

Youth Council Annual Meeting June 10, 2009

Members Present: Nelson Hockert-Lotz; Dianne Rivet; Kathleen Castro, Jennifer Donovan, Nancy Feeney, Joan Ann Niles, Alice Oliveira, Pamela Pollock, Ronald F. Rheume, Dianne Rivet, Ronald L. Rouillard, Donna Sachs, Emily Saunders, Dr. John Sbrega, Christine Shannon, Cynthia Wallquist, Elaine Wilcox, Gloria Williams

Members Absent: Carl Alves, Richard Colon, Lynn Donohue, Elizabeth Lozano, Walter Jones, Jr., Dr. Jean F. MacCormack, Helena S. Marques, James H. Mathes, Gregg Miliote, Benita Santiago, Emily Saunders, Dr. John J. Sbrega, Barbara Sullivan

Workforce Development Staff Present: Wendy Andrade, Tanya Alves, Craig Baker, Len Coriaty, Edward Dennehy, Jean Fox, Steve Grant

Guests Present: Kristin Almeida, Stephanie Barnes, Peg Curro, Lisa Mello Frost, Jane Jacobsen, Zelia LaGarde,

Welcome and Introductions – Dianne Rivet opened the meeting at 3:30 p.m. and welcomed members and guests. She also announced a proxy submitted by Reverend David Lima.

Approve Minutes from 5.13.09 Quarterly Meeting – Ms. Williams made a motion to approve the meeting minutes, which was seconded by Ms. Pollock. The motion carried unanimously.

Discussion of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Proposals and applications relative to the Request for Responses – Ms. Fox noted the Planning Committee had agreed to move 11 proposals forward to the Youth Council, with some recommendations for funding. She stated that the RFR had generated about 225 job slots, and the proposals could accommodate 400-500 youth. However, the available funding will serve only about 400 youth, according to the latest budget breakdown by the Chief Financial Officer, Steve Grant. It was also noted that the Planning Committee understood the need to negotiate the bidders' numbers down, as there is about \$430,000 available to satisfy \$935,000 in requests. She further noted that the eligibility process is ongoing, with some 270 youth determined eligible thus far, and an additional 900 or so applications still being evaluated.

Mr. Grant shared his most recent breakdown of the proposals going forward, with budgets and enrollments he believes are workable. He noted that all proposals will likely be pared down from current requests of \$750,000 (as a result of preliminary discussions with the larger bidders) to \$430,000 for 414 youth. Mr. Craig Baker added that all the proposal evaluations scored in a very high range, which is why the Planning Committee voted to move them forward. At this point, the exercise is to scale down rather than eliminate.

Mr. Coriaty stated that the responses to the RFP represent 75-80% more dollars than ARRA funding can accommodate. All were deemed fund worthy by the Planning Committee. However, bidders will be asked to determine the extent to which programs can sustain cuts without compromising program integrity. He also noted that the proposals are a good mix of geographical and population diversity.

In response to Mr. Hockert-Lotz's inquiry about the number of job slots solicited through the RFR process that would likely be filled, Mr. Grant stated that 230 jobs could probably be filled. There will be an internal review process, which may whittle out an additional 30 or so. However, with his most recent

funding review, the job slots would be cut to 114. He asked New Directions staff if 114 was a manageable number. Ms. Andrade stated that it would be challenging to match youth with 114 jobs.

Mr. Hockert-Lotz asked if cutting the number of slots was due to the criteria employers placed on youth employees. Ms. Andrade stated that programs are far less difficult to fill because of their greater flexibility. Employers often have requirements that the WIA youth population cannot meet. Mr. Grant added that many proposers included amounts for transportation. Mr. Ed Dennehy reminded the Youth Council that New Directions has funding for bus passes where needed.

Ms. Williams indicated that, only a couple of weeks ago, the Planning Committee was looking at 500+ youth as well as more money for programs. The committee also discussed doing more than creating “make-work” opportunities. The community responded with these proposals, but the latest information is that they will be cut 40-50%.

