

Minutes of September 23, 2020 meeting

Attendees

Board Members: Jean Breault, Dave Cabral, Paul Correia, James Daniels (Career Center), Helena DaSilva-Hughes, Laura Douglas, John Fernandes, Rachel Gordon, Margarita Graham, Diane Hurley (Wagner-Peyser), Deb Jenkins, Lisa Jochim, Rick Kidder, Pam Kuechler, Lisa Lemieux, Ron Melbourne, Jim O'Brien, Jen Patnaude, Charlie Quinn, Chris Rezendes, Tracy Silvia, Dave Slutz, Carl Taber, Mike Tavares, Yvonne Tobey

Guests: Chuck Coakley (MassMEP), Beth Costa (State), Steve Frechette (Youth Committee), Bernice Jensen (NB Public Schools), Jen Menard (BCC), Patricia O'Brien (Career Center), Michele Paul (City of New Bedford), Gayle Pelletier (Career Center), Elizete Perry (Career Center), Paula Roux (Career Center), Cynthia Wallquist (City of New Bedford - Director of Community Services)

WB Staff: Abigail Despres, Rick Marshall, Andrea McLaughlin, Jim Oliveira, Donna Ramos, Brian Silva-Boutwell, Jacquie Sylvia

Greeting and Call to Order - meeting called to order at 12:07 pm.

- James Oliveira read the standard announcement for the open meeting law regarding remote meetings. Board Members attendee roll call. A quorum was met. An audio and video recording of the meeting is on file.

Introductions and Announcements

Dave Slutz, Chair

- Dave Slutz welcomed Board members Jennifer Patnaude, Administrative Officer, and Greater NB Community Health Center. Jennifer has agreed to serve as the Youth Council Chair. Christopher Rezendes, Founder, Partner, INEX Advisors LLC is serving as the Youth Council Vice-Chair. Traci Silvia, HR Business Partner at Ahead USA/Kate Lord is a new Board member will serve as a member on Business Development Committee. Our new workforce coordinator at One SouthCoast Chamber is Kimberly Rioux who will be working with the MHGNBWB's Connecting Activities team.
- Michelle Paul, New Bedford Director of the Office of Environmental Stewardship is being recognized by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) with the 2020 merit award for the high level that she operates her office and the recent \$200K Brownfields training grant award that the WB will be assisting with.
- Dave Slutz congratulated staff members for anniversaries, Jim Oliveira for 9 years, Donna Ramos for 10 years, Deborah Meggison and Andrea McLaughlin for 2 years.

CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS 1 & 2 (Combined Vote)

Dave Slutz, Chair

- Minutes of the June Annual Board Meeting (Vote)
- Treasurer's Report - Dave Slutz noted that there wasn't anything specific that needed to be addressed in the report. James Oliveira noted that the WB is in very good financial condition and are moving forward on a number of fronts in efforts to manage fiscal affairs. Dave Slutz noted the work of Abigail Despres, Finance Director, has been exceptional. (Vote)
 - Motion to approve consent agenda made by David Cabral seconded by Carl Taber – Roll call vote all in favor

Executive Director Report

Jim Oliveira, ED/CEO

- Jim Oliveira reported that in the 3 month since they retained Abbey Despres the financial systems are stable and our previous fiscal year is reconciled. Through Abbey's efforts they are prepared for an upcoming financial audit, have petitioned the Department of Career Services to approve an increase our indirect rate, and worked with The WorkPlace to expedite payments to connect job seekers with training vendors. Due to Abbey's advanced accounting skill sets and familiarity with non-profits the Board is in the better place than any time in the past 10 years. Jim wanted to make it clear that Abbey is exceeding expectations.
- Jim announced that they recently received a Healthcare Workforce Hubs training grant from CommCorp and will be starting the planning phase in October. Jim wanted to thank Jacquie Sylvia publically because she had never written a grant before and with a little direction did a great job in putting together a compelling response. The planning will determine if training will be for pipeline or incumbent workers. This is a regional grant with our MassHire Southeastern Region 6 Workforce Board

partners MHWB South Shore, MHWB Greater Brockton, and MHWB Bristol. This opportunity could lead up to an additional \$375k in funding over a period of 2.5 years.

