or two clients are on needs related payments. The majority of funding goes to childcare which we have cut and transportation costs which we have cut in half. The only place to get the money is from the line item that is needed for training.

Discussion ended and the motion to approve the revision of the Supportive Services and Needs Related Payment Policy passed with Tom Connors and David Hartleb voting "no."

- **Proposed FY2010 ValleyWorks DTA Service Policy**

Peter Matthews said that with the change in funding through the 2009 Competitive Integrated Employment Services Procurement, the Department of Training & Development (DTD) no longer receives funds from the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) for occupational skills training support for TAFDC recipients. Therefore, the matching DTA funds which supported the prioritization of TAFDC recipients for training services is no longer available. The planning committee voted to recommend approval of the FY 2010 ValleyWorks DTA Service Policy.

Motion to approve FY 2010 ValleyWorks DTA Service Policy by Tom Casey seconded by Mike Lynch. Discussion followed.

Tom Connors said that, in practice, this policy violates the civil rights of DTA providers. He asked, "Why are we doing this to people who have the most need?" He said that this is to cover up a policy since the end of July. He said that he has been involved with the board for thirty years and never has seen anything like this because ValleyWorks didn't get the contract. He has tried to discuss this but has gotten no response and has only been given lip service.

Peter Matthews clarified that he did get a call from Tom and did in fact meet with him and bring his concerns forward.

Chili said that if someone qualifies under WIA they can get services at the Career Center but we also make a recommendation to send them back to welfare for services. We do provide access to all. We are serving the same number as last year using WIA dollars. Chili said that this has nothing to do with losing the contract, we were upset with the welfare office and not LARE. If anyone is eligible for services, they are not denied.

Tom said that he spoke to Chili and his staff and that he has name after name who were refused services as soon as they approach the reception desk and mentioned his organization's name, and that is the reality. He has heard that over and over. He asked them to sit down and hear what the people are saying to hear them out. He has met nothing but road block after road block. He said to Chili in a meeting that, if there is a problem with DTA, Tom said that he would go down and try to work it out. He said that he asked ValleyWorks in April to partner with them on this grant and Chili wanted to boycott it as other WIBs were doing. He also said that he had gotten a call from Amy regarding the proposal the week before it was due, which he described as a convoluted proposal and offered to help. He sees this as a result of not getting funded and he said that people get hurt. Tom said that he is willing to partner and work with anyone.

Chili asked to see the names and said that he would work with them.

Peter Matthews suggested tabling this matter until the next meeting.

Motion by Julie Gadziala seconded by Stan Usovicz to table this item until the next meeting. Motion passed.

Youth Council

Cal Williams, Youth Council Chair, reported on youth programming. We are almost at the end of the funding for ARRA summer youth who were extended and Byrne Grant youth, which will be out of funding in early February.

We are running out of Byrne funding earlier than expected because the youth enrolled in this program have been demonstrating a great work ethic and working 30 hours per week. Usually, there is some attrition and absenteeism.

Of the 80 youth extended through ARRA and the 40 from the Byrne grant (120 total), 15 individuals, or 12.5% of those youth, were hired by their employers. As the time nears that the rest of the youth lose their subsidized jobs, VWCC has counselors advising them on GED training, Job Corps opportunities and Career Center Services.

Cal said that we would like WIB board members to know about these now experienced older youth, in the event that you have a job to offer them.

As we have said before, ValleyWorks did a great job getting employers to participate. We recently held a Recognition Breakfast for employers at Northern Essex Community College, attended by 45 employers and staff. The feedback on our youth and on the programs was encouraging.

The Annual 10th Grade Career Fair was held on January 12 at Northern Essex Community College for students from Newburyport, Triton and Amesbury schools. Youth from Newburyport, Triton, Amesbury High and their alternative high school, and Georgetown High attended. Presenters from more than 30 career areas shared their expertise with the students. Feedback from presenters was very positive and the youth were engaged.

