

Worcester Jobs Fund Oversight Committee

May 28, 2020

10:00 a.m.

Conducted Via WebEx

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

Meeting number (access code): 472 948 665; Meeting password: vTEBiEMJ223

Meeting Minutes

WJF Oversight Committee Attendance: Karen Pelletier, Fred Taylor, Janice Ryan Weekes, Maritza Cruz, 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 April 23, 2020 Meeting Minutes:

- The meeting minutes from April 23, 2020 virtual were reviewed and J. Turgeon made a motion to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by F. Taylor and unanimously approved.

Economic Development Updates:

- P. Dunn provided updates on current TIF Projects throughout the City of Worcester. Construction projects have been temporarily suspended and Economic Development staff is keeping in touch with TIF applicants throughout the coronavirus crisis to discuss updated plans. P. Dunn noted that the Washington Sq. hotel project has delayed construction to spring 2021 and the Biomanufacturing/Wuxi is planning to begin construction as early as July 2020. P. Dunn shared that Table Talk received a building permit and demolition of the new site will be completed in June 2020.
- I. Gonzalez-Webster inquired about the relocation of residents living at the Chandler St. development project. P. Dunn noted that the Chandler St. project is not a TIF so Economic Development will not have that information.
- F. Taylor inquired about whether contractors will need to submit COVID-19 safety plans and policies. P. Dunn provided a summary of the guidelines that are required by the State. F. Taylor noted that different contractors are establishing different policies on each site which is leading to inconsistencies.
- K. Lamoureux inquired about the possible date for the final sale of the Washington Sq. parcel and P. Dunn noted that the transaction is expected to be processed in November 2020.
- E. Brown shared the next compliance meeting will be on June 18th held via WebEx. More information will be provided in regard to the upcoming meeting via email.

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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 April 30, 2020 and discussed expected expenses for the rest of FY20.
- K. Lamoureux discussed the possibility of another Building pathways program fall of 2020 and accepting more applicants in the Class B program June 2020.

WJF Director Report:

- K. Lamoureux shared that the CDL Provider Bids were reviewed and NETTTS was awarded the contract for May 2020 to May 2022. K. Lamoureux provided a summary on the updated format for the CDL Class B June cohort. Up to 13 participants will complete a blended program (online and in-person) starting June 16th.
- K. Lamoureux provided an update on the Building Pathways Program and the possibility of reopening the program during phase 2 or phase 3 of the state's reopening. F. Taylor inquired about student performances on the online curriculum that was provided to them. K. Lamoureux explained the challenges that students encountered completing the assignments due to current stressors but communicated that most students successfully completed all assignments. F. Taylor inquired whether students completed apprenticeship applications before COVID-19 closings and K. Lamoureux provided a summary of the students who had completed applications with specific apprenticeship programs.
- K. Pelletier questioned the possibility of providing childcare for participants in the programs. K. Lamoureux opened a discussion on the different possibilities for students including stipends. M. Cruz and I. Gonzalez-Webster shared childcare challenges for parents and acknowledged that providing this opportunity to students will motivate their return to the programs.
- I. Gonzalez-Webster inquired about mental health supports being provided to students and K. Lamoureux shared that on-going case management is being provided to students and is connecting students to resources within the community.
- 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 and will begin Bounce curriculum in June. The Worcester Building Pathways students have completed online-based learning through the Khan Academy and the program is suspended until it is safe for students to resume in-person training.
- K. Lamoureux shared SNAP application assistance continues to be offered remotely and there have been several eligibility challenges for families due to unemployment benefits.

FY 21 Planning:

- K. Lamoureux provided a brief overview on FY 2021 planning for different training programs including CDL Class B, Building Pathways and Medical Office. K. Lamoureux shared that New England Tractor Trailer Training School (NETTTS) is offering both online and in-person training for new drivers. F. Taylor shared challenges with virtual online learning for the CDL program and asked about access to facilities following completion of the online portion. K. Lamoureux

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provided clarification on NETTTS program and the students' access to learning online and on-campus. I. Gonzalez-Webster shared concerns about classroom learning for the fall and A. Buduski noted that Training Resources of America has moved to remote learning for many programs. M. Cruz shared concerns about dropout rates of students for the online learning curriculum.

- K. Lamoureux shared that based on the DOT budget, additional funding is available to offer students enhanced services such as additional trainings or subsidized on-the-job experience or to offer an additional shortened training to a new group of participants.
- K. Lamoureux suggested that purchasing a set of chromebooks will help students across all programs access online learning and job search. I. Gonzalez-Webster shared that chromebooks will be beneficial for students who do not have access to devices in their household. K. Lamoureux agreed to provide a proposal of purchase of chromebooks for the next meeting.
- K. Lamoureux added that QCC has capacity to offer Medical Office Assistant Training online and the Worcester Night Life program is planning to offer in person job skills classes' during the fall.

Other Items/Announcements:

- J. Ryan Weekes shared that MassHire Central Career Centers continue to provide services to clients remotely and a virtual Career Fair will be held on June 4th. Employers can connect with MassHire to be a part of the Career Fair and all job seekers are welcome to be a part of the session.
- K. Lamoureux highlighted that the MCRWB is recruiting for another cycle of the Pharmacy Technician Pre-apprenticeship program starting June 2020. Flyers will be distributed via email.

Adjourn:

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

The next monthly meeting will be Thursday June 25, 2020, at 10:00 a.m.

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