

Worcester Jobs Fund Oversight Committee

October 24, 2019

10:00 a.m.

IBEW Local 96, 242 Mill St. Worcester, MA 01602

Meeting Minutes

WJF Oversight Committee Attendance: Karen Pelletier, Jeffery Turgeon, Isabel Gonzalez-Webster, Fred Taylor, Karen King and Thomas Maloney.

WJF Staff: Kelsey Lamoureux and Theodora Appiah.

Guests: Greg Baker, Peter Dunn, and Ethan Brown.

- The meeting was called to order after a quorum was established.
- All attendees introduced themselves, their positions and their organizations.

Discussion with Economic Development Office:

- K. Pelletier introduced G. Baker from the City of Worcester's Office of Economic Development. G. Baker provided a summary of the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG), a federal project to assist cities with low to moderate income populations and development needs. Within the CDBG program, approximately \$600,000 is allocated to Public Services including social services, job generation, food security, and case management. With a focus on neighborhood development, the City is working to encourage more job training proposals for CDBG funds. G. Baker explained that applicants can apply for the standard pool of funds and/or a secondary pool that is set aside for new organizations asking for \$10,000 or less. The secondary pool is expected to be less competitive and a good starting point for new proposers. F. Taylor inquired about the list of organizations currently being funded through CDBG. G. Baker listed a few human service agencies and noted that the full list of all current recipients is available through the City's website. I. Gonzalez-Webster inquired about the use of funds for affordable housing in the neighborhoods. G. Baker described the ways in which CDBG funds can be used for affordable housing consistent with the current five year plan and noted that areas in flood planes or with environmental concerns are benefiting from a tiered approach to meet the increased restrictions for using federal funds in these areas. K. King asked about the workforce development goals for the funds and inquired if the Job Fund is eligible to apply. G. Baker explained that the Jobs Fund would be a strong resource to support other workforce and other self-sufficiency projects to develop proposals. J. Turgeon inquired about the process for evaluating the proposals and G. Baker described the recommendation process including the CDBG review committee and the City Manager's roles.

Approval of August 15, 2019 Meeting Minutes

- The revised meeting minutes from August 15, 2019 at 340 Main Street were reviewed and unanimously accepted via a motion by J. Turgeon and seconded by I. Gonzalez-Webster.

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Approval of September 26, 2019 Meeting Minute 2019 Meeting Minutes:

- The meeting minutes from September 26, 2019 at 242 Mill Street were reviewed and F. Taylor made a motion to approve the minutes with one addition. I. Gonzalez-Webster seconded the motion and the revised minutes were unanimously approved.

TIF Project Updates:

- P. Dunn provided a summary of the status of several projects including Chatham St. and the Washington Sq. Hotel. P. Dunn highlighted that construction will begin on Chatham St. project next month. K. Lamoureux requested that the anticipated additional Washington Sq. funds be added to the existing Washington Sq. budgeting account.
- P. Dunn noted the successful launch of the Diverse Business Directory and their growth to 140 registered businesses. P. Dunn explained updates on the workforce diversity goals and compliance activities related to TIF and TIE projects.

November and December Meetings:

- K. Lamoureux explained that the November and December Jobs Fund meetings will need to be rescheduled due to holiday conflicts and that Committee members can expect a poll sent to them by email to determine rescheduled dates.

WIF Financial Update:

- K. Lamoureux presented financial updates on the Worcester Jobs Fund, Washington Square, and Department of Transportation (DOT) Funding and as well as updates on the overall FY 20 Budget. K. Lamoureux noted that renewal for funding from DOT will be decided in January 2020 and the funding from DOT aligns with the timing of the Ball Park project. This can result in additional cycles of the Building Pathways Pre-Apprenticeship training to occur in Spring 2020.
- K. Lamoureux explained that UMass is interested in partnering with the Jobs Fund to develop a pipeline to entry level positions at UMass. I. Gonzalez-Webster recommended continuing these discussions to ensure that the application process and career opportunities would utilize best practices, where possible.

WJF Director Report:

- K. Lamoureux provided updates on the active programs, completed programs, SNAP Employment & Training, SNAP Outreach, and a demographic breakdown of FY 20 training program.
- K. Lamoureux noted that the next Tradeswomen Tuesday event will be November 19 at 6pm and collaboration with outreach would be appreciated. F. Taylor, K. King, and I. Gonzalez-Webster provided suggestions of additional locations for information sessions.

Other Items/Announcements:

- K. Pelletier shared information about the Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce's Annual Game Changer event on October 25, 2019 at Mechanics Hall.
- F. Taylor announced that the School Committee Candidate Forum at the Worcester Youth Center will be on October 29, 2019 at 6:00 p.m.
- J. Turgeon described the current Pharmacy Technician Pre-Apprentice Program funded through the Commonwealth Corporation and implemented by the MassHire Central Region Workforce

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Board. J. Turgeon proposed that the Jobs Fund partner with the project to co-enroll the participants. F. Taylor and I. Gonzalez-Webster inquired about the Jobs Fund's role in the partnership and J. Turgeon explained the ways Jobs Fund staff could support the Pharmacy Technician Training Program with their workforce training experience. K. King made a motion to partner with the project. The motion was seconded by I. Gonzalez-Webster and unanimously approved.

Adjourn:

- A motion to adjourn was made by K. King, was seconded by I. Gonzalez-Webster and was unanimously approved.

The next monthly meeting will be November 26, 2019 at 10:00 a.m.

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