35 youth from Lawrence and 25 from Haverhill will participate in Job Shadow Day on February 9th. Ann Shaw, Matt Qualter and Lisa Coy, from ValleyWorks have done well matching jobs to student interest.

Cal said that we are offering three high school teacher externships this spring. The externships will be offered to teachers in STEM disciplines – Science, Technology, Engineering and Math, or one of the MVWIB's emerging and critical industries such as manufacturing, healthcare, green jobs and life sciences. They will spend 30 hours of learning at real-time industries with state-of-the-art facilities. The skills and information they absorb will be translated into exciting authentic curricula to share with their students and other teachers.

The 2010 Out of School Youth RFP was released on December 14 and proposals are due February 1st. We are hoping for some strong proposals for education and skills training with employment outcomes in MVWIB emerging and growth industries. The Youth Council (YC) will review staff recommendations for funding at the February Youth Council meeting. The YC will then send funding recommendations to the Planning Committee for approval.

The Race to the Top is a federal ARRA funded competitive grant that is asking states to advance reforms around four specific areas:

1. adopting standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace and to compete in the global economy;
2. building data systems that measure student growth and success, and inform teachers and principals about how they can improve instruction;
3. recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals, especially where they are needed most;
4. and turning around our lowest-achieving schools. Applications were due January 19th and Massachusetts submitted one.

Awards will go to states that are leading the way with ambitious yet achievable plans for implementing coherent, compelling and comprehensive education reform. Massachusetts is positioned for funding with the signing of the new MA education bill last week.

Our WIB, along with The Boston Private Industry Council and others, encouraged the Mass proposal to include a stronger component for dropout prevention and recovery, as well as more emphasis on interventions for youth with special needs. The State just rolled out the results of their 2009 drop-out study that includes prevention and recovery strategies. The WIBs feel the proposal will be stronger and will address the needs of the 10,000 MA youth who drop out every year.

The Youth Workforce Solutions Act has been submitted by Representative David Torrisi and others to ensure better alignment of the workforce and education systems in the Commonwealth. They are looking to increase funding levels in many existing youth workforce development programs and to provide funds to local districts to expand alternate routes to a diploma or equivalent.

Cal said that our Youth Council meets monthly, usually at the WIB offices. Please let us know if you have any interest in serving on the Youth Council.

Nominating Committee

Ann Ormond, Chair of the Nominating Committee, reported that the committee met on January 13th and discussed the process for nominations taking into account the geographics of the region and the demographics. She said that there are a large number of Latinos in the region and it is important to represent the communities we serve. We also are focusing on blueprint industries such as health care and manufacturing, but we need to look at the green jobs sector and welcome input from board members. We also talked about the High Performing WIB directive to develop continuing quality improvement. The WIB is also developing a newsletter which will be coming out soon. Ann also talked about having an advocacy committee which would be a standing committee to engage state legislators on workforce issues.

The committee voted to recommend the following individuals for board appointment: Whittier Superintendent William DeRosa; Ron Contrado, CEO of Homisco; Juan Yepez from Mainstream Global; and Lisa Gonzalez Welch from the US Small Business Administration.

Motion by Cal Williams seconded by Peter Matthews to approve nominations of Whittier Superintendent William DeRosa; Ron Contrado, CEO of Homisco; Juan Yepez from Mainstream Global; and Lisa Gonzalez Welch from the US Small Business Administration for board membership. Motion passed.

Joe then called on Chief Elected Official Mayor William Lantigua, who said that he has learned a lot in the last few minutes. He said that, as CEO, he plans to address issues that are raised, not only by Tom Connors, but by anyone who has anything to offer.

Mayor Lantigua said that his main focus will be jobs as he represents the city with the highest unemployment in the state. He said that the lack of jobs in one community becomes a social issue and impacts other communities.

Joe then called on Mayor Kezer from Amesbury. Mayor Kezer said that he feels like a seasoned veteran after four years as mayor of Amesbury and welcomes his new partners. He spoke about a Merrimack Valley Mayors and town managers coalition that meets to find creative ways and share ideas on benchmarks and best practices. He said that an organization works best when each person does the best they can. In Amesbury, the major objective is to grow the industrial tax base which is only 12% to attract and attain businesses. He also spoke about a plan to have major economic development soon in the area of the Golden Triangle (rte. 95, rte. 495, and Elm Street). This would benefit the region by increasing the number of jobs.