Mr. Grant explained that the original estimate of 500 youth was based on ARRA’s employment focus. Initially, \$1 million was earmarked strictly for jobs. The remaining funds totaled about \$250,000 for programs, and an RFP was issued. However, the funding requests that came in through the proposal process approximated \$1 million. As a result, the staff has been examining modified hours, weeks, and other parameters in order to accommodate as many youth as possible. Programs are more costly to run per participant.

Ms. Williams then reiterated the concern she raised at the bidders’ conference regarding the process. She had observed that those proposing programs would be impacted by the earlier focus on job slots, since far fewer dollars would be available for program funding. Mr. Dennehy stated that the current effort puts more emphasis on programs. Mr. Coriaty stressed the fact that resources are limited. Quality of services is the most important. The question before the Youth Council now is, “what is the mix of quality programs that are more costly than just the wages associated with employer slots.” Much of the process will be driven by who is determined eligible under WIA.

Ms. Williams observed that \$1.57 million is not a small allocation, and its utilization deserves careful thought. Mr. Coriaty asked Mr. Grant to explain how \$1.57 million is now \$1.25 million. The Youth Council started with \$1.57 million. Mr. Grant stated that \$120K is for administrative costs; there is significant funding allocated to case management and frameworks; there is \$20K for Connecting Activities; and an additional \$22K for outreach provided by YouthBuild. He further clarified that 10% is administrative overhead. Some of that funding went directly to the framework provider. In a typical year round WIA program, far fewer dollars are dedicated to training

Mr. Hockert-Lotz then asked how the 270 youth deemed eligible thus far would be lined up with programs and employers. Mr. Coriaty noted that 70 of the youth will be going into WIA formula programming, The 270 covers ARRA and other opportunities. Mr. Dennehy said that the 270 will increase rapidly and that he anticipates arriving at 500 eligible youth.

Mr. Hockert-Lotz asked Mr. Dennehy what he recommended the Youth Council do at this meeting.

Mr. Dennehy stressed the value of programs and asked that the emphasis be placed there. He stated that he would prefer to fill the programs, and then have the flexibility to fill in the employment slots as needed. In response to a question from Ms. Shannon, Mr. Dennehy noted that many programs would be self referring, which aids in the outreach effort. When Mr. Baker asked what the priority would be if a particular youth were selected for a program placement and a job placement simultaneously, Mr. Dennehy pointed to the educational components of programs as a value-added element of program structure.

However, Mr. Rheaume reminded the Youth Council that jobs have a greater likelihood of resulting in a permanent job placement in the future, and that is what ARRA is supposed to be about. Mr. Baker observed that the organizations provide maximum flexibility for placements. If only a few programs are funded, then placements could be somewhat restricted.

Ms. Sachs then inquired about Work-Based Learning Plans and whether or not any budgetary provision had been made for the increased volume of plans associated with ARRA. Ms. Fox and Mr. Grant both responded in the affirmative, noting that about \$20,000 had been set aside for Connecting Activities for the plans.

Mr. Hockert-Lotz asked if the Council should determine whether or not to fund all the proposals forwarded by the Planning Committee at a reduced amount.

Mr. Grant suggested that the staff review all the proposals, with permission of the Council to exercise some discretion. The review may result in fewer awards if that is the only way to maintain other programs whole.

Mr. Hockert-Lotz then requested clarification on the BCC proposal, asking if all participants must be WIA eligible, and inquiring if it would be possible to fill all the slots. Mr. Dennehy responded in the affirmative to both questions, noting that New Directions is still very busy in the eligibility determination phase.

Ms. Castro asked about the PACE/YouthBuild proposal, noting that the original request exceeded \$400,000 and was down significantly. Mr. Grant informed her and the Council that youth wages were initially included in the request.

Ms. Sachs inquired if the staff felt that any of the programs would be hard to fill. Ms. Andrade stated that no difficulty was expected.

Ms. Shannon asked if New Directions had compiled a Crystal Report on the youth coming through the door, as that would assist in planning for summer placements. Ms. Andrade stated that they had no such report.

