

## Worcester Jobs Fund Oversight Committee

February 23, 2023

10:00 a.m.

Via WebEx

### Meeting Minutes

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

WJF Guest Attendance: Peter Morano

WJF Staff Attendance: Arianna Drummy, Anh Dao

- The meeting was called to order after a quorum was established at 10:03 am.

#### Approval of January 26, 2023 Meeting Minutes:

The meeting minutes from January 26, 2023 virtual meeting were reviewed. A motion to approve the minutes and second were made and the motion was passed.

#### City ARPA Update:

A Drummy reviewed the deadline for the ARPA applications. She noted that she has heard from Edward Street who wants to host a training with the Worcester Public Schools as a training provider for school bus drivers. The Adult Learning Center has also expressed interest in hosting a Serv Safe or some sort of culinary training. R Seward announced that she also is interested in applying on behalf of Worcester Night Life and requested clarification in regard to reporting back to the city. A Drummy replied that the process would be determined on a case-by-case basis but it would mostly be narrative. J Turgeon added that there would also be basic quantitative reporting regarding goals, recruitment, and retention. Reports would most likely be expected monthly. A Drummy then directed the committee to review the ARPA scoring rubric and offer feedback. J Turgeon noted that any parties planning to apply should refrain from participating in any voting that may occur but are welcome to participate in general discussion. The first part of the rubric scores out of five total possible points the quality of the proposal narrative. The committee found this satisfactory. The second section of the rubric scores out of five total possible points the experience the training provider or administrator has with grants and training programs. K Pelletier questioned if this would keep newer organizations with less experience from getting involved or being awarded funding. She added that she understands the need to score experience, but she also wants to ensure we lower barriers for newer organizations. A Drummy suggested we add a section that allows applicants to elaborate on why they would be a suitable training provider, such as disclosing other similar programs they've managed. K Pelletier recommended the committee add language to include any personal or professional experience employees may have at other organizations. F Taylor agreed with previous comments, citing Dismas House as an example of an organization with a lot of experience working with certain populations but less job training experience. K Pelletier addressed the Edward Street proposal and questioned whether another organization would be the best lead to administer a training already administered by the Worcester Jobs Fund, especially if their goal is just to get kids to after school programs. A Drummy clarified that to her knowledge we are not allowed to apply for ARPA funding. J Turgeon clarified that the initial RFP bid functions as a public

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offering so we could prioritize trainings from newer organizations but any funding left over could be considered for the Worcester Jobs Fund. A Drummy then moved onto the third section of the rubric evaluating the proposal's target industry, whether those jobs are in-demand and pays a living wage, and whether there is support from the business community or employer partnerships. A Drummy found this section satisfactory. Pelletier echoed that sentiment and noted that some of the job trainings mentioned by committee members, such as the culinary programs, may not lead to careers with livable wages. R Seward commented that she is working with the Adult Learning Center to collect data to support their proposal and its goal of assisting new immigrants in getting a job. They are hopeful that if they recruit local colleges as employer partners, trainees will receive better wages and benefits. K Pelletier advised that the committee finish reviewing the rubric and release it with the application so applicants would know what they were being scored on. In addition, if this isn't published, parties represented on the committee have an unfair advantage.

A motion was made to request the rubric be released so all applicants have equal footing. A second was made, a vote was taken, and the motion passed.

K Pelletier recommended language be added to the third section to include benefits, career pathways and ladder opportunities.

P Morano referred back to the proposed culinary training and asked for clarification on how it differs from the free culinary training offered at the tech schools. R Seward clarified that the culinary training would be for adults, which is not offered right now. She noted that in her research, she found that the application process for culinary positions is confusing, and it is not clear what certifications applicants need to qualify. A Drummy then reviewed the next section which scores the proposed training's benefits to disproportionately impacted populations, such as black and indigenous persons of color, immigrants, refugees, veterans, etc. P Morano inquired if there is a section scoring the support of local employers who pledge to hire graduates. A Drummy directed his attention to section 5 which scores for support of the business community and she noted that the application does ask for letters of support from local employers. She added that they could add clearer language. R Seward commented that it would be incredibly difficult to get an employer to agree to hire all graduates because that is typically not feasible. K Pelletier suggested we add specific language requesting the employer partners at least interview all program graduates. P Morano agreed and cited a previous training held by the East Side CDC that served as a direct pipeline to an employer. K Pelletier recalled a past training held in partnership with a local company that had conflict as city money was spent to specifically support one business instead of an "industry. There were also issues with the company in question misleading training providers about the wages they offer, their benefits and working conditions.

A Drummy directed the committee back to section six noting benefits to disproportionately impacted populations. K Pelletier questioned the wording as it alludes to a program that specifically targets re-entry would be rated higher against a program that targets wider demographics but specific socioeconomic status. R Seward also noted that in her experience, a training might aim to recruit a certain population, but it doesn't always end up that way. J Turgeon responded that the general practice would not be as cut and dry as we might like but applicants that demonstrate specific goals and practical training options should be rewarded.

