

**DRAFT    Greater New Bedford Workforce Investment Board, Inc.    DRAFT**  
**Quarterly Meeting Minutes**  
**09/30/09**  
Konarka Technologies, Inc.

**Members Present:** David DeJesus, **Chair**; Maria O. Pinarreta, **Vice Chair**; David Cabral, Richard Colon, Thomas G. Davis, Edward J. Dennehy, Charles DiPirro, David J. Ferreira, Mary Harrington, Lisa A. Jochim, Lisa M. Lemieux, Dennis Maltais, Richard F. Mello, Peter J. Muise, Roy Nascimento, Joan Ann Niles, Alice Oliveira, Ronald F. Rheahme, Ronald L. Rouillard, Michael R. Shea, Jeffrey Travers, Lawrence J. Weldon

**Members Absent:** Paul Correia (written proxy), John Fernandes, Dennis D. Galvam, Fernando Garcia, Nelson Hockert-Lotz (called), Chancellor Jean F. MacCormack (sent Lee Blake as her proxy), David R. Maher (called), Helena S. Marques, Bruce Morel (called), Joseph Notini (called), Christopher J. O'Neil (written proxy), Anthony R. Sapienza (written proxy), Dr. John J. Sbrega, Charles R. Simpson (written proxy), Charles N. Sisson (excused), James F. Snow, Louis St. John (written proxy), Brad A. Truini, Dean Robert V. Ward, Corinn Williams

**WIB Staff Present:** Bridget A. Alexander, Esq., Director of Development; Craig Baker, Chief Operating Officer; Leonard Coriaty, Executive Director/CEO; Jean C. Fox, Youth Council Director, Steven Grant, Chief Financial Officer; Christopher D. Holt, A/P – Payroll Clerk; Carlene M. LeBlanc, Accounting Manager/Human Resource Coordinator; Annie Massicotte, Business Office Manager; Sean P. McGauley, Communications Coordinator

**Workforce System Staff Present:** Tim Nelson, Wareham CC; Mike Travers, NDSI

**Guests:** Norm Audette, Liaison to CEO; Lee Blake, UMass Dartmouth; Dr. Portia S. Bonner, New Bedford Public Schools; Mitch Cahn, NB Tactical Gear, LLC; Kari Coelho, Adecco Employment Services; Heather Fragata, Adecco Employment Services; State Representative Robert M. Koczera; Patricia McPartland, Upper Cape Tech Program; Lisa Marie Mello-Frost, Training Resources of America – South Shore; Tobias M. Paulo, Aide to Rep. Koczera; Mike Prior, MassMEP; Dianne C. Rivet, GNB Youth Council; Judy Ryan, Dept. Of Transitional Assistance; John Schneider, MassINC; Chris Shannon, BCC; Cynthia Wallquist, City of New Bedford; Rosemary Wilde, New Bedford Public Schools

**Greeting and Call To Order**

Chair DeJesus called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. He announced 6 proxies: Four WIB members gave their written proxy to the Chair (Paul Correia, Christopher O'Neil, Anthony Sapienza, and Charles R. Simpson); WIB member Louis St. John gave his written proxy to the WIB Executive Director/CEO – Leonard Coriaty; and Chancellor Jean MacCormack gave her proxy to Lee Blake. He acknowledged Rep. Koczera and Norm Audette from Mayor Lang's office as well as Superintendent Portia Bonner of the New Bedford Public Schools. He then introduced the new WIB Communications Coordinator Sean McGauley.

Chair DeJesus noted 5 upcoming events: The MA Workforce Board Association's Quarterly meeting on October 5 will be held at Salem State, with Congressman John Tierney as the guest. The topic will be WIA. The Chamber's Good Morning Southcoast event is set for October 7 at the Hawthorne Country Club and will feature gubernatorial senatorial candidate Christie Mihos. WIB orientation is slated for October 13 at 3 p.m. at the New Bedford Career Center. The orientation will be followed by a tour of the facility. Also coming up in October is the SouthCoast Business Expo, which is jointly conducted by the New Bedford and Fall River Chambers of Commerce. The Miles for SMILES fundraiser will be held at the Sky Lounge in Fall River on October 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Larry Weldon, Vice President of Manufacturing for Konarka, hosted the meeting and welcomed the attendees. Larry offered a tour of the facility immediately following the meeting. He spoke briefly about the company and its flexible solar panel niche. Konarka is headquartered in Lowell, the company moved into the former Polaroid film manufacturing facility recently. At some point, headquarters may relocate to New Bedford as well. Currently employing 25 people in its single-shift operation, Konarka expects to have 100 people on its payroll in the next two years. Its product has been well received at shows in Europe; in addition, it will be announcing its products at Solar America in October.

