



Executive Committee Minutes of Tuesday, June 25, 2020

Attendance sheet available upon request

Audio recording available

Greetings and Call to Order by David Slutz, Chair–12:03 pm

- James Oliveira noted that the meeting was being conducted remotely on Zoom due to the State mandate regarding public meetings. Deborah Meggison recorded the meeting.

Announcements

- The group welcomed Rick Marshall, Apprenticeship Integration Manager, and Abigail (Abbey) Despres, Finance Director. Rick and Abbey introduced themselves.

Consent Agenda (Votes)

- Treasurer's Report. A budget summary was provided by Abbey Despres. Abbey noted that this was an assessment of the budget that she had brought up to date since starting 3 weeks ago. Abbey will provide a full budget report next meeting –motion to approve R. Melbourne, seconded by R. Kidder –verbal roll call all in favor
- April 28, 2020 meeting minutes for approval –motion to approve J. Fernandes, seconded by L. Lemieux –verbal roll call all in favor

Report Outs

- Executive Director–Jim Oliveira
 - Jim noted the pandemic's effect on the entire workforce system and the measures the State took to create an amazing transformation to meet the challenges of worst recession since 2008. Jim's report highlighted this year's accomplishments.
 - The collective grant output for the WB and partners increased from \$4.4 million dollars to over \$11 million dollars over the past two years. The WB increased grant output by \$1.5 million which contributed to the addition of 2 office team members. The WB also supported \$2.5 million in successful Capital Skills Grants for area high schools and Bristol Community College. \$150,000 in Community Development Block Grant funds was secured to support Out of School Youth in the upcoming year in maritime and public service jobs. The WB is also seeking a HealthCare Hub Planning grant with the potential to generate \$350,000 in regional training funds early next year. A complete report of cumulative grants will be provided at the upcoming Annual Board Meeting.
 - Jim noted 4 great new hires over the past year. Jacquie Sylvia, Media Specialist; Brian Silva-Boutwell, Connecting Activities Manager; Rick Marshall, Apprentice Integration Manager and, Abbey Despres, Finance Director all supported in part by aggressive pursuit of grants. All staff members are performing well in their respective areas.
 - Jim noted the drastic change in the unemployment rate since March 13th and a loss of 18,000+ jobs statewide. During this time:
 - The Career Center Operator went virtual with staff working remotely while continuing to improve performance, and provide services innovatively. Two remote meetings were held each week to keep staff on course with the Board's mission. Brian Silva-Boutwell and Rick Marshall were brought on board. The Finance function was transitioned to Abbey Despres who is already establishing a strong fiduciary position in a short period. Jim commended existing staff – Donna, Deborah, Andrea, and Jacquie for their steadfastness and leadership. The staff is currently all back at the office practicing all precautions and are safely social distancing while conducting business.
 - In the final quarter DCS conducted Fiscal & Administrative Desk Review and we were administratively certified. The Fiscal review found some deficiencies that will require adjustments over the next 30 days to bring us in compliance. This was not unexpected due to Donna and Jim managing as an ad hoc finance team while they

recruited for the Finance Director position. Jim noted Abbey's background was in auditing which should allow her to get things in order quickly.

