

Greater New Bedford Workforce Investment Board, Inc.
Finance and Performance Measurement Committee
04/15/09
Fairhaven Homecare Conference Room

Finance and Performance Measurement Committee members present: Vice Chair Roger Masson, Edward J. Dennehy, Peter J. Muise, Charles R. Simpson, Jr.

Finance and Performance Measurement Committee members absent: Chair Bruce Morell (called), James C. Nichols, John Fernandes (called). Joe Notini, Maria Pinarreta, WIB Chair Dave DeJesus (called)

Others in attendance: Len Coriaty, Craig Baker, Steven Grant, Richard Mello, Norm Audette, Jean Fox, Bridget Alexander

Vice Chair Roger Masson began the meeting at 3:07 pm. He noted he had proxy votes, if needed, from Bruce Morell and Dave DeJesus

Consent Agenda:

A motion to approve the 1/28/09 **meeting minutes** was made by Chuck Simpson and seconded by Peter Muise. All were in favor.

Steve Grant reviewed the treasurer's report with the committee. It was noted that the 3/31/09 cash balance of \$427K was fairly close to the actual Reserve Fund balance of \$481K indicating net forward funding was only about \$54K.

A motion to approve the **Treasurer's report** through 3/31/09 was made by Ed Dennehy and seconded by Chuck Simpson. All were in favor.

Finance Report

Steve Grant reported on variances to date. The NDSC contract showed some significant favorable spending variances to date while WIB expenses were slightly favorable overall as well. ITA training lag was mainly due to timing of training starts and although Adult and Out of School Youth ITA are well behind pace, the Dislocated Worker pot is very close to the limit. We will continue to shift expenses when possible to accommodate more Dislocated Worker ITAs. He noted that projected spending show we will be well over minimum required spending but there will be significant carry-out for Adult and Youth funds.

Len Coriaty spoke to the decision by the Mayor to suspend further expenditures under the WIB Liaison grant in favor of paying \$19K for an Old Bedford Village debt to the Institute for Environmental Education (IEE). A favorable agreement was reached with IEE whereby all former participants would be given their certificates that were held back due to nonpayment by OBV and offered recertification courses at significantly discounted rates. Also, future participants from our region will be offered recertification courses at discounted rates.

Roger Masson expressed concern over using this money to pay someone else's debt and questioned what changed since six months ago when the position was so important. Len reported it is a permissible use of the funding and the Mayor plans to request another grant from the Secretary.

Chuck Simpson said the Mayor saw that the participants and the vendor were being held hostage and he thought that the deal fell within the mission of the funding since the training will close the skills gap in the area. Chuck said that any future funding for the liaison position should be identified by the Mayor in advance of any further paid employment.

Operations Report

Ed Dennehy – UI claimants still at about 500 /week, although only about 200 are new claims. The number of regular customers using the Career Center (non UI) so far this FY is 9576 through March 2009 with over 35,000 visits. This is on track for 13,000 by the end of the FY, a 15% increase over last year. This does not count most of those coming to the CC to file for Unemployment. He said the CC is continuing outreach to employers with about 100 calls per month, resulting in an average of 15 new job orders received. He said the Brownfield's grant was delayed to 7/1. The Pathways Out of Poverty grant was not awarded to our region.

Chuck Simpson asked if we knew why we did not get it. Bridget said she has a meeting scheduled for April 28th to get feedback on our application. Ed said New Directions was just awarded a grant from the Amelia Peabody foundation. It is \$19,500 to use for job readiness training and 12 summer jobs. Peter Muise said there would soon be a new wave of municipal layoffs and asked Ed if we are ready for that. Ed said we know it is coming and are prepared to work with Rapid Response.

Operations Review

Craig spoke about review of 22 tasks. He said 60 – 75% of the tasks would be completed in the next 30 days. He said the completion of these tasks is integral to our planning. He said our update is ready for the Mayor and the next update is scheduled for May 20th. Peter asked about plans for follow-up with the Mayor. He said there were items that required the Mayor's advocacy or involvement. Len said he would touch base with the Chair and arrange to follow-up with Mayor Lang.

