



**David's Tavern**  
**11 Brown Square**  
**Newburyport, MA**

**Meeting Minutes**  
**Thursday, June 24, 2010**  
**7:30 AM**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Howard Allen, Joseph Bevilacqua, Thomas Casey, Ron Contrado, Michael Collins, Paul Durant, Julie Gadziala, Barbara Grant, David Hartleb, Susan Jepson, Michael Munday, Ann Ormond, Cindy Phelan, Fred Shaheen, Stefanie McCowan, Peter Matthews, Lester Schindel, Michael Strem, Stanley Usovicz, Ray Wrobel

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Kimberly Abare, Pedro Arce, Patrick Blanchette, Wayne Capolupo, Dr. Ronald Champagne, Thomas Connors, Leonard Degnan, Supt. William DeRosa, James Driscoll, Howard Flagler, Mark Forman, Joe Gangi, Jr., Gary Hale, Robert Ingala, Atty. Robert LeBlanc, Charles LoPiano, Jeff Linehan, Sal Lupoli, Maria Miles, John Olenio, Kevin Page, Donna Rivera, Cal Williams, Andres Rodrigues, Margaret O'Neill, Steve Salvo, Jeff Sheehy, Len Wilson, Juan Yopez

**GUESTS PRESENT:**

Terry Allen for Dr. Champagne, Arthur Chilingirian, Tracy Myszkowski

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Rafael Abislaiman, Elizabeth Kirk, Mary Kivell, Deborah Andrews, Corina Ossers, Odanis Hernandez

**1. Call to Order**

A quorum being present, Chairman Joseph Bevilacqua called the meeting to order at 7:40 am. He welcomed everyone to the meeting stating that one of our goals is to go to every area of the region with our quarterly meetings to talk about different opportunities and challenges. He said that Ann Ormond the head of the Newburyport Chamber is doing a great job. Ann then said that she was pleased to be able to have this meeting in Newburyport at David's Tavern and asked the owner, Stephen Pfginst to say a few words.

Stephen thanked the board directors for coming and talked about this unique facility noting that they have a daycare for parents to have a quiet dinner while their children are cared for. He also talked about using the facility for meetings and his successful Sunday brunch. He said that Joe Tavano plays classical guitar by way of entertainment. Ann Ormond then introduced Newburyport Mayor Donna Haladay who she said is doing a great job.

Mayor Haladay said that the work of the WIB affects all the communities in the region. She said that the work we do is valued and the retraining of workers and youth programs greater benefit the

community. She spoke about the meeting space and Brown Tavern being a history lesson. The building was the home of Moses Brown who donated the land across the street for Brown Square which was recently rededicated and is the oldest park in the city. The Mayor invited meeting attendees to take a moment after the meeting to walk through the park.

Joe said that we want the mayors to be part of our program and we need to support what the mayors want to do. Our goal is to work together as a region and as one economic development entity.

## **2. Report of Chair**

Joe Bevilacqua talked about the recent summit meeting of the Mass WIB Association which included Governor Patrick. He said that Andy Sum talked about some interesting statistics on the recession and the impact on sectors. He said that the unemployment levels of men dropped by 135,000 and the employment statistics for women increased by 54,000 which is the highest ratio in the nation. He said that we have lost manufacturing jobs which were traditionally male and gained in education, health care and professional services. There is concern for the gap in available jobs for men and concern for the educational levels. Joe also said that the summer youth jobs are at the lowest ever and it has been proven that youth who work at earlier ages want to work when older and those youth who come for a higher economic level are more likely to want to work. There is a growing disparity with youth who are neither in education or the employment system. This is a very difficult situation statewide.

Joe continued stating that the Governor was very positive and said that Massachusetts is doing better. This is the first time in a decade that people are returning to Massachusetts with the life sciences, energy and health care sectors. He said that construction is still struggling. The Governor is working on a number of issues across the state. Joe said that the federal government is considering bringing back On the Job Training, which was successful in the past, and he also mentioned working together with the unions on apprenticeship programs. He said that not only is training an issue but also the availability of jobs. Joe said that he wanted to comment that our new Executive Director was very well accepted by his peers as the Summit. This was an opportunity to share information on what works and interact with other executive directors, chairs and other officials. He said that he is glad that Ralph is working quickly and successfully in his role. Joe then mentioned the conflict in Washington with the desire of some to continue funding programs and others who want to cut spending with the summer jobs and unemployment extension not being funded.

