

Greater New Bedford Workforce Investment Board, Inc.
Business Development Committee
Meeting Minutes
05/11/09
GNB WIB Office - Conference Room 207

Meeting Minutes

Committee members in attendance: Christopher J. O'Neil, Chair; Lisa M. Lemieux, Roy Nascimento, Michael R. Shea, Paul Correia, Dennis Galvam, Michelle Hantman, Jeffrey F. Travers

Committee members absent: James Butler, Thomas G. Davis, Charles N. Sisson, David Cabral, Andrew T. Guilbeault, Derek Santos

Board Members in Attendance: Ed Dennehy

Workforce Development System staff attending: Len Coriaty, Bridget Alexander

Meeting called to order 8:35AM

Consent Agenda:

April Business Development Committee Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve by Lisa Lemieux

Seconded by Michael Shea

Approved unanimously

Len Coriaty commented on the April meeting minutes in that there is a distinction between services through WIB and Career Centers. When talking about WIB services we are really talking about what happens through the Career Centers. The WIB is a role in a system. Lisa L. pointed out that Len's comment supports the proposed staff positions at last month's meeting.

Opening Comments:

Chris O'Neil had some opening comments for the committee. Chris stated the need to represent the towns better in order to cast the net wider than we apparently have in the past. Chris reported out that WIB did get invites out to all the towns to present ARRA plans and the meeting was held at the Mattapoisett public library. This meeting was definitely a positive event and was an example of successful outreach. Also, those attending said this was the first they'd heard about ARRA plans from anyone.

Chris then raised the issue of the marketing/branding/website project this committee and marketing working group have been meeting on. Chris reported out on the working group, which met once (May 7th) since the last meeting. At that meeting the working group came to an agreement that a logo change for the WIB and Career Centers is a good idea and we want to send it through the committee and receive support through the Executive Committee.

Chris stated some concerns he has with the branding project. He stated that with any marketing/branding/website changes there is the need to have those changes be effective over a long period of time. What he's seen from the outside in is a lack of clarity as to who (WIB or Career Center) does what and where the relationships are. How it works and who to contact needs to be clearer for businesses and jobseeker clients. We want to make sure that an investment in marketing/branding/website isn't wasted. More specifically, one of the issues that comes to mind, is if there is a change in the lead operator, we will not want to redo all the

branding and marketing materials and change the website. Therefore, having the lead operator's name/logo on materials would set us up for future expense, not to mention, add to existing confusion.

Chris then explained that he and Len Coriaty spoke over the weekend and discussed the fact that the WIB may not always be a WIB (use to be REB), and therefore, maybe the WIB is in the same position as the Career Center lead operator in that the WIB may not always be the WIB, necessarily. However, the one static element in the workforce development system is the Career Center(s). The conclusion reached from the discussion between Chris in Len was to put the Career Center out in front, opposed to the lead operator of the Career Center or the WIB.

Len then praised the committee for taking up this issue, with the goal being improvement of service delivery. Len posed the question: "How do we simplify the workforce delivery system so they know what the system is and how it works and how they can take advantage of it?" The other question to ask when going through projects like this one is "what is the value add of the WIB?" We make services better – conduct strategic planning – appropriate funds – provide oversight on the system. How effective is our system and how do we make it better?

Chris then stated that we need to take the time necessary to make sure these decisions are vetted properly - focus needs to come down to services – we need to pull away from lead operator *and* the WIB – we need to update the website and utilize social networking sites – we need to create a more positive atmosphere between the WIB and New Directions going forward – we need to decide where we are going to concentrate the message – we are way too tied to the current lead operator – if New Directions goes away and we have a new lead operator the website for the Career Centers goes away – and so would the Career Center identity.

Discussion:

Michael Shea stated that if you would have told him a year ago what the state was going to do with this funding he wouldn't have guessed we'd be where we are now. The point being that it is hard to predict the future. Michael stated the importance of striking while the iron is hot. It is hard to come up with a scenario that may last for 5 years, so, lets keep moving forward. Michael stated that a month to review the plan would be fine but cautioned waiting too long. "Don't worry about 5 years from now, because things might change in four years, but right now the investment in marketing/branding/website would not be wasted."

Ed Dennehy then wanted to address the discussion around the lead operator being changed. He stated that the comments make him wonder if the lead operator isn't doing a good job. Ed stated that, frankly, he doesn't feel there will be a new operator and that they, New Directions, do a good job.

Len responded that he couldn't agree with Ed more and that New Directions is doing an excellent job. Over the past four years New Directions has met or exceeded all 17 measures – this has evolved – it wasn't always this good – it's great and it getting better – now we are only talking about the role and functions of the Career Centers. The Mayor has indicated that certain programs are requiring more, hence, the need for the operations review. We need to do a better job, we need to do more, and the bar has been raised. The WIB has a responsibility, in partnership with the Mayor, to consider who will be the best to run the Career Centers and to simply accept the possibility of change.

Comments were made on price of marketing/branding/website bid prices. Chris stated pricing needs to be further vetted. Three bids were received, with two to be presented and further reviewed. Paul Correia and Dennis Galvam provided two additional vendors to seek bids from.

Chris reinforced that the logo/marketing/website project is a huge opportunity to give workforce development in this area a new face and give it a more positive message. This is also an opportunity for a more coordinated effort with the lead operator and the WIB to provide better services to the employer and employee customers. We need one focused place. Right now, if you Google Greater New Bedford Career Center you are taken to the New Directions website. This goes back to the one issue already stated: if the lead operator isn't New Directions there is no Career Center website. We need "one page" we can all get on. Chris asked, are we in agreement that we should have one place [website]? Chris stated we should have a new message – one message. Chris asked Ed is he agreed with one website and one message and we can have the Career Centers be on the one site.

Ed stated that New Directions just spent \$5-6k on the their website so that when customers, etc., type in the Career Center urls people are routed to the New Directions website. However, Ed stated, it's not that big of a deal to change the url.

Chris stated the WIB needs to have a connection to the website too. Also, on the WIB's current website we need to tuck away some of the internal board directed stuff. Len stated that the WIB's website was primarily for the WIB members. Typically the WIB is the "what" and the Career Center is the "how," supporting each other.

Chris stated that part of the "how" is who (WIB/lead operator) is going to run the website and working together (WIB and lead operator) to put the website together.

Len stated that the Career Center needs to inform the WIB what the system need to be the best/better.

Next steps are issue identification and going more in depth on vendors and proposals. The vote on vendor proposals (not presented) will be tabled until further notice.

New Business:

Len presented the Labor Needs Template. Senior management have been developing the template. They have shared it with Tom Davis, Matt Morrissey and the City. Craig and Ed have been working on what happens when work orders are received via the template. Eleven requests were received over the weekend from Matt Morrissey/New Bedford Economic Development Counsel. A copy will be e-mailed to members.

Since last meeting the new WIB positions voted on changed slightly. Now, there will be a youth/communications coordinator and a green/business development coordinator. A vote was taken to endorse these positions.

Michael Shea made a motion, Roy Nascimento seconded the motion. Unanimously in favor.

Motion to adjourn by Lisa Lemieux, seconded by Michael Shea.

Adjourned at 9:40 AM.