Joe then said that the Mayor of Haverhill James Fiorentini sent his apologies for not attending as he had a matter that requires his attention.

4. Report of Executive Director

Fred Carberry began his remarks stating that on behalf of the MVWIB, I would like to thank Superintendent William DeRosa for his welcoming remarks and also for hosting our Quarterly Meeting here at the Whittier Regional Vocational Technical High School. He also thanked Haverhill Mayor James Fiorentini and Mayor Thatcher Kezer for their continued involvement in the work of the Merrimack Valley WIB; and welcomed two new mayors: Mayor Donna Holaday of Newburyport and Mayor William Lantigua of Lawrence, the Board's new "Chief Elected Official".

As most of you know, ARRA stimulus funds have played a vital role in many initiatives the MVWIB has been involved with since last Spring. The MVWIB, using ARRA Youth funds and working with its partner agency, ValleyWorks Career Center, developed and executed a highly successful summer jobs for youth program, which when combined with state funding from its YouthWorks Program and the Executive Office of Public Safety's Byrne Program, resulted in putting nearly 800 youth to work, at over 140 worksites, earning over \$1million in wages. We were allowed to keep eligible, out-of-school youth employed through the end of March, but unfortunately, as Cal Williams reported, all funding will be exhausted by early February.

With regard to ARRA Adult and Dislocated Worker funding, the Board, acting upon the recommendation of the Planning Committee, approved a plan to utilize these funds to follow a new strategy. While many workforce boards in Massachusetts and across the nation simply added their ARRA funds to their existing Individual Training Account funding...after all it was the easiest course to take and did not require any additional work in development of new delivery processes...this Board made the decision to do something different. In a quote sometimes ascribed to Albert Einstein: "Insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result". If ever we were in need of different results, it's now.

The approach we took was to allocate our ARRA Adult and Dislocated Worker funding toward the development of creative and innovative approaches that will enhance the ability of our local workforce system to respond to the regional economy and workforce development needs. We developed an RFP seeking proposals that were "designed to promote and reward the development of training options in new areas with priority given to those occupations and skill areas that have been identified by the MVWIB and the State that demonstrate emerging or expanding opportunities for future growth and employment opportunities."

As we proceeded on this new approach, mindful of the importance of sustaining the strong and effective existing ITA training system, the Board approved our plan to continue to allocate all of its traditional WIA formula training funds to ITAs.

After holding well-attended vendor training meetings this fall, the RFP was issued in mid-November. We are extremely pleased with the level of interest that the RFP generated, resulting in the submission of 16 proposals, ranging in a variety of disciplines, from "Project Management for Green Jobs" to "Electronic Health Records" to "Automotive Technologies" to "Pharmacy Technician".

As the recession deepens, we are finding more and more higher qualified, educated and experienced workers struggling to find employment. The old vocational training methods of the past are not the right match for a growing number of today's unemployed. These proposals represent new opportunities for vocational training that goes beyond the \$10 per hour, entry level position.

The proposals are currently under review and successful proposals will be announced by late February.

In the event that we have some remaining ARRA Adult and Dislocated Worker funding, we may be allocating some to Customized Training, to be applied for by an employer, in conjunction with a training provider; and to On-The-Job training.

The WIB staff and our consultant, Barbara Zeimetz, have been working on the re-submission package for the High Performing Workforce Board initiative. The High Performing WIB Advisory Council met last Friday to review the critical elements of a "scorecard", which defines the Board's priorities, goals, activities, and benchmarks, which will allow us to establish clear objectives that plainly reflect the Board's mission, and that are achievable, understandable, and measurable. I believe that the ultimate result of completing the High Performing Workforce Board process will be an increase in relevance of the MVWIB as the region's primary workforce development entity. We thank the Board members and other stakeholders who collaborated on the HPWB advisory council, whose input was a great help.