Mayor Haladay said that she recently attended the Mass. Municipal Association meeting and that the topic was the need for the \$687M which is short the vote of four senators. The impact to the state without that funding will be a 3.8% cut and we can't absorb any more cuts. She urged board members to encourage passing this legislation. The state is preparing two budget versions. One with the \$687M and other with the 3.8% cut. Joe Bevilacqua said that Congressman John Tierney is a friend of workforce development and a member of the committee to reauthorize WIA.

## **3. Approval of Minutes of April 27, 2010**

Joe then called for a motion on the minutes of April 27, 2010 meeting.

**Motion by Fred Shaheen seconded by Julie Gadziala to approve the minutes of the April 27, 2010 meeting as submitted. Motion passed.**

Joe said that the state wants board members to be actively involved with the High Performing WIB Initiative and he has been meeting and talking with staff on a regular basis. He wanted to thank the committee chairs for their work. He then introduced Peter Matthews, Planning Committee Chair, to give the Planning Committee report noting that Peter's father was a former city official in Newburyport and instrumental in saving the waterfront.

#### **4. Reports of Committee Chairs**

- ***Planning Committee***

Peter Matthews began his remarks stating that there have been a difficult couple of meetings and we have new private industry members on the committee. After considerable, thoughtful debate we were able to take care of business.

Peter began with an update on ARRA stating that the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act allowed us a unique opportunity to provide group training for Adults and Dislocated Workers and to fund training programs that would help to close the skills gap in the Merrimack Valley. We asked training providers to develop new, innovative training programs that meet the needs of the employers in our region, with a special focus on critical and emerging industries; and that provided participants with industry recognized certifications. The WIB provided extensive technical assistance to potential bidders. As a result, six group training programs for Adults and Dislocated Workers were approved for funding under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. These programs include Green Job Skills Training, Green Handyman Training, Machinist Training, Certified Pharmacy Technician Training, Emergency Medical Technician Training and training in Automotive Technologies. We plan to train approximately 140 unemployed individuals. Start dates for the programs are in June, July and August. ValleyWorks Career Center is actively recruiting for all programs.

Peter said that that we resubmitted our application on April 21<sup>st</sup>. The Undersecretary of Labor and Workforce Development, Jennifer James, asked us to resubmit the narrative portion of our application electronically so she could connect our narrative more specifically to the State's questions. We responded to this request on May 14<sup>th</sup>. On June 18<sup>th</sup>, we received additional feedback from the Undersecretary, which is currently under review. There is no deadline regarding our final submission, but we hope to resubmit during the next few weeks. There is a one-time award of \$100,000 upon certification.

Regarding refunding Out of School Youth Program for an additional year, board member Tom Connors, the President/CEO from American Training, Inc. attended the May Planning Committee meeting and requested that the Chairman allow him to speak. Permission was granted. Mr. Connors spoke regarding funding for two LARE Out-of-School Youth programs, the CNA and Medical Assisting Program, which the Youth Council recommended not be re-funded. Although these programs failed to meet the performance goals outlined in the contract, Mr. Connors stated that there were extenuating circumstances; the difficulty of the population that they serve, particular unforeseeable issues with many of the enrollees this past year, as well as the poor economy. He pointed out that his past performance has been good and that he has vast experience running these types of training programs. The Planning Committee, after considerable, thoughtful discussion, voted to re-fund the Medical Assisting and CNA programs for a second year.

Peter then spoke about the Annual Plan and the noted that the budget and additional information regarding the FY11 Annual Plan is contained in your packet. He said that Tracy Myszkowski, DGA Finance Director, will be presenting the budget information later during this meeting. We do have an updated draft revision of the planning charts based on additional budget information and additional information regarding carry-in participants in training programs. The planning charts are not yet finalized because the State is presently negotiating performance goals with the DOL. The entered employment rate for adults and dislocated workers is based on the goals the State is requesting and on our local adjustments. Once we receive the updated performance goals from the State, we will revise the planning charts, complete the performance charts and dispense this information to the Board. The Planning Committee voted to recommend adoption of the Annual Plan as submitted.