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The last section questions if the program demonstrates cost reasonableness. J Turgeon commented that a cheaper training is not always better and expressed that a training should make sense and support the maximum amount of people. F Taylor expressed doubt over the necessity of the question. J Turgeon responded that it is necessary to be able to evaluate a proposal that shows unnecessary cost. F Taylor clarified his initial inquiry to say that this question should be a yes or no question instead of one that is scaled. He posited that if the answer is no, the committee should not support the training. F Taylor recommended a model similar to the one utilized at the Carpenters' Union that implements a scale from not recommended, recommended and highly recommended. J Turgeon mentioned in the past, the city had informed the committee to utilize four metrics like not advantageous, advantageous, highly advantageous etc, and to not use any numbers so they may need to revise the rubric anyways to comply with such standards.

A Dao raised concerns regarding how each section is weighted as some sections are worth only 5 points while others are worth 9 and asked the committee to review those determinations. K Pelletier agreed. In response to J Turgeon's comment about city standards, P Morano noted the goal is apparently to prevent the committee from boxing themselves in with numbers as a highly advantageous training might score lowly, but if the rubric is just used internally, it would be fine. A Drummy noted that we could use the rubric internally but when submitting the reports to the city managers we would utilize the metrics as per city guidelines. The committee decided to table this conversation and authorized a subcommittee meeting for further discussion.

#### WJF Program Report:

A Drummy shared that 68 students are enrolled so far in FY23. A Drummy reviewed the demographic breakdown which only ever changes by 1-2% month-to-month. She mentioned that the demographic breakdown remains consistent especially with genders. A Drummy then reviewed current job placement statistics. A Drummy then reviewed numbers for current trainees and graduates. Clinical Medical Assistant, Phlebotomy and Building Pathways just finished up a couple weeks ago. Their job placements are still being collected, but she knows at least one Phlebotomist has been placed and at least one Building Pathways graduate has been placed with DPW. Several CCMA graduates have received job offers and have started working.

A Drummy reviewed the CDL A trainees. Five individuals are currently in training. One trainee passed and got his license. Considering the obstacles associated with this training, she is reluctant to send students to NETTTS to complete their CDL A again. The Worcester Jobs Fund contact at NETTTS who they typically work with has since left and it seems our students has fallen through the cracks so staff is working with the director of admissions to make sure our students finish. She is interested to see how the CDL A folks perform through the Parker School. J Turgeon noted that they are a lot more expensive. F Taylor emphasized that if Parker has a much better track record, that would be a better investment. A Dao noted that a factor may be that the training is in Connecticut and the NETTTS staff may be ill equipped to prepare students who are testing in Massachusetts. K Pelletier suggested that committee or staff members have a conversation with the entity who administers these tests. A Drummy announced the goal is to help the last three pass and go from there.

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A Drummy reviewed the CCMA fall cohort. Four took the test and one failed. The remaining students who need to take the test will do so on April 2. A Drummy then reviewed the Phlebotomy training. Six trainees finished externship. Five took the national exam and one failed. Two will take the test on April 2.

The Building Pathways Pre-Apprenticeship program graduation went extremely well. A Drummy expressed gratitude to everyone who came. All have applied to at least one apprenticeship program, one has gotten a job at Worcester DPW.

A Drummy debriefed the committee on the CDL B Training that started on January 9. All took their first attempt at the road test and all of them failed. One of them was extremely close to passing but ran out of time. They are all scheduled to take their second try the week of March 6.

A Drummy reviewed the CCMA spring cohort. The instructor resigned within the first couple of weeks and they've since obtained a new instructor who immediately tested positive for COVID-19. The students are doing BOUNCE this week but will start up next week with the new instructor. This has been a bumpy start but there are discussions around extending the class by a week to make up for lost time.

A Drummy reviewed the selected participants for the spring Phlebotomy program and their demographic breakdown. P Morano was impressed with recruitment and asked how staff find and recruit participants. A Drummy replied that the WJF are in a lot of community groups and are out giving flyers but there is so much interest that staff members often don't have to do much legwork. Lately, a lot of people are saying they find out about the trainings on social media.

A Drummy shared staff are recruiting for a School Bus Driver cohort starting March 7 and an Environmental Remediation class. P Morano is impressed with how far the city has gone and commended staff and committee members. He noted that 20 years ago the city would give funding to training providers who would bring individuals in, show them the help wanted ads and help them with their resume and that was the extent of it. F Taylor thanked A Drummy for showing the committee members everything including the things they don't want to hear such as five people failing. He noted that transparency helps the committee members ask questions and be better moving forward. K Pelletier also thanked Arianna and Anh and asked the committee to consider how they can help retain staff.

#### Other Items/Announcements:

P Morano announced they have found a replacement for Ethan Brown. Her name is Victoria and she grew up in Fitchburg, lives in Worcester, went to Clark and got her masters in Public Administration and Policy. She is fluent in English and Spanish and is currently an international student advisor at Worcester state. Her first day should be March 13.

J Turgeon invited the committee to a manufacturing summit and breakfast to discuss available training and resources on March 16 at Holy Cross.

#### Adjourn:

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- A motion to adjourn was made and the committee adjourned at 11:21 A.M.

The next monthly meeting will be Thursday, March 24 2023, at 10:00 a.m.

*Respectfully submitted by Anh Dao*

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