

DRAFT Greater New Bedford Workforce Investment Board, Inc. DRAFT
Quarterly Meeting Minutes
12/16/2009
Waterfront Grille

Members Present: David DeJesus, **Chair**; Thomas G. Davis, Edward J. Dennehy, John Fernandes, David J. Ferreira, Dennis D. Galvam, Mary Harrington, Nelson Hockert-Lotz, David R. Maher, Richard F. Mello, Bruce Morell, Peter Muise, Joan Ann Niles, Joseph Notini, Alice Oliveira, Christopher J. O'Neil, Maria O. Pinarreta, Ronald F. Rheume, Ronald L. Rouillard, Michael R. Shea, James F. Snow, Louis St. John, Jeffrey Travers, Lawrence J. Weldon, Corinn Williams

Members Absent: James Butler, David Cabral (sent written proxy to Chair); Richard Colon (called); Paul Correia (sent written proxy to Chair); Charles DiPirro, Fernando Garcia, Lisa A. Jochim (called), Lisa M. Lemieux (called), Dr. Jean F. MacCormack (gave proxy vote to Lee Blake); Dennis Maltais (called), Helena S. Marques, Roy Nascimento, Anthony R. Sapienza, Dr. John J. Sbrega (called), Charles R. Simpson (called), Charles N. Sisson (excused), Brad A. Truini, Dean Robert V. Ward, Jr.

WIB Staff Present: Craig Baker, Chief Operating Officer; Len Coriaty, Executive Director/CEO; Jean C. Fox, Youth Council Director, Steven Grant, Chief Financial Officer; Carlene LeBlanc, Accounting Manager/Human Resource Coordinator; Annie Massicotte, Business Office Manager

Workforce System Staff Present: Rita Guidotti, GNB Career Center; Diann Haynes, NDSI; Deb Marcondes, NDSI; Tim Nelson, Wareham Career Center

Guests: Erik Andrade, YouthBuild NB – Member; Norm Audette, Aide to Mayor Lang; Lee Blake, UMass Dartmouth; Rick Bowie, MassMEP; Beth Costa, DCS; Nelson Gonzales, Jr., YouthBuild NB – Member; Lynne LaBerge, New Bedford High School; Edward Lambert, Jr., UMD Urban Initiative; Patricia McPartland, Upper Cape Tec Program; Lisa Marie Mello-Frost, Training Resources of America – South Shore; Dianne Rivet, GNB Youth Council Clerk; Chris Shannon, BCC – Youth Council Member; Barbara M. Sullivan, Boys and Girls Club of New Bedford; Jill Ussach, P.A.C.E. (Mission Story presenter); Paul Vigeant, UMD SouthCoast Development Partnership; John Whalen, DCS; Gloria Williams, YouthBuild NB

Greeting and Call To Order

Chair DeJesus called the meeting to order at 3:35 p.m. He announced 3 proxies. Chancellor MacCormack gave her proxy vote to Lee Blake; David Cabral and Paul Correia both sent their written proxy to Chair DeJesus. He went on to announce there were no new Board appointments or resignations since the last 9/30/09 WIB quarterly meeting.

The Chair congratulated Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational Technical High School Superintendent/Director Michael R. Shea on the school's 10-year New England Association of Schools and Colleges accreditation.

Chair DeJesus then alerted Board members to a new link on the WIB's website homepage, entitled USA Learns. A site for online adult learners was requested by Mayor Lang. Bridget Alexander located the resource and had it posted to the WIB website – that address is www.USALearns.org.

He also noted that Issue 11 of the WIB eNewsletter was released on 12/15/09. If you did not receive a copy in your email, be sure to go to the WIB website at www.gnbwib.org/eNewsletter.html and sign up to receive the next issue, or call Annie Massicotte at 508-979-1504 ext. 10.

The Chair noted that there was a holiday gift for everyone, and a holiday reception will follow today's meeting. He also noted that the next quarterly meeting will be on March 17, 2010 at Lockheed Martin Sippican, Inc. in Marion.