- ***Youth Council***

Youth Council member Howard Allen presented the Youth Council report in the absence of Cal Williams. He began his report with the externships. He said that jobs, careers and industries in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) industries are growing nationally, statewide, and locally. There is a shortage of youth choosing STEM careers, and there are many current open positions and will be more in the future without a youth pipeline to them. Following the guidance of the state and recognizing the local labor market industry growth, the MVWIB is focusing on STEM career ladders for youth. Our annual plan includes initiatives that provide STEM related opportunities that motivate and excite teachers, schools, and youth. At the same time, we are collaborating with higher education STEM programs because most of these jobs require some kind of degree.

Howard said that we are developing a new STEM Advisory Committee which will work to expand our externship program and participation by teachers and employers. Our goal is that all teacher externships will be employer paid. In addition to the teacher externships, we are working on a STEM mentoring component for out of school youth. We are soliciting participation from businesses, community based organizations, schools and other stakeholders. Please let Deborah Andrews know if you have an interest in lending your expertise to these undertakings.

2010 externships have been completed and Howard said that since he is presenting this report for Chairman Cal Williams he would do this portion in the third person. Howard Allen, Youth Council member, facilitated the process. The WIB and the Youth Council want to thank him for his wonderful leadership and thoughtful reorganization of the process.

Andy Katz, from Lawrence High School, a repeat teacher extern, looked at connecting students' understanding of the need for math skills to the workplace at Strem Chemicals in Newburyport. Mike Strem is a very active MVWIB board and Youth Council member and Howard thanked him. At Bostik, Inc. Bronwyn Boyle, Haverhill High, explored how to make youth more aware of math in their everyday lives and how algebra formulas apply to the world of work.

We had a good return on our investment of a one-week slot. This was win/win for students and teachers. Howard, the externs and businesses spent a number of hours discussing how to better organize the externships, such as develop a series of questions for the company and for identified key people that will solicit information pertinent to the classroom.

Please check the WIB website or our next newsletter for information on the wonderful curricula that were developed through this initiative.

Under new programs, we have two 12-month training programs beginning soon. The vendor for both is LARE. The programs are Education and EMT Training and Education and Food Services program. They include GED and/or basic skills remediation. Our programs have consisted of 85% females and 15% males and we hope that these two new programs will be of interest to males and as well as females.

Howard said that as Peter mentioned this spring, LARE requested that we fund two of their programs for a second year. They are Education and CNA/CHHA and Education and Medical Assisting. The Youth Council voted to recommend **not** re-funding the programs because neither program met the contract outcome requirements. Or As Peter mentioned, we approved the other two the LARE CNA/CHHA Education and Medical Assisting Programs.

This summer we will be serving 160 youth through our state YouthWorks summer jobs funding. 85-90 youth from Lawrence will be served, about 60 from Haverhill and 15 from Methuen. Eligible youth participated in a summer jobs lottery and selected youth took part in job readiness and health and safety workshops. The ability to participate in summer jobs is dependent upon workshop attendance. We have more than 300 positions offered by 78 employers in Lawrence, Haverhill, and Methuen. Youth have chosen their jobsite and those employers will have a breakfast orientation tomorrow (6-25-10) Youth will earn \$8 per hour for 20 hours per week for 6 weeks, beginning on July 6.

We have had a 44% cut in state funding and have received little other summer funding to date. There are two bills in the US senate that were passed by the house, which include ARRA funds for summer jobs, but they are in committee. In addition, the governor asked the legislature to use next year's summer funding this year, but we have nothing definite to report at this time. If that were to happen, we wonder if there would be state funding for summer jobs next year. If more money comes down with the same eligibility criteria, we are all set to go, with 500 youth and many employers on the waiting list.