As you heard in our Nominating Committee report, we are adding four new Board members: two from the private sector, one from vocational education, and one from the US Small Business Administration. We believe that these new members will enhance the Board's ability to respond to the needs of small business more effectively as well as beginning to look at self-employment through small business entrepreneurship as another option for our long-term unemployed. We welcome William DeRosa, Juan Yopez, Ron Contrado, and Lisa Gonzalez-Welch to the Board.

Our Youth Workforce Development Manager, Deborah Andrews, is working with the region's school districts on this year's Teacher Externship Program. Ours is a very simple program, giving three teachers the opportunity to spend one of their vacation weeks working in a private sector company and bringing the knowledge gained from this exposure, back to the classroom. We are hoping to expand the externship program into a much richer, real world experience for teachers, modeled after a program that the Northshore WIB has been operating for the last couple of years. This would put a teacher to work for a private sector employer for up to eight weeks during his/her summer break, followed by a college seminar in the Fall, for which the teacher would receive continuing education credits. We will be developing the details of this program over the next several months and we would be very eager to hear of any employers who would like to participate. One of the leading causes of high school dropout is the feeling that students have that the classes that they're taking are not relevant to career development. Through the teacher externship program, real world examples are presented to the students, increasing their understanding of the reasons to study algebra and trig, etc.

In closing, Fred said that he is sorry to report that unemployment rates, which appeared to be trending downward in recent months; this month have seen a resurgence across the state with the month to month rate rising from 8.7% in November to 9.4% in December. Our regional rates will be announced later today, but I expect to see an increase there as well. As I said earlier in this report, the time has come to stop doing the same thing over and over, expecting better results. The time has come for innovation, determination, and a clearer focus on the basic workforce needs of our critical and emerging industries, giving Merrimack Valley employers the competent and capable workforce they need as we struggle out of this recession.

5. Modification to Supportive Services Policy with Regard to Child Care Payment Rates

Fred Carberry reported that the Planning Committee voted at their last meeting to approve the modification to the Supportive Services Policy with Regard to Child Care Payment rates from \$15.00 per day for first child to \$10 per day and from \$7.50 per day for second child to \$5 per day with no payment for the third and fourth. If an enrollee has two (2) or more children, he/she would receive \$75 a week for child care. If it is a 26 week program, the cost would be approximately \$2,000. Child

care services can exceed the \$500 cap but all other supportive services will be capped at \$500. It is intended to review the modification at the end of June to determine the impact.

Motion to accept the change to Supportive Services Policy with Regard to Child Care Payment by Cal Williams seconded by Peter Matthews. Motion passed with Tom Connors voting "no."

6. Presentation - Northern Essex Community College Health Career Pathways Maps

Deborah Andrews introduced Irene Chalek from Northern Essex Community College.

Irene Chalek began by thanking the WIB, Career Center and NECC staff as well as the Greater Lawrence Family Health Center for participating in the P21 grant. She said that through this grant we were able to develop career maps for nursing, dental assisting.

Carmen Morales from GLFHC talked about a program she has been running for five years. This is a paid after school program and students can explore careers in nursing, pharmaceutical, social worker, and medical doctor. Students can move into nursing through tutoring and get college credits for courses.

Patricia Demers from the Allied Health & Nursing program said that her first love is nursing and students are encouraged to continue their education.

Karin said that she was happy to participate in the grant to bring to the community what we offer. There are vocational programs in the Merrimack Valley that allow students to come in and earn credits. She also said that there are externships offered.

Irene said that we have focused on these growth areas but intend to continue developing career pathways for students.

Dr. Lane Glenn said that Northern Essex Community College remains committed to supporting future Career Pathways. We appreciate being asked to participate in the P21 grant through the Youth Council. Our role is to meet the student where he is and get them where they want to be. We are looking at developing pathways in criminal justice, computer science and laboratory science.

7. Adjournment

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

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Kivell

Recorder