- Jim noted thanks to the Mayor for Community Development funds awarded to Year-Round Youth programs that will be combined with WIOA funds to supplement efforts. They also received a \$30k grant from the Commonwealth Corp for the summer YouthWorks program planning which will allow them coordinate with priority industry sector employers to plan robust job training experiences and career pathways.
- Work continues with the Mass Clean Energy Center. The second of four communities of practice meetings have been conducted. They have four or five educational providers including Bristol Community College, Cape Cod Community, Martha's Vineyard HS Adult Basic Education, and Mass Maritime. This effort allows our Workforce Board to better understand the levels of training available and what will be implemented in the upcoming months.
- Jim noted that for some time they had been discussing a succession planning for when he retires. The board will be asked to vote on instituting a Deputy Executive Director Position which can be funded with their current budget. They will be asking some of the Board members to assist in the interview process and anticipate several good candidates applying.
- They have been in the process of strategic planning and are in the process of forming working groups for this effort.
- Jim noted he has been participating in a statewide working group for the reopening of the career centers. Jim stated they have a good idea of how, but have not established when they will open.
- They continue to manage the Manufacturing Grant and that they have had for the last three years. Each year is about \$630k. It was extremely challenging closing out the year. They were asked to repurpose a lot of funds and some were approved to purchase a virtual welding machine. This will reside in Quest Center building and one of the spaces is being converted into a lab. A lot of the training is going to be done in the next calendar year to allow for planning.
- Mass Technology Development secured a \$5million grant. Through our efforts in the manufacturing community of practice and working partners across the state we were selected to administering \$500k in our region to help Voke Tech to develop curriculum for robotics and photonics technician training.
- To round things out Jim noted that he felt our social media pages could be matched up with just about any good-sized organization thanks to the efforts of Jacquie Sylvia. He encouraged the board to take a look at our social media. Our inaugural quarterly newsletter is scheduled to go out October 1st. They are doing their best to get information to the public via social media. Dave Slutz agreed and noted that they have not been a better spot in regard to social media thanks to Jacquie.
- They continue to explore grant efforts and continue to grow the footprint of the workforce board.

Performance and Oversight Committee Report
Committee Chair

Ron Melbourne,

- Ron stated they had met again after a long time due to COVID. It was a productive meeting and came to an understanding about the challenges the Career Center faced. Ron presented the June snapshot analysis of performance shows the great difference from 2019 to 2020 which clearly shows the difficulties emerged due to the virus including technology issues. Ron then noted the July snapshot and that it showed improvements from the previous month. Ron felt comfortable that The WorkPlace is doing a good job. Ron stated that James Daniels was also working on some new reports that will provide more detail moving forward.

Business Development Committee Report

Rick Kidder, Committee Chair

- Rick stated that they have been focusing on three key areas. They are looking at how the Career Center has pivoted given the COVID environment. They had post COVID reports from The WorkPlace from the Business Services Unit and virtual services for job seekers.
- Rick Kidder that the website had been a concern for a long time, it was not very business friendly and difficult to navigate. However, it is now more streamlined and looks incredibly good. Rick encouraged the Board members to take a look at it. He stated he could not speak more highly of the communications side of what's going on with Workforce Board.

- Dave Slutz asked about the job posting and time line for the position. The staff noted it had already been posted on the website, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and will be put on the state's JobQuest site. The position will be posted up to October 9th. The next step will be to organize the interview process.
- Business Development also vetted the concept of the Executive Deputy Director position and brought it before the Executive Committee. The motion was then made to bring it forward to the Board.

Youth Council Report

Andrea McLaughlin, Youth Program Manager

- The Year Round Out of School Program received a \$30k award from Commonwealth Corporation for a staffing allocation. The funds will be utilize to support service to a sub-set of participants, increased capacity to engage and maintain private sector partnerships, stronger alignment with Connecting Activities, and an avenue for tracking participant outcomes serving more youth over several years. The funding provides additional administrative support to the WB and will support out of school youth with meaningful internships leading to paid employment.
- The Year Round and WIOA Out of School Youth Programs has received a Community Development Grant for \$150k that will be used to supplement WIOA funds of \$148.5k for funding of our four youth vendors. The integration these two grants will serve 51 Out of School Youth ages 17-21 with 21 youths being supported by the Block Grant. This program will provide opportunities for youth employment, training/education and mitigate issues resulting from restrictions due to COVID-19. The program will be accomplished through an effective mentoring model that will identify longitudinal career pathway strategies for designated priority and emerging industry sectors.
- The Youth Council held an Initial Meeting on August 26, 2020. Members engaged in discussions to build youth people's self-esteem and confidence, manage personal and social relationships, and create learning opportunities in academic instruction, service learning, and work experience. Jennifer Patnaude will serve as Youth Council Chair. On behalf of The Greater New Bedford Workforce Board, congratulations and welcome to Jennifer!
- Initial Meetings for the NB Connecting Activates are currently being conducted with our 12 Partner Schools. Newly formed partnerships are with Trinity Day Academy, Wareham Cooperative Alternative, and Whaling City Jr/Sr. High School. Connecting Activities will play an active role engaging with students in alternative opportunities through virtual methods and remote learning with safety being our highest priority.
- First quarter ITA Monitoring is on track. Overall, reviews are satisfactory and in compliance. Spot monitoring of Career Center files is currently found to be satisfactory and in compliance.
- Jim Oliveira added that there were over 200 participants in the summer program and received about \$270k in wages over the course of 6-7 week period. They deem that as highly successful. Jim wanted to publically thank Youth staff at the Career Center in achieving this in the middle of the pandemic. Jim also noted they had some great teachers from New Bedford High School and Fairhaven High systems. One outcome was a New Bedford student winning a \$500 scholarship from CommCorp for a video presentation. Another New Bedford team received an honorable mention.

