

GNB Workforce Investment Board, Inc.
Executive Committee Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, June 11, 2009
4:30 PM
Fairhaven Home Care Conference Room
Southcoast Hospitals Group
Fairhaven, MA

Members Present: David DeJesus, Chair, David Ferreira, Richard F. Mello, Bruce Morell, Christopher J. O'Neil, Charles Simpson, Ron Rheaume

Members Absent: Peter Muise, Maria Pinarreta, John Fernandes

WIB Staff: Len Coriaty, Jean Fox, Steve Grant

New Directions Staff: Ed Dennehy

Guests: Joseph Notini (DCS), Norm Audette (Mayor's Office)

1) Chair's Welcome

Chair DeJesus called the meeting to order.

2) Consent Agenda

The Minutes of the 5/14/09 ExCom meeting and the WIB Treasurer's Report through 5/31/09 were unanimously approved upon a motion made by David Ferreira and seconded by Bruce Morell.

3) REPORTS

Executive Committee

Chair DeJesus stated that the slate for FY '10 Officers has been finalized. He has agreed to stand for Chair for a second year, Maria Pinarreta, Vice Chair; Peter Muise, Treasurer; David Cabral, Assistant Treasurer; and Richard Mello has agreed to stand for Clerk.

Chair DeJesus also announced that he, Mr. Coriaty, and the WIB staff have developed a list of awards for the Annual Meeting, and that list will soon be finalized.

The Chair then discussed the new ExCom "Scorecard." A draft was circulated. He noted that the scorecard is a template for committee reporting and delineates areas of interest to the Executive Committee and Committee Chairs. It provides consistency in monthly reporting and is tied to the Strategic Plan. Chair DeJesus asked the committee chairs and staff to review the scorecard for finalizing at the next meeting.

Mr. Coriaty then referred to the meeting schedule for the upcoming fiscal year. However, because of ARRA and directions from the state, the local business plan and budget will be submitted in the next 6 to 7 weeks and will require approval of the Finance and Performance Measurement and the Executive Committee, as well as the full Board. As a result, it will be necessary to hold a meeting in July.

Mr. Coriaty also reported on a meeting that he and Bridget Alexander recently attended with the president and CEO of Ze-gen, a Boston based waste to energy firm looking to locate in New Bedford. There was a discussion regarding the establishment of a clean energy accelerator park and cluster in New Bedford, which already has a handful of clean energy companies, including Konarka and several others. Ze-gen would like to position itself in that area and power the companies. If this comes to fruition, jobs would be created. The CEO is exploring

financing options and permitting requirements. The WIB will continue working with Ze-gen in partnership with the City and Commonwealth Corporation.

Mr. Coriaty then discussed the recent meeting with EPA regional officials regarding the harbor clean-up. During that well-attended meeting, there was extensive discussion on EPA activities and how workforce development efforts locally can assist. The people at the table were not familiar with the WIB or the Career Center, and they currently have only one opening. However, they use a New York recruiter to fill jobs. In addition, most positions are affiliated with a bargaining unit. Nevertheless, they are interested in hiring locally. Additional discussion ensued regarding emerging green jobs and the types of training and support anticipated. Mr. Coriaty noted that a broader meeting with the community may be in order to explain what can and cannot be done. The EPA Regional Director will get back to us on that point. There may be some required clarification of federal funding and whether or not local ordinances would be superseded in some instances.

Mr. Coriaty also referenced a letter sent jointly from the U.S. Secretaries of Labor and Housing and Urban Development in Washington encouraging partnerships between WIBs and local public housing agencies in stimulus activities. Mr. Coriaty has had a conversation with the Executive Director of the New Bedford Housing Authority and is preparing to set up a meeting. The letter cited some specific programs and addressed training and job opportunities for residents of public housing.

Mr. Coriaty reported that the WIB has been selected as one of three pilot site WIBs in the state for the new Commonwealth Corporation Regional Workforce Strategies Initiative. He explained that CommCorp will work with the WIBs to assist in developing data-driven strategies and plans to address local workforce priorities through technical assistance in strategic planning, mapping resources, analyzing on-going labor market trends, and aligning funding resources.

Finance and Performance Measurement

Mr. Morell noted that no votes were taken during the previous meeting. The Committee was informed about the reduction in state funding, and they were given detailed information from Mr. Grant regarding stimulus funds and their use. ARRA funding will preclude the elimination of 8 or 9 staff positions that would have been lost with the reduced state funding.

Chair DeJesus then took a moment to recognize Bruce Morell and his many years of service to the WIB, to the Finance Committee, and to the Finance and Performance Measurement Committee.