- Jim also noted that staff is determined to meet the mission of the board and thanked Dave Slutz for his support who made himself available at all hours.
- Member Reappointment Update—Rick Kidder, Chair
 - Rick was pleased to announce that all Executive Members will continue their current positions for 2021. The Youth Committee has one placement to fill and they are waiting for a person to be named from Mass Rehab. Existing Board members have been cleared by the New Bedford Mayor and letters will be sent. Jean Breault of Coastline Elderly Services has been nominated to Paula Shiner in her retirement. The Nomination Committee tasks will be complete once the names for Chair for Youth Committee and a replacement Mass Rehab are provided and finalized.
- Committee Reports Meetings—suspended until further notice—roll call
 - Performance & Oversight—Ron Melbourne, Chair, no report.
 - Business Development—Rick Kidder, Chair, no report.
 - Youth Committee—Jeff Pelletier, Chair, report out:
 - FY20-21 Out-of-School-Youths both the year-to-date performance report and the funding recommendations are pending as they close out FY20. An update will be reviewed at the July meeting. 27 members are in some stages discussion and preparing to become members of the Youth Counsel. Operating procedures will be developed during the first quarter FY21. The Counsel will be launched in the fall FY21. Through mid-year FY19 Connecting Activities Partnership served 4500 students which exceeded prior year totals. COVID-19 caused significant disruptions for the rest of the school year. In FY21 they will be expanding into 3 new schools. YouthWorks Summer has 345 applicants under review for eligibility and orientation. Funding for YouthWorks Year-Round has a competitive funding cycle and funds were not received but there are other plans in place for programing and a briefing on this will be held later this summer.
 - Jim Oliveira added that the Mayor's office approached them about the summer program and the Director of Community Development encouraged him to apply for a program for Out-of-School Youth Year Round. The application for about \$150K in grant funds is scheduled to go for consideration in a few days.
- The Workplace—Nestor Leon, MassHire Career Center Operations Performance Update.
 - Over the first 3 quarters of operation the Career Center began to stabilize. The situation was the opposite of what they face now with the unemployment rate being historically low, but on March 13th everything changed. The amount of UI telephone calls during the initial 8 weeks was enough to keep the entire staff busy. They also created a resource guide that covered everything from food, energy and rental assistance to give staff the ability to holistically serve customers. They brought on virtual services including addressing customers' skill sets and access to technology. They assured that staff had everything they needed technologically to service customers. They developed a schedule for customer contact. They checked in with vendors to assess and enhance their activities. The WorkPlace put together about 500 hours of staff training and felt the staff is in a good position for when UI benefits come to an end. WIOA Youth is at about 78% enrollment. The summer program is unprecedented and will be completely virtual with programs based on the youths' ages. Nestor thanked the board for getting Chrome Books through CommCorp. They are working with Verizon to secure Wi-Fi hot spots.
 - Dave Slutz expressed concerns about the CC being closed and that some people did not have the technology needed for applying for UI virtually. Nestor stated they are preparing by addressing the social distancing issues at the center, but that there was a lot more that needed to be done. He also noted that there was approximately 2.5 years of UI claims filed in a matter of 21 days and handled by the State. Diane Hurley explained that the State is doing a lot of planning to address expected issues and mitigate problems. There are no immediate plans to reopen the career centers until a system is in place to address the health and safety of staff and customers. They are addressing security including training to prevent and deescalate violent situations. In the meantime RESEA customers are being encouraged to access virtual services and that virtual services need to be scaled up even more and in a much broader way.

- Ron Melbourne expressed his personal thanks to the CC staff members who provided exceptional assistance to his wife while keeping her motivated. She started her new position at the end of April.
- WB Staff recommendation to renew final year of Operator Contract/Initial Budget effective July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021. **Vote: To approve the FY21 Operator Contract/Initial Budget for a period of one year to commence on July 1, 2020 and end June 30, 2021.** R. Kidder asked if the budget was subject to changes during the year as needs arise. J. Oliveira stated that modification could be made any time as funds become available. –motion to approve J. Fernandes, seconded by R. Kidder –verbal roll call all in favor

Other Business

- Jim stated that some Youth vendors have been asking about when their contracts can start. We have recently gone through a procurement and extension of some vendors and are confident that the Executive Committee could approve at least 1/12th of the anticipated contracts that will be ratified in July. –motion to approve D. Slutz, seconded by R. Kidder –verbal roll call all in favor
- Schedule of subsequent Ex-Comm via Zoom Meetings
 - July 23rd
 - August 20th
 - September 16th
 - December 9th

Adjourned at 12:57 pm