AARA Funding

Craig – Still no state guidance. We believe the May 1st deadline for plans has been pushed back to May 15th but there has been no official word. He said we are moving ahead with the plan and have the ability to put things in or pull something out. He said the next Regional Implementation Team meeting is Thursday AM (4/16) and the Community Forum would be held Thursday evening, and we would move forward with plans based on any new input.

Craig said a meeting with Town officials and School Superintendents is scheduled for 4/29 for economic stimulus planning. Len said tentative plans are for it to be held in Acushnet.

Craig said DOL Technical Assistance site has a list of 63 questions that the states will be asked to address in their planning, and he has built those 63 questions into our plan. Len noted that GAO has selected Massachusetts as a state they have chosen to monitor for economic stimulus planning and implementation.

Craig noted that the Stimulus Youth budget provides for \$970k in youth wages and fringe, and there is an aggressive outreach for job sites. Ed asked if WIB members have been asked to hire youth. Roger asked about liability insurance and Ed said that youth on job sites would be on New Directions' payroll and covered for Workers' Comp. Jean Fox reminded all that we could place youth up to 24 years old under Stimulus funding. Peter noted that these jobs are not to replace layoffs. Roger asked about CORI, or Drug Test. Jean said they are not required but if it is an employer's policy, they can request that of New Directions.

Craig said we have currently planned a large ABE/ESOL allocation based on RIT input, and also plan to focus on Weatherization/Construction training at this time. ITA training is also part of the plan. Craig and Ed noted the issue of space requirement and that two portable trailers are a potential solution included in the current plan at a cost of \$100K to buy. He said the hope is to have them in the ferry lot next to the CC. Roger commented that if you buy them you are stuck with them. It was decided to explore alternative sites as well as leasing the trailers.

Craig talked about staffing additions for Career Center. Roger asked, "can you keep them after stim \$". Chuck said he would conclude that some of these dollars are not for stimulus if used for staff. Len reported on a recent staff discussion that indicated things that need to be done are not getting done or are being pushed way out. Staff is past capacity and burn-out is an issue. Chuck said he did not care what the salary was but based on the level of scrutiny the stimulus funding is producing in the banking industry we better be prepared to justify all positions. He said we will have to be in a defensive position. That justification is being developed.

MOTION

Mr. Simpson made a motion to approve the staffing proposal as is, provided each position is justified to create new stimulus and is not used to alleviate or spread out existing activities. Peter Muise seconded and it passed unanimously.

Peter Muise noted the Mike Longo position in the planning information. Steve said it was there as a placeholder right now but not likely to be justified under Stimulus. Peter said he did not support Longo position being paid with stimulus funds. Len spoke about the state contract for Longo's position and said the Mayor plans to secure another grant from the State. Peter said he's okay with the need but not from Stimulus. The full committee agreed.

Craig described new WIB staff additions proposed, noting the need to focus on business and Youth. He noted that one position would evolve into a Communications role and continue to develop public involvement. Chuck reiterated the need for justification. Craig said the next page being developed for the plan deals with justification.

Norm Audette asked what is the RIT's role? Len responded advisory and planning support for economic stimulus. Norm said he believes the Mayor sees it as oversight. Committee members expressed displeasure at that notion. Len pointed out that all prior communications indicated the RIT was planning support. Peter asked Len to obtain clarification from the Mayor quickly.

Roger noted the time and asked to move any other discussion on the agenda to the ExCom since all members were remaining. Chuck made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Peter; all approved.

Meeting adjourned at 4:35 PM.

**Next meeting: May – TBD
Fairhaven Home Care Conference Room
(Southcoast Hospitals Group) in Fairhaven**

Respectfully submitted,

Steve Grant
Chief Financial Officer