New Directions

Ed Dennehy circulated his Career Center report and reviewed the data briefly. He noted that the current focus is on summer jobs. The WIB is finalizing the list of employers who submitted applications through the Request for Responses (RFR), and that will determine job placements. The Youth Council has already voted on programs. As of today, there are 1,300 applications, with 301 youth deemed eligible. Some 500 TABE tests have been administered. The rest of the applications are incomplete and are currently being followed up and processed by six full time personnel and two part-time staff. There are 22 youth in jobs. One of those is an ARRA job, the other 21 are YouthWorks. About 10 young people will be working for the BaySox with Nelson Hockert-Lotz selling pizza and working crowd control. In the next couple of weeks, New Directions will be matching youth to jobs. Orientations will also be scheduled. Some youth will begin working right after the Independence Day holiday. However, the majority of applicants are 14-15 years of age and will be placed in programs. Employers tend to be more restrictive in their job requirements, which makes matches more difficult to accomplish.

Business Development Committee

Chris O'Neil reported on the Labor Needs Template that has been developed and shared with the Economic Development Council. He will keep the Executive Committee apprised of template outcomes.

The Committee focus on branding has decreased of late, but a subcommittee has been established to study the issue. However, the Committee agrees that the WIB website needs significant updating.

Mr. O'Neil also reported that he had met with Mr. Dennehy and Mr. Bill Edwards at the Career Center to discuss employer outreach. It was concluded that there is a need to "put a new face on workforce development" for the business community. There remains too much confusion; refocusing is in order. Mr. O'Neil and Bridget Alexander recently attended a Chamber-sponsored seminar on branding and found it very informative.

He further stated that he is seeking additional guidance from the WIB on the direction of Business Development. Mr. O'Neil concluded by stating that there would be committee outcomes for presentation at the next meeting.

Youth Council

Jean Fox reported that both the YC Planning Committee and the Youth Council had agreed to go forward with 11 ARRA proposals. The budgetary requests from the proposals exceeded \$761K; however, there is only an estimated \$430K for programming. Given the tight timelines, the Planning Committee and the Youth Council have asked the staff to negotiate with all 11 bidders, with an eye to program diversity and integrity. If necessary, some program(s) may be eliminated to optimize ARRA funds across programs and to serve the greatest number of eligible youth. Mr. Simpson noted that, procedurally, this is not the way the WIB traditionally approves funding. However, given the situation, it is necessary to get it done in the most expedient manner, and he is supportive of moving the negotiations forward. Mr. Rheume requested that vendors who cannot maintain quality programs with reduced funding be dropped from consideration. A suggestion from Mayor Lang through Norm Audette was to consider cutting back from some of the larger budgets to provide enough resources to smaller, grant-worthy programs.

Mr. Ferreira, in reviewing the latest spreadsheet on potential budgets and participation levels, asked if the drop in participant numbers was arbitrary. Mr. Grant stated that the staff has only had conversations with a couple of the bidders, albeit larger bidders. Those discussions have directed enrollment projections thus far, but those projections are subject to change as a result of negotiation. Mr. Simpson noted that it is within the purview of the Youth Council to examine all the programs to determine those that are most important and valuable. The Executive Committee's focus is on business and on what is practical.

Mr. Simpson made a motion to have the WIB staff proceed with negotiations with the 11 bidders, with the understanding that final negotiations may result in the elimination of some proposals. The motion was seconded by Mr. Mello. In discussion, Mr. Ferreira asked for clarification on whether or not the Executive Committee was voting a final number. Ms. Fox stated that the final numbers would not be available until negotiations were concluded, and those numbers would be reported at a subsequent meeting. There being no further discussion, the vote was unanimous.

4) OTHER BUSINESS

The schedule of meetings for FY '10 was reviewed.

Mr. Dennehy expressed his dissatisfaction with the recent negotiation with MY TURN, which resulted in the loss of a GED instructor. He stated that the need for the instructor is very great, and that having the case managers assume that role, as proposed in the negotiated agreement, is not an effective model. He further stated that New Directions is always at the negotiating table, but was not included this year. He does not know why New Directions was not invited, but noted that if they had been there, they would never have supported the elimination of the GED instructor position. Mr. Grant acknowledged that the instructor position was cut during negotiations, but he has asked MY TURN if they can bring back the position with a \$10K increase in funding. Ms. Fox reported that MY TURN will be able to retain a GED instructor for 15 hours a week with the additional funding.

Mr. Morell stated that the issue Mr. Dennehy raised appeared to be procedural. Mr. Coriaty asked Ms. Fox to explain. She stated that New Directions has been extremely busy with WIA formula and ARRA efforts. The formula negotiations were fast-tracked so that contracts could be finalized in time to negotiate the ARRA programs. Due to the tight timeline and stressors on staff, the decision to proceed with negotiations was not intended to exclude New Directions, but rather to expedite the contracting process. She further stated that the process will be reviewed.

5) ADJOURN

There being no further business to discuss, upon a motion by Mr. Rheaume and seconded by Mr. Ferreira, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully,

Jean C. Fox
YC Director