

Worcester Jobs Fund Oversight Committee

January 28, 2021

10:00 a.m.

Via WebEx

Meeting Minutes

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

WJF Staff: Kelsey Lamoureux and Theodora Appiah.

Guests: Ethan Brown, Paul Morano, and Amanda Cornwall.

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

Approval of December 22, 2020 Meeting Minutes:

- The meeting minutes from the December 22, 2020 virtual meeting were reviewed and I. Gonzalez-Webster, made a motion to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by F. Taylor and unanimously approved.

EDA Application Discussion:

- P. Morano provided a summary of the Economic Development Administration Grant Opportunity and the proposed project to improve the road and other infrastructure at the Reactory. P. Morano shared information on the WuXi Biotech Manufacturing facility currently in development and their employment goals for City of Worcester residents. An open discussion occurred surrounding possible collaboration with employers, including WuXi, and the Worcester Jobs Fund to ensure local residents have the skills needed for these new positions.
- K. Pelletier provided information on the committee's goals and their previous collaboration with employers, including WuXi. F. Taylor expressed concerns about guaranteeing training for local companies because information about their employment needs is currently unknown and asked for more information about the source of the funding. P. Morano stated that the commitment that is being requested is for the Worcester Jobs Fund to collaborate with local companies to see if developing trainings would be suitable for both parties and noted that the source of the funding is the CARES Act.
- J. Weekes asked if this funding could be used for the training costs and P. Morano stated this grant is strictly for the construction of the projects, but there may be opportunities for companies who buy the parcels to make donations to the Worcester Jobs Fund to help cover the costs of the trainings.
- E. Brown suggested companies could commit to engaging with students during their training through activities such as tours, internships, or presentations to the class. K. Lamoureux expressed support of employer involvement during the development and implementation of the

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project and also suggested an opportunity for the Worcester Building Pathways graduates to apply to available employment opportunities during the construction phase of the project.

- K. Pelletier made a motion for the Worcester Jobs Fund to submit a letter of support for the project. The motion was seconded by I. Gonzalez-Webster, and was unanimously approved.

Economic Development Updates:

- E. Brown provided an update from the Construction Diversity Monitoring committee. E. Brown summarized the status of various contractors in meeting their diversity goals and stated ways in which the committee is improving the process to assist contractors in meeting their goals in the future. F. Taylor acknowledged that several projects are making improvements in meeting their diversity goals and starting to implement some best practices, but there is a lot of work to do.

WJF Financial Update:

- K. Lamoureux presented an overview of the financial reports for the Worcester Jobs Fund, Washington Square, and Department of Transportation accounts through November 30, 2020. K. Lamoureux provided an update on participant numbers for current and future FY 2021 programming as well as pending grant applications.

WJF Director Report:

- K. Lamoureux provided updates on current programs, completed programs, and SNAP updates. Current programs include IT Support Specialist, Clinical Medical Assistant, and CDL B training provided through the Worcester Job Fund, Donnelly Grant, and Veteran's Grant. Programs currently in recruitment include Building Pathways, CDL A and CDL B trainings. Graduates from completed programs are currently seeking employment or are in the retention phase of employment. A. Buduski requested details on the recruitment efforts for the CDL A program.
- K. Lamoureux noted that the recruiting process for the Worcester Building Pathways program is more challenging in the COVID-19 climate. K. Lamoureux suggested a change in the start date of the Building pathways program from February 2021 to April 2021 in order to offer students more opportunities for hands-on learning for construction pre-apprentices.
- I. Gonzalez-Webster suggested including testimonials of past or current students on program flyers to appeal to interested individuals in the community.
- K. Lamoureux shared SNAP application assistance will continue in FY2021 and has a goal to support at least 50 households with their applications.

Other Items/Announcements:

- K. Lamoureux provided details on the YWCA in-person tour and the COVID protocols.
- K. Pelletier shared that Worcester Public Schools hired a Worcester Nightlife Coordinator and requested they be invited to attend the next Worcester Jobs Fund Oversight Committee meeting.

Adjourn:

- A motion to adjourn was made by K. Pelletier, was seconded A. Buduski, and was unanimously approved.

The next monthly meeting will be Thursday, February 25, 2021, at 10:00 a.m.

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