Career Center Operations

Nestor Leon, The WorkPlace Inc.

- They had a very small footprint in terms of virtual delivery when the pandemic hit in mid-March and he thanked the staff and Board for making it possible for them to pivot to where they are today.
- Some services have started to come back including the Career Center Seminars (CCS) and they are averaging about 20 customers. RESEA procedures are in place averaging 15 per CCS. Career Counseling is averaging 40 to 50 per week. They are holding an average of 12 workshops and trainings per week covering interviewing, resume and cover letter writing, computers, TORQ and Labor Market and pathway to training.

- Nestor shared a sample of their weekly work log showing the volume of services provided; customers served and staff professional training. They have been found in compliance in recent reviews and are working hard to keep that status.
- Nestor reviewed a report provided by the Department of Career Services that showed Career Center services delivered from March through September. These included 635 assessments, 643 counseling contacts, 145 job placements, 572 job search, and 670 attendees for workshops for a total of total 1363 individuals served by the career center.
- Moving forward they will be conducting a youth virtual job fair and a virtual CDL job recruitment event. They are focusing on job development and search with customers, developing Career Center workshops in Spanish followed by one in Portuguese, working on virtual recruitment for workforce board trainings and grants, developing a schedule of virtual job fairs and recruitments.
- They are working hard to engage customers and employers with quality workforce development services.

Board Ratification – details included in Board package (Votes)

Dave Slutz, Chair

- James Oliveira requested a motion from the Board to vote on items 1 through 6 as whole. —motion to approve Rick Kidder, seconded by Lisa Lemieux, roll call vote all in favor
Jim Oliveira introduced each item and reviewed details
 1. FY21 Integrated Budget
 2. FY21 Local Plan
 3. FY21 OOSY Vendor Contracts
 4. WIOA Performance Goals for fiscal year 2021 and fiscal year 2022 roll call vote
 5. Deputy Executive Director position
 6. Updated Bylaws Adoption

Roll call vote all in favor motion carries

Guest Speaker Introduction

Ron Melbourne, P&O Committee Chair

- Thelma Melbourne, Life Guidance Director, Atria Woodbriar Falmouth, MA
Thelma provided a testimonial about the assistance she had received from the Career Center after she had lost her job. Thelma thanks the leadership and Board. She said the experience of losing her job was not a good feeling but she was welcomed from the very moment she entered the Career Center. The counselors guided her through the system and she attended a resume workshop that helped greatly. All of the people at the Career Center were kind and supportive and did their job with a smile. Her journey ended with finding a job that she is very happy with. Even after she had gotten the job they reached out to her to see if she needed anything. Her job now is in employment recruitment and she has reached out to the Career Center for assistance with placements. Her experience with the Career Center moved her from being confused to the confidence she needed to find work. They even went above and asked if her family was okay or if they needed food. She appreciates everyone at the Career Center from the bottom of her heart not only did they help her financially but she found support.

Letter from YouthWorks Participant

Brian Silva-Boutwell, Connecting Activities Coordinator

- Brian Shared a letter from Philip Tran participant in the summer YouthWorks Program and winner of the YouthWorks Gold Scholarship for his participation in the Voter Registration video project. Philip was unable to attend due to school obligations. Philip thanked the board stating that the summer program was an amazing experience that allowed him to explore career paths and engage in projects that could potentially affect his own city. He was so proud of what they produced because he felt he was contributing to his community in a positive manner.

Guest Speaker Michelle Paul, Director of Environmental Stewardship, City of New Bedford

- Michelle discussed working with Jim Oliveira, James Daniels, Donna Ramos, and Nestor Leon on the New Bedford EPA Workforce Development Grant. It was something that was out of her comfort zone and they have been showing her the ropes and they are putting together a great program.
- Jim Oliveira stated his intention of having her there was to congratulate Michelle on the award she received from the EPA as well.

OTHER BUSINESS

Jim Oliveira

- Jim Oliveira was pleased to report that latest unemployment rates for the region was 12.3% up from 24.3% a couple of months ago and is lower than the rate in Boston.

ADJOURN – motion to adjourn, roll call vote all in favor

Meeting adjourned 1:06 pm