Mr. Hockert-Lotz then asked if the discussion concerned cutting slots or cutting per-participant costs, to which Mr. Grant responded, both. Mr. Hockert-Lotz then noted that some programs may have good scores but not be a good match to the youth deemed eligible. The staff needs the power to negotiate to maintain the program integrity, he stated.

Ms. Sachs observed that the Council is not in a position to make the final decision on the programs. Negotiations are usually complete by the time the Council is required to act. Mr. Hockert-Lotz agreed, noting that there is not enough information in front of the Council to act on the programs at this time. He further noted that he would like a staff report on the final determinations.

Ms. Feeney stated that she had read four proposals, and these all represented a diversity of opportunity for kids. Many boast innovative training opportunities and a number of new experiences. She asked that the staff do the best they can to negotiate favorably and keep Wareham in the mix. She further stated that she has faith in the "people that do the work." The timeline is tight, and decisions must be made. She advocated for moving ahead with a recommendation to allow the staff to negotiate the contracts. She also observed that there were many people at the meeting with conflicts of interest.

Mr. Coriaty consolidated the discussion with the following: The Planning Committee read and recommended all 11 proposals. They recommended negotiating all 11. That recommendation proceeded onto the Youth Council today. There is a desire to have staff negotiate with the bidders, keeping in mind program integrity. As a result of negotiations, some programs may have to be eliminated from funding if cuts negatively impact programming. Working with about \$437K, the staff would then go forward with funding. All programs will go on record stating that they can provide a good program, or they will not be considered.

Mr. Hockert-Lotz clarified by stating, "Those [programs] that cannot absorb cuts may drop out; some may not be as good a fit."

Ron Rheame made a motion for the staff to proceed with negotiations, ensuring that the most youth are connected with the most appropriate program or job opportunity. Ms. Feeney seconded the motion, which carried. Abstaining were Ms. Williams, Dr. Sbrega, Ms. Shannon, and Ms. Sachs.

FY 2010 Meeting Schedule

Ms. Fox pointed to a suggested revised schedule of meetings for the upcoming fiscal year, noting that the suggested day of the week is Tuesday, rather than Wednesday, leaving a preferred two-week span between Youth Council and Executive Committee meetings, as requested by Chair Fernandes. By consensus, the Council agreed to the revised schedule.

FY 2010 Slate of Officers

Mr. Hockert-Lotz asked the Council to review the slate before them and asked for any nominations from the floor. Hearing none, Ms. Williams made a motion to close nominations, which was seconded by Ms. Sachs and voted unanimously.

Ms. Sachs then moved the slate, which was seconded by Ron Rouillard and voted unanimously. The officers for FY 2010 are as follows: John Fernandes, Chairman; Ron Rouillard, Vice Chairman; Dianne Rivet, Clerk.

Ms. Fox took a moment to thank Mr. Hockert-Lotz for his service as Vice Chair and for his long-standing willingness to step into the Chairmanship when Mr. Fernandes could not be present. She further noted that Mr. Hockert-Lotz has consistently demonstrated a tireless commitment to the youth of our region and has donated significant time, energy, and resources over the years to further the mission of the Youth Council. Mr. Hockert-Lotz will remain a member of the Youth Council.

Ms. Fox then informed the Youth Council of a BCC event that had taken place earlier in the day during which Plymouth Rock Studios presented information on "Hollywood East" and the job opportunities associated with this development. The Plymouth Superintendent of Schools suggested that the vocational schools consider aligning their curriculum with the projected 2,500 positions and the skill sets necessary to fill those slots locally. A representative from the Department of Apprenticeship Training was also on hand to discuss the requirements of apprenticeships and to emphasize their appropriateness for studio jobs. Both Dr. Sbrega and Ms. Shannon expanded on the details of the event.

Ms. Jacobsen then noted that a semifinalist student of hers just became a finalist in competition and will be going to the next level.

Finally, Ms. Fox reminded the Council that the WIB is seeking alternate locations for Youth Council meetings. Any suggestions would be appreciated. Parking and adequate meeting space are the top

priorities. Ms. Feeney suggested Keith Middle School. Ms. Castro said that she would investigate the possibility.

Respectfully submitted,

Dianne Rivet, Clerk
