

Greater New Bedford Workforce Investment Board, Inc.
Executive Committee Meeting Minutes
05/14/09
Southcoast Hospitals Group – Fairhaven

Members present: Chair, David DeJesus, Jr.; Vice Chair, Maria O. Pinarreta; Bruce Morell; Peter J. Muise; Richard F. Mello; John Fernandes (by proxy); David J. Ferreira; Ronald F. Rheame

Members absent: Roger W. Masson (called), Christopher J. O’Neil (called), Charles R. Simpson, Jr. (called)

Other WIB Members in attendance: Joseph Notini

Workforce Development System Staff in attendance: Len Coriaty, Edward Dennehy, Jean Fox, Steve Grant, Bridget Alexander, Craig Baker

Chair DeJesus called the meeting to order at 4:48 p.m.

Consent Agenda:

A **motion** was made by David Ferreira and seconded by Richard Mello to approve the draft minutes of the 4/15/09 Executive Committee meeting. The vote to approve was unanimous and carried.

Reports:

Executive Committee – Review of Draft American Recovery and Reinvestment (ARRA) Plan

Chair DeJesus stated that the draft plan had just been discussed in detail and asked if there were additional questions on the plan.

Dave Ferreira posed a question regarding the \$50k budget for additional space, asking for more detail.

Ed Dennehy responded that the additional space would be used to administer Career Center services. He has identified space in the City and a trailer option, which would reside in the Career Center parking lot. In short, Mr. Dennehy stated that he is still in the midst of giving the research of the project his due diligence.

Mr. Ferreira asked if this space is for training. Mr. Dennehy responded that the space is merely additional space that is not connected to any particular training program.

Mr. Ferreira then asked a question regarding staffing as it pertained to the draft plan. He asked how long the positions would last, taking into consideration that stimulus funding is short term.

Craig Baker responded that the positions were contract positions and new employees would be hired knowing the positions were short term.

Ron Rheame asked that “short term” be defined. The consensus in the room was one year.

A **motion** was made by Peter Muise and seconded by Maria Pinarreta to accept the draft ARRA Plan. The vote to approve was unanimous.

Finance & Performance Measurement Committee

Peter Muise reported out that at the Finance and Performance Measurement Committee meeting they reviewed the draft ARRA Plan (and the finances that go behind that) in quite a bit of detail. They also reviewed the numbers Steve Grant put together as of today. Mr. Muise described the budget as a “moving target,” and went on to state that despite that status “we are where we need to be.” Mr. Muise also noted the committee passed a motion in support of the six Youth Council programs (recommended by the Youth Council at its last meeting). Also noted, was the ability to have those programs fit within the available funds.

Business Development Committee

Chair DeJesus asked for a description of the two new WIB positions proposed in the draft ARRA Plan. Len Coriaty responded by referring to documents that laid out support for the positions. Mr. Coriaty went on to refer to April’s Executive Committee meeting where the staff positions were first proposed, and the request from the Committee was to receive further support to show the positions are specifically linked to “stimulus” funds.

Mr. Coriaty explained that WIB staff had identified four areas of need (youth, communications, green jobs, and business services), but have combined those four areas into two positions. Referring again to the supporting documents, where six questions are answered addressing why the positions are needed and why they were requested. Mr. Coriaty explained that the “long and short” is these are current and emerging responsibilities and requirements. Mr. Coriaty also noted that he has director level staff at the WIB office working on things that are more appropriate for a coordinator level. With this new layer of support the office would perform at a higher level.

Mr. Muise reiterated Mr. Ferreira’s question regarding the new hires coming on as contract positions. Mr. Baker responded, stating he wanted to add to his previous response by noting that if the WIB did well with its stimulus dollars there was the potential of receiving additional stimulus funds, which would allow the WIB to extend the employment contracts.

Youth Council Report

Jean Fox reported six vendors submitted proposals; 3 for In-School, and 3 for Out-of-School Funding. Five of the 6 applicants were repeat programs. If these programs are level funded at the requested \$560k, there will be additional funding negotiations that need to take place. The Youth Council requested that CFO Steve Grant and the Youth Council Director negotiate with all six vendors. There were some significant funding discrepancies noted by the Youth Council relative to the In-School proposals, which need to be more clearly defined. The Youth Council further requested a cap of \$2,200 per participant for Out-of-School programs and voted to begin negotiations with the vendors.

A **motion** was made by David Ferreira and seconded by Dave DeJesus to accept the recommendation from the Youth Council. The vote to approve was unanimous and carried.

