



YOUTH COUNCIL

MINUTES

Wednesday, April 8, 2009

11:30 a.m.

Cambridge College – Room 106

60 Island Street

Lawrence, MA 01840

Youth Council MEMBERS PRESENT:

Janet Allison, Kristine Blum, Christine Bradshaw, Lisa Coy, Brad Howell, Barbara Richards, Megan Shea, Tricia Snow, Steven Noroian, Michael Strem, Cal Williams

MVWIB Youth Council MEMBERS ABSENT:

Howard Allen, Tom Casey, Linda Cote, Howard Flagler, Steve O'Brien, Vinnie Ouellette, Linda Piergeorge, Jason Pimentel, Bill Blanchette, Irene Chalek, Gina Bozek, Ed Fitzgerald, Bob Mazzone, Ed Warnshuis, Marianne Vesey

GUESTS PRESENT:

Blair Gann, Sam Martin, Latoya Williams, Tichelle Charles

MVWIB STAFF PRESENT:

Deborah Andrews, Mary Kivell

I. Introductions

Chairman Cal Williams called the meeting to order at 11:40 a.m. stating that after the business meeting, Sam Martin from Commonwealth Corporation, would be providing training on WIA 101 for youth council members to assist us in improving standards as we go forward.

Introductions were then made and Deborah Andrews noted that, new MVWIB board member, Mike Strem of Strem Chemicals has been a member of the Newburyport Education Business Collaborative for many years and has some good ideas to share as an employer. She also said that we are looking for our membership to cover all geographic areas in our region.

Barbara Richards, DYS, talked about youth from her program who have been hired after completing their program at the hospital for full time jobs with benefits.

II. Approval of Minutes

Cal Williams then called for a motion on the minutes of the March 17, 2009 Youth Council meeting.

Motion by Megan Shea seconded by Brad Howell to approve the minutes of the March 17, 2009 Youth Council meeting as submitted. Motion passed.

III. American Recovery & Reinvestment Act (ARRA)

Cal Williams said that MVWIB Chairman Joseph Bevilacqua gave an overview of the recent NAWB conference and the stimulus package at the last meeting. He said that we need to put forth a good effort on spending the \$1.3M slated for the Merrimack Valley as part of the youth initiative in the ARRA.

Deborah Andrews explained that Sam Martin is here to conduct a training session after the business meeting, as Commonwealth Corporation oversees the WIA Title I program.

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and 2009 Summer Jobs for Youth:

The ARRA federal youth funds require that we dispense 60% this summer and she said that, if we spend 100%, that would be ok. YouthWorks is the state summer program which has been funded through Commonwealth Corporation and served Lawrence/Haverhill neediest youth with 10% going to the other communities. Typically we have served 200 youth. We will still have the same YouthWorks money this year, but we will have additional federal stimulus funding to serve the whole valley, with the caveat being income eligibility. We expect that 800 – 1000 youth will be served through our programs this summer.

Deborah explained that a private company or a community youth serving agency could hire a 14-24 year old who would earn \$8 per hour working 20-30 hours per week with payment processed through the City of Lawrence Division of Grants Administration. This would put money in the youth's pockets and could open the door for hiring youth when the summer is over.

Under WIA regulations there are many 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 replace someone who has been laid off and cannot work in casinos, aquariums, pools, zoos and golf courses. The positions will run for seven weeks, beginning July 6, 2009.

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. Deborah talked about a woman from a local entity who has requested up to 10 summer youth who will learn how to archive collections at a local cultural organization. This is a skill that can be used long after the summer program has finished.

Next week we are convening a meeting with Merrimack Valley municipal and school administrators to explain the program and ask for participation. On Thursday, April 16th there will be an employers meeting at ValleyWorks Career Center in Lawrence from 7:45 – 9:00 a.m. and on Friday, April 17th at Arwood Machine in Newburyport from 7:45 – 9:00 a.m. Deborah also talked about the brochure that was distributed to members and the fact that she will be on the radio and at rotary meetings to spread the word. We need 800 – 1,000 youth and employers quickly.

Lisa Coy from ValleyWorks said that she has put together two applications: one for the YouthWorks funds and the other for the stimulus. She spoke about barriers such as a disability, ex offender and teen parent which could be qualifying criteria. She also said that she has a large list of social service agencies she is going to mail to as well as conduct meetings in the area schools at lunch time. There was a discussion on barriers for youth when meeting at lunch time and it was suggested that a check list be circulated to alleviate asking for confidential information in front of peers.

Steven Noroian asked about a brochure for employers and Deborah said that the brochure handed out today would be circulated.

Lisa Coy also said that the older youth can extend their work time till the end of September if available.

Brad Howell asked if an older worker is connected to MRC, MCB or DMR are they precluded from applying if they are receiving services from a state agency. Discussion followed on whether they may be in need of one on one services and if so whether another agency could pay for the job coach. Lisa suggested that could be put in the response to the RFP and if the support is in the response it may be funded.

IV. Report on Youth Summit

Deborah observed that several members of the Youth Council were present at the recent Youth Summit at Merrimack College. This was convened by Commonwealth Corporation as a joint venture with the North Shore, Greater Lowell, and Merrimack Valley WIBs. Andy Sum from Northeastern did a great power point presentation about youth employment and drop-out information in

our area. Megan Shea and Barbara Richards said that it was an excellent event and Deborah said that the presentation would be on the MVWIB website in the next couple of days.

Out of that event, participants talked about the strengths and needs in the region. It was agreed that folks who serve youth are the strength. The takeaway from the event is that service providers need to communicate better and more often. In the past, the MVHUB was slated to do this with P21 funding, but is not up to date. We need something like a WIKI which is similar to face book or my space and is an interactive website. Deborah said that perhaps this summer we could have our summer youth work on this project.

Tichelle Charles said that in the Virgin Islands they have summer youth clean the roadsides and wondered if we do anything like that. Deborah said that we do have youth who have cleaned parks and other spaces in the past.

Blair Gann from GLEC asked about a summer youth program and if they could seek funding that would result in ServSafe certification. Lisa asked if it were summer school and you could add culinary to the curriculum. Mr. Gann said that they are thinking of doing a farm stand for the summer as their facility is ideally located.

Mike Strem asked if we had run the program before and what were the barriers for employers? Megan said that it may be the youth's first job and having them show up, adapt to the business culture, and find what kind of job they fit in is the task at hand.

Lisa said that they have a lot of energy and often have excellent computer skills. Employers should utilize them for something they have wanted to get done and can't liberate regular employees to do.

Mike Strem said that when the employer meetings are held we should market employer benefits.

Janet Allison said that youth up to 24 years old could be college students and we need to reach out to them. There was discussion on what is considered an out of school youth.

Tishelle asked if they have to be high school graduates and the answer was "no." Latoya asked if they will take pregnant youth and Lisa responded that based on their due date and health they could be accepted.

Megan Shea said that the difficulty is that many youth who are chronically unemployed haven't gotten that first job and need to get over that hump.

Blair Gann said that Greater Lawrence Educational Collaborative would host the next Youth Council meeting in May at their facility in Methuen.

Janet Allison asked about the Merrimack College homelessness white paper, funded through P21. Deborah said that an invitation would be going out for an event at Merrimack College on April 30th from 9:00 – 11:00 a.m. to release the white paper.

VII. Adjournment

Having no further business Christine Bradshaw made a motion to adjourn seconded by Megan Shea. Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Kivell

Mary Kivell
Recorder