The Barnes & Noble fundraiser to benefit the Early Literacy Consortium is underway, and all members are encouraged to attend. The kick-off ends at 8:00 p.m. this evening, but the certificate needed to ensure credit to the Early Literacy Consortium is valid until Tuesday, Dec. 22nd.

On Monday, January 18th, Gifts to Give will sponsor the Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service.

Consent Agenda:

Upon a motion by Mr. David J. Ferreira and seconded by Ms. Maria O. Pinarreta, the minutes of the 09/30/09 WIB quarterly meeting, as well as the WIB's Treasurer's Report through 10/31/09 were unanimously approved.

Mission Story:

Craig Baker introduced Jill Ussach, Housing Director for PACE. Ms. Ussach shared her Career Center experience and how that experience helped guide and direct her job search. She noted that she had 25 years of banking experience before retiring. Her husband's illness necessitated she return to work. Just before Thanksgiving 2008, her employer, the Standard-Times, let her go. The search for a new position was challenging, but the Career Center has tools for everyone looking for work. She asked Board members to encourage use of the Career Centers. She also supported the work of the WIB and its mission to raise the educational and employment levels of the community.

Service Provider:

Gloria Williams of YouthBuild New Bedford briefly spoke of YouthBuild efforts around the country, noting that there are 225 YouthBuild organizations throughout United States working with youth 16-24 years of age. The YouthBuild philosophy requires that the youth commit to a personal transformation. At the local level, Ms. Williams discussed the organization's many efforts with "school leavers" and its success over the summer to build awareness of the contributions young people can make when provided with the appropriate structure and support. There were 61 youth participating last summer. It was the first time most of them received consecutive paychecks, which was a significant motivator.

YouthBuild New Bedford boasts green projects, including weatherization, retrofitting, energy audits, and more. The youth become eligible for educational awards that permit them to attend Bristol Community College. During the summer, the youth braved the heat and transformed Veterans Memorial Park (Buttonwood Park). Their efforts were observed by Senator Mark Montigny's mother. The Senator personally presented citations to the youth. In addition, Mayor Scott Lang joined the youth as they were planting trees in the city and agreed to prepare letters of recommendation for any youth requesting one.

Ms. Williams reminded the business community that they will experience some attrition and turnover in the coming years. Today's 18-24 year olds are tomorrow's employees. Their education and training are essential to economic growth and development. Yet many are denied economic opportunity and become part of the underground economy as well as public safety issues.

She then presented a YouthBuild "rising star" member, Nelson Gonzalez, who spoke of his experience with the organization. Nelson was a dropout with no direction who ultimately decided to sign up for the YouthBuild Summer of Work. For the first time, he felt motivated and ready to work. He stated that he has learned so much about the planet and about himself. YouthBuild "helps kids like me get on track before the streets get them."

Committee Reports:

Executive Committee: Chair DeJesus noted that the WIB committees continue to use the scorecards to ensure consistent reporting. He then reviewed some of the Executive Committee scorecard items. "Board Membership" remains a challenge. Meeting the 51% employer threshold is difficult. Referrals from members are welcome. In connection with "Legislative Affairs," the Chair informed the meeting that he and Mr. Coriary are meeting with the Mayor on a monthly basis. Most recently, the Learn at Work grant application was discussed, as was the Career Center Charter, and the eNewsletter. The eNewsletter's detailed reporting of the \$2.9 million in local workforce development stimulus spending was also discussed with the Mayor.

Finance and Performance Measurement: Peter Muise praised the knowledge and dedication of Craig Baker and Steve Grant, with whom his committee is greatly involved. Regarding his committee's scorecard, Mr. Muise noted that a subcommittee is conducting the "Charter Rewrite," which will likely be completed by the end of January. The "High Performing Board" application for certification is underway as well. The WIB applied earlier and did not meet the criteria completely. Subsequently, the WIB's focus shifted to the intense needs of the growing unemployed population in the area and to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). The revised application is expected to be completed by the end of January. "In addition to \$100K in state incentives, high performing board status opens other doors." Finally, he reported that about \$43K in Wagner Peyser carry in was firmed up last week.