We have been funded by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) for a Summer Work and Learning Grant program that we call the MCAS Cell Phone Repair program. We will serve 20 youth at Lawrence High School who failed to pass MCAS and are at risk of receiving a certificate of completion rather than the diploma necessary to attend college and/or get a good job. We are targeting seniors first and then juniors in order to help them get ready to take the MCAS again and to give them work readiness training, occupational skills training and information about related career ladders that are of interest to them. Two math teachers from Lawrence High School who have worked with this population of youth will provide the MCAS remediation in the morning and the work experience in the afternoon. Morning lessons will correspond with the work so participants can understand how what is learned in school, as measured by the MCAS, is necessary and valuable in a work setting. One of the teachers, whose family owns a cell phone business, will donate up to 200 used cell phones for repair purposes. The youth will learn how to repair the phones, how to read manuals, how to apply math and how to research related information. At the end of the program the phones will be donated to the Greater Lawrence's YWCA Domestic Violence Program. The instructors will be paid by DESE. The youth wages will be paid with a little more than \$23,000 in State leftover ARRA monies. The Governor had the dollars divided up between the WIBs for summer jobs. The YWCA will conduct dating violence workshops and will explain to the participants how the phones and the money they will receive from recycling the phones benefit the YW's customers.

Joe Bevilacqua said that one discussion the Youth Council has had is that the employment criteria is very restrictive and we can't hire kids who don't meet that criteria.

- ***Nominating Committee***

Ann Ormond, Chair of the Nominating Committee, stated that the Nominating Committee has lost two members and we need to rebuild that committee. She said that Joe and Ralph will be looking to repopulate that committee. At this time, there is no report.

## **5. Report of Executive Director**

Rafael Abislaiman began his remarks stating that Commonwealth's 2011 Annual Plan Guidance highlights the role of workforce development in the state's economic development effort. He said that the thing that makes Massachusetts special are people. He said that perhaps we are lucky that we don't have offshore oil but we run the risk of going awry in other ways if we don't do a very good job of training, especially the disadvantaged and what you need as employers to succeed and grow. You realize that training and education remediation is necessary. At the conference this Monday and Tuesday he said publicly expressed why we have to dedicate so much to folks that sometimes don't use our resources well. There are many, many poor people in Lawrence as Joe mentioned we raise the issue why in the youth category the criteria is such that the delivery of service is such that we can't help the young people that want to make their lives better. We continuously put money and chase people who apparently feel that our services are just endless and they can postpone taking their own personal responsibility. As a WIB he said as the board has a role in making that argument and that argument has come to the floor recently with some of the funding decisions we made that there are poor people that need our help who can help themselves and we should be dedicating more of our resources in that direction.

Ralph said that the MVWIB and ValleyWorks Career Center staff are committed to helping employers grow and maintain high quality jobs. He said that he wanted to assure the board that he will try to provide correct and timely information as much as possible. He said that he wanted to build on the job that Fred had done so well and one of the things is wrapping up the High Performing WIB plan that we have. Half of the WIBS in the state have been funded and there are some exceptional cases such as Boston but he said that with hard work and following closely the instructions of Undersecretary James we should be able to wrap that up in the next month or two. Ralph said that he was asking for the board's help in a review and clarification of our by-laws, agreements and operating guidelines prior to the next State recertification visit. Together we will look for ways to ensure that quality is not compromised in the wake of increased or changing demand and diminishing resources.

Ralph continued stating that our efforts to effectively address local skills gaps strive to align State allocated and other resources to sectors with a stable or increasing number of job openings. As stated by the Commonwealth's Department of Workforce Department, our vision must continue to encompass both short and long-term strategies designed to promote and sustain a prosperous regional economy. The infusion of ARRA funds helped this WIB accelerate transformational efforts. All of us are human and there were some issues if that money was appropriately spent. We hope to prove that it will be. All of those programs are now underway. Time will tell just how effective we are in initiating new training activities, none of which were done prior to this year. It is a challenge to change and we have a great number of training programs that have helped many people. Sometimes we get stuck in what works but recent indications are that we need to diversify our job

training offerings because of the areas that we have been conducting a great part of our training is increasingly saturated.

Our Planning Committee has again recognized the importance of supporting vendors of tested and proven competence. As we continue to focus on developing and refining a strategic vision as expressed in our High Performing WIB submission to the Massachusetts Dept. of Labor and Workforce Development, he asked that they all remember their hard work on that initiative. Ralph said that he especially wanted to thank our Chairman Joe Bevilacqua and Vice-Chair and Planning Committee Chair Peter Matthews along with Youth Council Chair Cal Williams for all of their work and effort on our High Performing WIB submission. Ralph said that he wanted to invite board members to read and offer comment on our current draft. It will be posted on our website until July 8<sup>th</sup>. He said that we are working with the Department of Labor and Workforce Development Undersecretary Jennifer James to more exactly crystallize board expectations in terms of specific workforce training numbers, detailed process outcomes and goal achievement criteria. We will strongly endeavor to do exactly that. He said that we hope to resubmit our plan on July 9, 2010 and ask you to consider the Planning Committees recommendation, and your review of the Annual Plan today as it is one more step in the High Performing WIB process.

