

Worcester Jobs Fund Oversight Committee

April 23, 2020

10:00 a.m.

Conducted Via WebEx

Join by phone: +1-415-655-0001 US Toll

Meeting number (access code): 479 107 936; Meeting password: PAcJNKxK949

Meeting Minutes

WJF Oversight Committee Attendance: Karen Pelletier, Fred Taylor, Janice Ryan Weekes, Adrianna Buduski, Isabel Gonzalez-Webster, and Jeff Turgeon.

WJF Staff: Kelsey Lamoureux and Theodora Appiah.

Guests: 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.

Approval of February 27, 2020 Meeting Minutes:

- The meeting minutes from February 27, 2020 at 242 Mill Street were reviewed and F. Taylor made a motion to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by J. Turgeon, and unanimously approved.

Economic Development Updates:

- P. Dunn provided updates on current TIF Projects throughout the City of Worcester. Construction across projects has been temporarily suspended and Economic Development staff is keeping in touch with TIF applicants throughout the coronavirus crisis to discuss updates on their plans. P. Dunn noted that the Washington Sq. hotel project has delayed construction to spring 2021 and that WuXi is planning to begin construction when it is safe to proceed. J. Turgeon inquired about news on entry level positions at WuXi and K. Lamoureux offered to share the email address for WuXi's Human Resources representative with J. Turgeon. I. Gonzalez-Webster inquired about the possibility of doing a remote Construction Diversity Monitoring Meeting and E. Brown stated that he would look into that as an option.

WJF 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 provided details on salaries, contracts, and program expenses through March 31, 2020 and discussed expected expenses for the remainder of FY20.

WJF Director Report:

- K. Lamoureux presented information on the Bounce USA's new online curriculum that could be offered to students as a distance learning option. The cost for the program is \$100 per student

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and could be offered to 10 Clinical Medical Assistant Students, 1 Medical Billing and Coding and 13 CDL B students during the remainder of FY20. F. Taylor inquired about details of the Bounce curriculum modules and K. Lamoureux provided a summary of the curriculum. I. Gonzalez-Webster made a motion to approve \$2,400 to be used to fund access to the Bounce online curriculum for 24 students and the motion was seconded by J. Turgeon, then unanimously approved.

- K. Lamoureux invited committee members to report out on the March 12, 2020 Table Talk Pies tour. P. Dunn shared his appreciation to the Table Talk Pies management for promoting collaborative community partnerships. J. Ryan Weekes and I. Gonzalez-Webster shared their tour experiences and acknowledged Table Talk Pies' willingness to collaborate with other partners and their long list of benefits to employees.
- K. Lamoureux provided updates on current distance learning programming offered to the Clinical Medical Assistant and Building Pathways Pre-Apprenticeship participants. The Clinical Medical Assistant students continue to complete the classroom portion of training on Google Classroom through Worcester Public Schools. The Worcester Building Pathways students use online-based learning through the Khan Academy and physical packets that were mailed to each student to continue learning. Both programs will proceed with hands-on training when safety guidelines permit these activities. I. Gonzalez-Webster shared that schools are closed through June 29, 2020 and F. Taylor shared that the Apprenticeship Training Center is closed through July 1, 2020.
- K. Lamoureux shared that MassHire Central Region Workforce Board (MCRWB) is applying for the Workforce Competitive Trust Fund Grant and has applied to the Reentry Planning Grant to improve availability of CDL B training for local jobseekers. J. Turgeon provided detailed information about the two grants.
- K. Lamoureux mentioned that Worcester Night Life applied for the Capital Skills Grant to secure biomanufacturing and CDL B equipment and is looking to collaborate with the Worcester Jobs Fund if their funding is approved.
- K. Lamoureux shared that job placement related to training has been difficult with program participants due to the COVID-19 pandemic, however, many participants are successfully finding employment in essential jobs.
- SNAP application assistance continues to be offered remotely and there are several additional benefits for families including P-EBT and maximum benefits that are being discussed with families during their appointments.

New Projects:

- K. Lamoureux provided a brief overview on new projects including Worcester Together, JobGet, and the Workforce Competitive Trust Fund. I. Gonzalez-Webster provided an in-depth explanation of the formation and goals of Worcester Together meetings. J. Turgeon explained details about how the JobGet mobile app streamlines connections between employers and job seekers and is offering services to employer partners of some MCRWB grants free of charge. E. Brown inquired about the employer breakdown on the JobGet app and J. Turgeon explained that many of the positions are hourly, high volume positions.

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Other Items/Announcements:

- F. Taylor shared that the Black Heritage Juneteenth Festival has been postponed to FY 2021 and that the Carpenter's Union recently decided to shut down for two weeks to encourage contractors to secure proper PPE and establish necessary health and safety COVID-19 procedures.
- J. Turgeon highlighted the approval of the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) benefits for self-employed individuals across the state.
- J. Ryan Weekes shared that MassHire Central Career Centers continue to provide services to clients remotely and that several career counselors have been reassigned to assist individuals with unemployment applications.
- K. Pelletier shared information on available microloans through the Chamber of Commerce loan funding program through the EDA.

Adjourn:

- A motion to adjourn was made and unanimously approved.

The next monthly meeting will be May 28, 2020, at 10:00 a.m.

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