**Mission Story:**

Mitch Cahn of NB Tactical Gear, LLC, explained that he has only been in New Bedford for about a month, but that the experience with the Career Center and the WIB has been extremely positive. He recounted how he needed to work with individuals from the Eagle layoffs and find training that would prepare them for work with Tactical. In the four training sessions held thus far, the workers have all rapidly climbed the career ladder. Sewing machine operators progressed rapidly through a Lean 101 seminar. The cooperation and assistance

provided locally has made a tremendous difference, and the company hopes to conduct another training session as well as seek HITG and other WTF training funds.

### **Consent Agenda:**

Upon a motion by Mr. Shea and seconded by Ms. Pinarreta, the minutes of the meeting of June 17, 2009, as well as minutes of the August 20, 2009; as well as the Treasurer's Report through August 31, 2009, were unanimously approved.

### **Committee Reports:**

**Executive Committee:** Chair DeJesus noted that the WIB did an excellent job with the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) programs. He then informed the Board about the Leadership Strategy Session conducted in August with technical assistance from Commonwealth Corporation. As part of an ongoing effort to focus efforts and channel limited resources, session outcomes included targeted populations and industries. In addition, the Chair indicated that the WIB is currently pursuing set aside funds for Alliant Industries and Acushnet Company from the federal government to establish some training programs for former employees. This activity by the WIB and the Career Center is "ahead of the curve." Chair DeJesus reminded the Board that the Career Center Charter will be up for renewal later this year, and the process will be starting soon. Any member interested in participating in this process should see Craig Baker. Also, a working group will be formed soon to examine the WIA eligibility process, which is burdensome and lacking in user friendliness. Any member interested in participating in the group should approach Len Coriaty.

**Finance and Performance Measurement:** Peter Muise observed that the committee has met several times regarding the target sectors and populations. He stated that Craig Baker would provide details of the discussions. A vote on the recommendations would then be requested.

Mr. Baker explained that while the WIB will continue to be charged with allocating WIA formula funding effectively, the WIB needed to identify focus areas in which to channel its energies for new resource development efficiently and productively. The August strategy session and its outcomes provide a structure as the WIB looks to expand capacity and identify resources. Commonwealth Corporation helped facilitate the session and synthesize the data. The Finance and Performance Measurement Committee as well as the Executive Committee reviewed the recommendations coming out of the strategy session and voted their approval. The sectors include: Healthcare/Social Assistance; Renewable/CleanEnergy/Weatherization; and Durable Manufacturing, which includes the entire sector and which focuses on Biotech Manufacturing, Medical Devices, and Marine Science Technology.

Mr. Baker noted that everyone who visits the Career Center receives some services. By identifying target populations, the WIB can focus resources in a more concentrated manner. The target populations include: Dislocated Workers; Incumbent Workers; Older Out-of-School Youth (ages 18-24); Those without a GED/High School Diploma. In all cases, this is a 3-year strategy. For example, for those without a diploma or GED, the focus would be on individuals who are deemed to be highly likely to successfully obtain that credential in 1-3 years.

Mr. Baker highlighted the rationale behind the sectors. A significant number of dislocated workers present with an elevated level of education and can successfully complete additional training in 1-3 months, which allows them to get back to work quickly. The current recession underscored the problems faced by skilled dislocated workers who needed relatively short-term training to prepare them for new jobs. Both incumbent workers and older out-of-school youth can be referred to the targeted sectors. The focus on individuals without a high school diploma or GED is more of a WIB goal, which was articulated by many of those in attendance at the strategy session.

Mr. Muise stated that the vote he would be calling for would be a vote for focus. The effort is beyond the WIB's primary focus and allows the WIB to set priorities.

A question was asked if there was an effort underway to revise the WIB membership to align with the stated priorities and whether the WIB would be able to ascertain which individuals would be able to complete a GED in 1-3 years.

Mr. Coriaty stated that there is a continuing effort to ensure that the Board membership reflects the populations and the community. Mr. Coriaty responded to the second question stating that there is expertise in the field to tap into regarding the readiness of individuals. The WIB would seek to build programs that have that level of assessment capability within the programs.

Mr. Muise then read the following **MOTION**:

To approve as a policy of this WIB, and as recommended by the Executive Committee:

- 1) That the WIB target the **Priority Populations and Industries** as presented,
- 2) That the WIB will strive to achieve the goals articulated for these populations and industries as presented, over the next three years

Upon a motion by Mr. Ferreira, and seconded by Ms. Pinarreta, the vote passed unanimously.

Bridget Alexander then reported on the procurement process and the awards for two ARRA Requests for Proposals issued by the WIB: Energy Efficiency and Construction Certification Enhancement, with one program funded for up to \$200K; Educational Attainment and Work Readiness Initiative, with funding available for two intermediate-high level ESOL with work readiness classes, one pre-GED with work readiness, and one GED with Work Certified for a total outlay of \$260K. She distributed a handout that listed the applicants and the reader scores, (contract [AMassicotte@gnbwib.org](mailto:AMassicotte@gnbwib.org) at the WIB office for a copy of the handout).