He concluded his report stating that he and his staff stand ready to try and provide you with as much information as you need to make informed decisions on our High Performing WIB submission and on this region's workforce training and development strengths and needs.

Susan Jepson asked if there has been discussion on how the \$100,000 would be utilized once the HPWIB certification is approved. Joe said that we have been working on getting approval and once we get approval that will be the next discussion. Ralph said that given the shortfall we will probably use the money to fill the gaps.

## **6. MVWIB Bylaws**

Ralph Abislaiman said that the revised bylaws are in the meeting packets and there no significant changes. He said that the state monitored us a few months ago and wanted us to standardize the terminology such as board members for example. We now call them directors and there were some other grammatical changes. We currently have a vice chair and that is reflected in the bylaws.

**Motion by Stan Usovicz seconded by David Hartleb to approve the revised by laws as submitted. Motion passed.**

## **8. Annual Plan**

Ralph Abislaiman said that this year was slightly different because most of the work was done in the High Performing WIB proposal. Most of the work has been done on the budget which was very difficult with daily notices of changes on the budget. He then said that Tracy Myszkowski would present the budget.

Tracy said that she would like to start with the spreadsheet and went over the amounts by agency. Tracy said that the total budget is \$7.9 million with \$621,176 to the WIB with 8 staff, \$545,251 to DGA with six, \$3.1 million for ValleyWorks Career Center with 40 staff and \$2.1 million for the Division of Career Services with 32 staff. Three staff salaries were not included as they are paid by the state. She then explained the notes stating the first being VWCC Vendor Service Fees in the amount of \$36,635 for services rendered in FY'10 that will be reimbursed (transferred) by DCS in FY'11 so the state will know to move that money. The other is the FY'10 Training Funds (carry-in)

for contracts one is the ARRA Group Training Contracts obligated in the amount of \$527,360 and the other item is total FY10 Training Funds is to be used for services in FY'11 in the amount of \$193,874. These funds have been obligated, but will be serving customers going into the next fiscal year.

David Hartleb said that it would be helpful if someone could give a brief description of the units and what they do.

Ralph Abislaiman said that the WIB is you and the money is staff. Last year the DGA and WIB numbers were reversed. One of Fred's last acts was to reassign Amy's position over to the WIB as well as the Contracts Manager and a one half position increase for a grants writer. DGA was formed about ten years ago as a firewall between the Career Center and the WIB to fiscally assure that public money is being well spent. ValleyWorks is the case management and orientation for the unemployed and its performance is well above average. ValleyWorks is one of the best career centers in the state. DCS is unemployment and tracks job search, etc. The bulk of the funding goes to the Career Center who has 40 employees and then DCS. Ralph said that in some ways the Career Center and DCS are at odds. With some folks eligible for 99 weeks of unemployment it is difficult to meet training numbers if folks want to keep their unemployment. Things may change counting back 99 weeks is when the fiscal crisis began and benefits will soon be exhausted. They will drop off the unemployment rolls but we may see an increase in training needs.

**Motion by Fred Shaheen seconded by Julie Gadziala to approve the Annual Plan. Motion passed.**

Joe then said that as State Chair of the Mass WIB he suggested that the national board come to Massachusetts for their summer meeting and it was voted on secret ballot. The National Governor's Association State Conference will be held in Massachusetts in August. Joe suggested a side trip and they are coming to Lawrence on August 3<sup>rd</sup> to Riverwalk and will discuss five categories of economic development. There will be a dinner that evening and Joe invited board members to attend as guests. He said that more information will be forthcoming.

## **9. Adjournment**

**Having no further business Fred Shaheen made a motion to adjourn and Tom Casey seconded the motion. Motion passed and meeting was adjourned.**

Respectfully submitted,

*Mary Kivell*

Recorder