Business Development Committee: Chair O'Neil stated that Bridget Alexander was not at today's meeting because she is at the book fair, and he encouraged members to stop in and support the effort. He then reported that the committee has been moving forward on the website project. Medium Studios was selected to draft three logos and develop a new website. Mr. O'Neil also mentioned the return of the eNewsletter. He further noted that the committee is developing a marketing report that will underscore successes over time. He stressed that there has been good media coverage of late, and that this exposure is reflected in the report. Mr. O'Neil praised the hard work of Bridget and Sean, and he noted that resource development is an ongoing focus of the committee and staff.

Youth Council: Mr. Fernandes reminded the meeting that almost 800 youth were in summer programming and jobs this past summer, with 430 of those youth attributable to ARRA funding. He then noted that Connecting Activities funding remains a priority focus of the Youth Council. A demonstration of the Work-Based Learning Plan will be presented next Monday to the Youth Council Executive Committee. He further noted that the plan will be a requirement for all youth programs going forward, as required by the state and the federal government. Mr. Fernandes also reported that a working group is reviewing the framework contract, which is up for renewal. In addition, the Youth Council Director will be organizing some WIA 101 sessions for employers. The sessions will provide information about WIA eligibility as well as guidance on working with at-risk youth. The Youth Council had also suggested conducting similar information sessions at the schools to advise the youth of the benefits of WIA programming as well as the need to obtain and submit extensive documentation. Mr. Fernandes then stated that the employer survey is currently circulating in the region. The survey will help staff ascertain the kinds of information and support employers will require when working with at-risk youth, as well as define the level of interest among employers.

Mr. Fernandes briefly noted the recent report from the Massachusetts Graduation and Dropout Prevention and Recovery Commission Report, which stemmed from legislation submitted by many of the area representatives and supported by the WIB and the SouthCoast Education Compact.

Chris Shannon, Youth Council member and participant in the state WIB Youth Task Force, briefly outlined the taskforce recommendations to Governor Patrick, which were revealed this week.

Investing in Innovation (i3)

Paul Vigeant of the Southcoast Development Partnership, accompanied by Edward Lambert of the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth Urban Initiative, shared a letter requesting WIB support for a grant application the SouthCoast Development Partnership and the University intend to pursue along with 5 area schools in response to a \$30 million federal stimulus opportunity. He told the meeting that the region's low educational attainment levels hinder economic development, as companies looking to locate in the region increasingly consider the capability of the local workforce. Ed Lambert's study last year revealed that this is a community issue. This grant opportunity allows for a number of stakeholders to address the issue.

An effort to "learn our way out of poverty" has been explored with the Alexandria, VA-based Remediation and Training Institute, which has developed a technology-based learning and capacity-building tool for schools and community organizations. He further noted that 100 hours of "extra learning" each year elevates those who are underperforming academically to a level on a par with the achievers. This "extralearning" technology tool will provide an opportunity for the challenged students to improve academic performance. They can log on during an after school program, at the Boys and Girls Club, at the library, or other venues. They have the opportunity to earn incentive dollars for their "extralearning." The IRS has approved the use of those funds for the purchase of a home or college coursework only. Mr. Vigeant emphasized that the grant is not a silver bullet, but it has great potential. The WIB is not the applicant on the grant, but its participation and support is appreciated. He is available to answer any questions.

Old / New Business:

Mr. Coriaty noted that the Workforce Board Association is beginning to plan for a legislative hearing to be held on January 13, 2010 for House 3696 – the Youth Solutions Act. The purpose of the Act is to establish within workforce development a Youth Development approach. The approach would align and coordinate existing programs and add some new initiatives. Dropouts and those not working are the target populations. Senator McGee, Representative Koczera, Senator Pacheco and others have been ardent supports of the legislation. Mr. Coriaty noted that the Youth Council will be informed. He will forward additional information as it becomes available.

Adjournment:

There being no further business before the Board, and upon a motion made by Mary Harrington and seconded by Tom Davis, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard F. Mello
Clerk