

Worcester Jobs Fund Oversight Committee

November 30, 2023

10:00 A.M.

Virtual via Microsoft Teams

Meeting Minutes

WJF Oversight Committee Attendance: Karen Pelletier, Ruth Seward, Jeff Turgeon, Fred Taylor, Roberto Diaz

WJF Guest Attendance: Victoria Porteiro-Cejas

WJF Staff Attendance: Arianna Drummy, Anh Dao

- The meeting was called to order after a quorum was established at 10:06 am.

Approval of October 26, 2023 Meeting Minutes

F Taylor made a motion to approve the minutes and R Diaz seconded. A vote was made, and the minutes were approved.

ARPA Update:

A Drummy announced they will be offering the ARPA Administrative Assistant position to an attorney named Kathleen. There were two rounds of interviews. For the second round, the applicants were given an ARPA application and asked to draft a contract. The chosen applicant performed well, and we are excited to have her on board. They are just starting the process of onboarding now with HR. She would ideally start in two to three weeks. J Turgeon confirmed that a verbal offer can be sent once we get approval from HR.

Economic Development Update:

V Porteiro-Cejas shared the snapshot for the month of October. Mission Chapel has completed, and they will do a ribbon cutting soon. Unfortunately, that project never saw a woman on site. The CDMC meeting format will change – starting today, the contractors and developers will directly present on their own numbers. K Pelletier asked on the status of the new TIF policy. V Porteiro-Cejas shared that it was approved, so there is a new goal of 15% for the number of apprentices on site.

WJF Financial Update:

A Drummy reviewed the budget as of November 29, 2023. There is \$159,000 left in the budget as Worcester Night Life and Worcester Public Schools have yet to bill us. A Drummy also mentioned that the committee will need to revisit the CDL contract as we put it up for bid to spend down the money. She noted that students are performing better – one student who hadn't passed a single section of the road test passed the entire thing with the new test. Staff are hoping this upcoming cohort will perform better with the new test. We are on track to spend down the Building Pathways grant. F Taylor suggested submitting a DOT public records request on CDL testing this week.

WJF Program Update:

The City of Worcester does not discriminate on the basis of disability, The MCRWB will provide auxiliary aids and service, written materials in alternative formats, and reasonable modifications in policies and procedures to persons with disabilities upon advance request. Please contact Arianna Drummy at drummyaj@MassHireCentral.com or 508-373-7641, or the ADA Coordinator at disabilities@worcesterma.gov.

A Drummy reviewed the demographic information for all current FY 24 participants. At this current time, there are no program graduates. There are 6 CCMA students, 6 Phlebotomy students, 9 School Bus students, 9 Building Pathways students, 4 CDL B and 1 CDL A. All programs are currently underway. CCMA and Phlebotomy students are set to start externship next month. 5 CCMA students will go to UMass and 1 student will go to Reliant. Last cohort, we had one student go to Reliant and it did not go well – the student had behavioral issues and was exited, however Reliant is willing to give us one more chance. That same student had gone to Family Health Center as well for externship and did not have a positive experience as externs there are only allowed to observe and are prohibited from practicing their clinical skills. We do not intend on sending further students to Family Health Center. F Taylor asked for further details. A Drummy clarified that the student had gone to Family Health Center first, where she lasted two days due to professionalism issues, then she moved to Reliant. The only reason that student was placed at a second site was we did not realize the Family Health Center’s externships did not allow for clinical practice. Prior to starting her externship at Reliant, A Drummy and the instructor spoke with the student at length. At Reliant, she continued to have issues with professionalism and was given several warnings before being asked to leave. F Taylor asked about the eligibility requirements for the program and how we can prevent this from happening. A Drummy added that we plan on adding two additional days to BOUNCE to focus on professionalism, especially for our healthcare programs.

Phlebotomy students will begin their two-week externships next week. This is the final Phlebotomy cohort for the foreseeable future. The class is doing very well. A Drummy shared that she was able to visit this week and observe as students brought in friends and family to practice on.

The Building Pathways program is underway and going well. Unfortunately, staff had to remove a student from the program due to transportation issues. During her interview, the student assured us that she had a vehicle, but the vehicle broke down prior to the start of the program and has been unusable. She has been late to training regularly, even when it is in Worcester, and when she was offered a ride, she caused another student to be over an hour late. F Taylor asked to be notified ahead of time in the future when Building Pathways students visit the Carpenters’ Union as he’d like to be present to represent the committee and the Union.

A Drummy shared one CDL B student passed and received his license on his fifth attempt. Out of the four CDL B students from the fall class, three of them have partial or full permits.

A Drummy shared that CCMA recruitment is going well. A Dao noted that we are still accepting applications and will send out the flier with details to the committee.

A Drummy asked when we plan to schedule meetings with City Council members. K Pelletier suggested that since we have new committee members, we could do a group meeting perhaps instead of one-on-one meetings. F Taylor said their legislative breakfasts are typically at 8 or 9 AM. He also suggested we do the meeting at MassHire. K Pelletier noted we should not do the meeting on Tuesdays – the committee agreed and suggested Thursday. K Pelletier added we would offer the option of one-on-one meetings for councilors who are unable to attend.

Member Announcements

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R Seward shared she is recruiting for her Diesel Technology program. 18 applicants interviewed for 10 spots.

K Pelletier announced the Chamber of Commerce will be hosting an HR round table focused on helping folks understand I-9 compliance when hiring. Most of the attendees will be small business owners who take on HR roles and lack the knowledge to ensure compliance.

F Taylor shared that last week the City of Worcester passed a Responsible Development Ordinance. His organization has been working towards this for quite some time, so he is excited for this development. The ordinance was initially meant to be a TIF policy but the change in nomenclature will make the policy more accessible to the public. F Taylor then invited committee members to the NAACP Christmas Party happening next week.

J Turgeon shared they've been working with a company called Forge that specializes in training people in construction technology. The idea is that residents can get trained very quickly and then move into an apprenticeship or employment opportunity. They are working on securing state funding to bring the training to Worcester. The program could be hosted at Worcester Night Life and MassHire or the Worcester Jobs Fund could fund some seats.

R Diaz shared on the recruitment for the School of Prophetic Action. They are looking for candidates who are passionate about community organizing.

Adjourn:

- A motion was made to adjourn at 10:58 AM.

Respectfully submitted by Anh Dao

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