Ms. Fox updated the committee on the previous day’s Youth Council meeting. The Youth Council Chair had requested that a committee be convened to address the new issues and questions related to stimulus and budget cuts. Additionally, Ms. Fox stated that there is a significant need for Youth Council members to participate in reading and evaluating the Youth Summer Jobs Program Proposals and the responses from the Request for Responses (RFRs). Ms. Fox put out the call for volunteers – pointing out that the review process is straight forward with no requirement for

extensive training. Reviewers would only be looking to make sure the job readiness component was met, as opposed to the formula requirements.

Chair DeJesus asked why the rotation system wasn't working. Mr. Coriaty responded that there has been an intensification of what needs to be reviewed with the stimulus funds dramatically increasing the Youth Summer Jobs Program. Ms. Fox added that the previous review system involved mandatory training that was difficult for readers to attend and the training itself was overwhelming. Ms. Fox stated the need to tweak the training, make it more user-friendly and not so intimidating.

Discussion

Chair DeJesus and Mr. Coriaty talked about developing a scorecard for the Executive Committee. The scorecard will be a short list of what the Executive committee expects to hear report outs on, from each of the standing committee Chairs. This system will keep the committees on track.

Chair DeJesus asked if the Board was on target to be at 45 Board members by July. Mr. Coriaty responded in the positive and noted that the WIB has the support of the Mayor on this matter.

Chair DeJesus pointed out that the election for new officers will take place at the annual meeting taking place June 17th.

Mr. Coriaty then presented on the Labor Needs Template, noting he had circulated a Draft at the last Executive Committee meeting. The goal of the Template is to get as much advanced notice as possible on labor needs, especially when group training would be necessary to meet the need. The WIB has received some information from the Mayor's office on upcoming projects in the city and it triggered discussions on workforce needs for these projects. There has been an initial meeting between Ed Dennehy and Craig Baker. Tom Davis reviewed the Template and liked what he saw – the simplicity of it, and asked for a cover letter to send around to his tenants at the New Bedford Business Park.

When a request for labor comes into the Career Center we are looking to see if the people the request is looking for exist in the labor pool or if the request triggers a training program that might be in place at Bristol Community College or at a vocational technical high school, or if a training program needs to be developed.

Chair DeJesus asked if there will be information reported out to the Executive Committee – not just the requests but the outcomes of the requests. Mr. Coriaty responded that he envisioned turning the tool (labor needs form) over to the Business Development Committee under its Chair, Chris O'Neil, and staff person, Bridget Alexander.

Mr. Muise made note that Mr. Coriaty had mentioned Tom Davis and the New Bedford Business Park and as we move east we will need to share this with the other economic development entities, such as Wareham Crossing.

Chair DeJesus further commented on the Template to say that it is a real homerun in closing the loop and it is in line with what the Mayor is looking for. He went on to suggest the Template be turned over to the Career Center to report outcomes and that the Business Development Committee maintain the business outreach function.

Mr. Coriaty then informed the group of the upcoming EPA meeting scheduled for Tuesday, June 2nd regarding the EPA Superfund site in New Bedford and employment issues, opportunities and

expectations. The WIB and EPA may hold a follow up meeting with community groups to inform them about how the system works, training and job opportunities and other expectations.

Mr. Coriaty then began a discussion regarding the state senate's recommended budget cuts. Mr. Coriaty proceeded to go over a list of the major programs cut. Mr. Coriaty then explained the state budget process and the importance of advocacy as demonstrated by the WIB's success in the House. Mr. Coriaty referred the group to a handout regarding The Workforce Solutions Group and stated that "this is our vehicle for coalition advocacy."

Mr. Coriaty then changed gears and went into an update on the WIB's High Performing Board (HPB) status/application.. There might be an opportunity to participate in a modified process to get HPB status this summer. There were six applicants in round two, with one applicant becoming certified, which brings the total to three out of 16 WIBs HPB certified. The state is considering designing a modified application process. This modified process would allow previous applicants the ability to revise their previous application(s) instead of resubmitting the whole application anew. Mr. Coriaty stated that the WIB has not received a call from the state yet, but we hope to be included. The September round is most likely the last opportunity to receive the \$100k in discretionary funds for achieving HPB status.

Mr. Dennehy then put forth a **motion** to put \$22K in WIB funding towards the current ESOL and ABE classes to keep them going through August. The programs are set to run out of funds at the end of June. If the WIB does not continue to fund these programs the students will be "out in the cold." These funds would be a way to bridge these students to another program. The students are mostly Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) clients and they will lose their DTA funds if they are not actively in training. Mr. Coriaty stated his support for the motion with FY '10 funds.

Mr. Muise added to the motion that these programs become a priority over ITAs for July and August and where (budget lines) the funds come from shall be reported back to the Finance and Performance Committee and the Executive Committee.

Ron Rheume seconded the motion. The vote to approve was unanimous and carried.

Meeting was concluded at 6:05 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Bridget Alexander, Esq.