Mr. Ferreira was not familiar with Treatment Development Corporation. Ms. Alexander noted that it is a nonprofit that has worked with at-risk youth in pre-GED and GED programs and has secured facilities at the YMCA for its proposed program.

In the Energy Efficiency and Construction awards, Ms. Alexander pointed out that the focus would be on WIA-eligible individuals with a construction background. The New Bedford Housing Authority has a great deal of construction projects. In addition, more energy efficiency dollars are expected from the federal government. The dual training will increase the odds of the participants' landing a job. The WIB seeks training for 70 individuals with this funding. Partnerships are essential.

Mr. Muise observed that the presentation of the data and information on these procurements is a new approach by the committee to inform the full Board of the process and the decision making rationale. It builds transparency and awareness, and it is good practice.

Mr. Muise then read the following **MOTION**:

To approve the recommendation by the Executive Committee to award ARRA funds to the following programs:

- a) **GED** - award to New Directions
- b) **Pre-GED** – award to Treatment Development Corporation:
- c) **ESOL** – 2 awards – one each to PACE and New Bedford Public Schools (proposal #2)
- d) **Energy Efficiency and Construction Certification Enhancement Program** - award to Bristol Community College

Upon a motion made by Mr. Ferreira and seconded by Ms. Blake, the motion was approved. Mr. Edward Dennehy and Ms. Lisa Jochim abstained.

Vice Chair Pinarreta then directed the meeting, calling on Mr. Baker to present the ARRA Economic Stimulus Report. Referring to page 13 of the meeting materials, Mr. Baker stated that there have been system improvements at the Career Center as a result of the Operations Report, which identified 22 areas of improvement. Many of those visiting the Career Center require more intensive services. In addition, the staffing levels are frequently at issue. ARRA funding was needed to cover other staffing shortfalls, resulting in 14.35 full time equivalent positions being realigned under ARRA. Also of note was the decision to open up a facility on Dover Street for \$49K. Youth Services will operate a "Youth Annex" at that facility, opening up more space at the Quest Center for classrooms. Mr. Dennehy stated that the move to Dover Street is currently underway. There will be an open house soon.

Mr. Baker then reported on youth summer jobs, noting that New Bedford exceeded the 60% required spend down of the funding by summer's end. The 85% spent thus far underscores the need for the funds locally.

Regarding other allocations, Mr. Baker stated that additional ARRA money boosted ITAs, as noted on page 14 of the handout. Additionally, \$30K was reserved for enhancement training (such as Quick Books or Excel). Some other dollars went to supplement such support services as childcare and transportation.

**Business Development Committee:** Ms. Alexander highlighted the committee report contained in the meeting materials. The WIB is preparing its submission to the State Energy Sector Partnership, which is an initiative of the Massachusetts WIB through CommCorp. About \$430K would be directed locally through this 3-year WIB consortium led by Brockton.

The Health Skill Gap Partnerships effort, issued by CommCorp and funded with ARRA dollars, seeks to support healthcare workforce development partnerships. Up to 16 grants will be awarded statewide, with the potential for \$210K per grant. WIBs are the only eligible applicants.

Ms. Alexander informed the Board that LiteracyWorks has been absorbed by the Business Development Committee. Currently involved in the Pathways to Family Success effort with the Family Center, the Community Foundation, and the New Bedford Public Schools, as well as the Early Literacy Consortium, she will be pursuing additional funding opportunities, including the upcoming Polaroid grant.

**Youth Council:** As noted earlier by the Chair and reiterated by Mr. Baker, many youth programs provided jobs and job readiness training to area youth over the summer. Ms. Fox reported that some 12 programs served 430 youth under ARRA, with an additional 150 youth obtaining Youth Works placements, and an additional 200+ placed with formula funding. Programs focused on green jobs, sustainability, conservation, and energy efficiency, and all used the Massachusetts Work-Based Learning Plan as its job readiness assessment tool. A few programs continue to operate with out-of-school youth. Ms. Fox visited a number of sites over the course of the summer, noting excellent engagement of the youth in the programs and solid development of job readiness skills. There have been a number of articles in the newspaper about some of the programs.

Tom Davis noted that state data indicate a shrinking local workforce, with large numbers not employed in the above-ground economy. Fall River generates a monthly report on new job seekers, new postings, who secured jobs, and who is asking for training. Such a report may be helpful in Greater New Bedford. Mr. Coriaty will address this issue.

Ms. Pinarreta then asked if there was any community input. Hearing none, she then entertained a motion to adjourn from Mr. Muise, seconded by Joan Ann Niles, which carried unanimously. She further mentioned that the next meeting will be followed by a Holiday Social on December 16<sup>th</sup> at the Waterfront Grille in New Bedford.

### **Adjournment**

There being no other business before the Board, upon a motion made by Mr. Maltais and seconded by Mr. Rouillard, the meeting adjourned at 8:56 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard F. Mello  
Clerk