

Worcester Jobs Fund Oversight Committee

September 26, 2019

10:00 a.m.

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

Meeting Minutes

WJF Oversight Committee Attendance: Karen Pelletier, Isabel Gonzalez-Webster, Maritza Cruz, Janice Ryan Weekes, Fred Taylor, and Thomas Maloney.

WJF Staff: Kelsey Lamoureux and Theodora Appiah.

Guests: Peter Dunn, Suja Chacko, Eric Batista, and Ethan Brown.

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

Discussion on Ad-Hoc Monitoring Committee

- P. Dunn provided a summary of the City of Worcester's recommendations from the 2019 Worcester Construction Workforce Disparity Study. Recommendations included goals of 38% people of color and 10% women workforce goals for public construction and incentive programs. P. Dunn also highlighted that contractors for the projects will include goals of 5% Women Business Enterprise (WBE) and 10% Minority Business Enterprise (MBE), in addition to support for Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE), Veteran Business Enterprise (VBE), Service Disabled Veteran Owned Business (SDVOB) and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans Business Enterprise (LGBTBE). P. Dunn also described the City's efforts to establish a local Diverse Business Directory to simplify the certification process locally. S. Chacko explained City's plan to create an Ad Hoc Monitoring Committee to oversee the implementation of these updated policies and procedures and work with contractors to assess obstacles to success and make recommendations for additional programmatic efforts to overcome obstacles. S. Chacko noted that E. Brown's role as the Program & Compliance Manager will be to supervise and enforce the workforce diversity goals related to economic development projects receiving municipal tax relief. S. Chacko highlighted the personal relationship building being conducted across the City to engage diverse business owners about these efforts and assist with registering businesses in the new directory.
- F. Taylor asked for clarification on the percentage of local residence workforce goal. P. Dunn stated that the goal for the Polar Park and Courthouse projects are both 25%.
- I. Gonzalez-Webster inquired about the status of Polar Park and Courthouse projects and whether workshops are being promoted to recruit diverse workers and businesses. I. Gonzalez-Webster suggested outreach strategies that can be implemented to increase a diverse workforce on these projects. P. Dunn ensured that outreach strategies are being applied and suggestions will be shared with the Economic Development Office and committees assigned to the projects.

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- K. Pelletier inquired about the consequences for contractors who are not compliant with the goals. P. Dunn indicated that the goals are a collaborative process and the intention is for the process to be a partnership and not regulatory. K. Pelletier suggested creating a rating system to assess and provide feedback to contractors as they work to meet the goals. I. Gonzalez-Webster noted the importance of giving upstanding contractors credit for the work they will do to meet the goals. P. Dunn noted that the process will collect payroll hours instead of employee counts in order to accurately track the workforce hours.
- T. Maloney explained the importance of not considering contractors' with histories of using unsafe or substandard materials and histories of unpaid wages.
- S. Chacko invited current Worcester Jobs Fund Oversight Committee members the opportunity to become part of the Ad Hoc Monitoring Committee. F. Taylor, I. Gonzalez-Webster, M. Cruz and K. Pelletier expressed interest in joining the Ad Hoc Monitoring Committee.
- S. Chacko described a variety of projects currently underway through her work as Chief Diversity Officer. Projects including the creation of several employee Affinity Groups, the implementation of the City's Affirmative Action policy, and the Cadet Program being developed in collaboration with community and cultural groups across the City. I. Gonzalez-Webster inquired about collaboration between Worcester Public School's new Chief Diversity Officer and Suja's role. S. Chacko explained that she would be available to share best practices with the newly hired staff in this role.

TIF Projects Updates:

- P. Dunn provided a summary of the status of several projects including Chatham St., Mission Chapel, Washington Sq. Hotel, and discussions with WuXi. F. Taylor inquired about the timeline for a general contractor for the WuXi project and P. Dunn noted that spring 2020 is the goal for that project.

Approval of August 15 2019 Meeting Minutes:

- The meeting minutes from August 15 2019 at 340 Main Street were reviewed and a motion to accept was made by J. Ryan Weekes. I. Gonzalez-Webster made a motion to add additional details about the discussion around the Chandler Street apartments and other Affordable Housing projects the Menkiti Group discussed during the meeting. M. Cruz seconded the motion and described the importance of the previous track record of the Menkiti Group. K. Lamoureux offered to revise the minutes for approval at next month's meeting.

Approval of August 22, 2019 Meeting Minutes:

- The meeting minutes from of August 22, 2019 at 242 Mill Street were reviewed and unanimously accepted via a motion by J. Ryan Weekes and seconded by M. Cruz.

Tradeswomen Tuesdays:

- K. Lamoureux provided an update on the Tradeswomen Tuesday collaboration with NCTE and discussed the low attendance rates experienced at the first two sessions. J. Ryan Weekes and I. Gonzalez-Webster provided suggestions of additional community based organizations, religious groups, and community contacts that can assist with helping to share information with the community.

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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 that current Medical Office Administrative courses are seeing positive results and that QCC has applied for a grant for two additional cycles of the training to occur in Spring 2020.

WJF Director Report:

- K. Lamoureux provided updates on the recent Worcester Building Pathways graduates placements. F. Taylor shared information about the timeline for sending the accepted apprentices to work on local job sites. K. Lamoureux summarized active programs, completed programs, SNAP Employment & Training, SNAP Outreach, and a demographic breakdown of FY 20 training program participants.

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 mentioned the School Committee Candidate Forum at the Worcester Youth Center on October 23, 2019 at 6:00 p.m.
- T. Maloney noted that the Businessmen of New England are hosting a meeting at National Grid.

Adjourn:

- A motion to adjourn was made by F. Taylor, was seconded by T. Maloney and was unanimously approved.

The next monthly meeting will be held Thursday, October 24, 2019 at 10:00 a.m.