

## Worcester Jobs Fund Oversight Committee

April 27, 2023

10:00 a.m.

Via WebEx

### Meeting Minutes

WJF Oversight Committee Attendance: Karen Pelletier, Fred Taylor, Ruth Seward

WJF Guest Attendance: Victoria Porteiro-Cejas, Lauren Silk, Jorge Rivera, William Burg, Daniel McNulty

WJF Staff Attendance: Arianna Drummy, Anh Dao

- No quorum reached.

#### DECCO Recruitment and Training

W Burg from DECCO, Inc. reviewed their upcoming pipefitters' apprenticeship program and shared their intentions to hire Worcester residents. He emphasized they are seeking quality candidates and plan to emphasize safety. Qualified applicants should have reliable transportation as they have a job site in Brookline. The program takes place two days a week from September to May for three years. A Drummy shared details about the Building Pathways students and requested information about the program to share with past and future program graduates. W Burg responded he will share the flyer they are using to recruit. He mentioned that there are no hard qualifications for this position, however they are looking for folks with respect for themselves, the willingness to learn and some level of mechanical aptitude. K Pelletier asked if a high school diploma would be required. W Burg clarified a high school diploma is required. K Pelletier then shared the history and mission of the Worcester Jobs Fund. She then requested A Drummy share the DECCO recruitment flyer with the entire committee to be shared out with committee members' individual networks. W Burg expressed their passion for educating students and staff about the trades. A Drummy inquired about the starting wages for apprentices. W Burg replied that DECCO has a merit-based pay schedule. However, apprentices are the only employees on a structured pay schedule. Apprentices enter bootcamp at \$21/hour. Once they complete boot camp, they will start at \$17.50 and move up to about \$35/hour as third year apprentices. K Pelletier requested clarification about whether the hourly wage included benefits as part of its compensation estimate. W Burg answered that a full benefits package is counted in addition to the hourly wage.

#### Building Pathways and Federal Infrastructure

D McNulty from the Massachusetts Building Trades Council introduced his colleague, J Rivera, the president of the Worcester-Fitchburg Building Trades Council. They shared some details about their organization, its role, and how this conversation arose from reaching out to J Turgeon about the Federal Infrastructure grants. D McNulty shared that part of the scale grant applicants would be scored on was local job development. He explained that the Building Trades Council is on the frontier for some of this work in terms of education as the amount of federal money available can be overwhelming for municipalities. The Building Trades Council was hoping to collaborate with the Worcester Jobs Fund Building Pathways to draft an application from the City of Worcester. He directed committee members to a page on the Metropolitan Area Planning Council website entitled 'Win Federal Money and Create Good Jobs for your Community.' They've invited representatives from cities and towns, targeting

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Departments of Transportation and Public Works and offered resources for applying for grants. He explained that these grants have workforce development resources specifically if projects support one of the following goals: a) increasing women and minority participation; b) addressing workforce gaps; c) building skills [.....]. D McNulty shared their desires to participate and provide structure around new hires and job development should the city want to invest the time and effort to apply for federal money. Any project the city might have put off for awhile such as replacing lead pipes or retrofitting older buildings would qualify for this funding. A partnership with the Building Trades Council would offer Worcester's application an edge. K Pelletier thanked D McNulty for sharing this information and emphasized how important it is for city staff to not just be aware of these funding opportunities, but also to be aware of these potential partnerships. D McNulty agreed and mentioned that something they're doing is offering rejected applicants 'post-mortems' that essentially explain why an application was rejected. He then cited the Cape Cod bridge as an example of an application that failed because they did not consider the project's effect on local communities.

#### Approval of March 23, 2023 Meeting Minutes:

As there was no quorum, the meeting minutes were tabled.

#### Economic Development Update:

V Porteiro shared updates on TIF projects. Most projects are not meeting their goals. The Doherty Memorial project is closest to meeting their goals. A couple new projects are starting up this summer including Washington Square Hotel. K Pelletier shared that this committee has been hearing about the Washington Square Fund for several years now and if the sale goes through, the committee should receive \$100,000 out of that sale. V Porteiro shared that she has heard about that, but no permits have been issued yet and she will share the details when she has updates.

#### WJF Financial Update:

As of April 7, 2023, we are on track to spending down the remainder of the Worcester Jobs Fund budget. A Drummy is meeting with Carlene immediately after the committee meeting to discuss the budget in further detail. As for the DOT budget, she announced that the remaining \$21,593 will be rolled over to next years DOT budget as it has been confirmed that the contract has been extended. She noted that the Building Pathways Boston has never spent the entirety of their contract, so she would like to propose ways to spend down the money. She suggested recruiting a class of 12 or increasing their stipends or offering gas cards as participants do travel quite a lot. A Drummy then reviewed the Washington Square Budget which has approximately \$16,000 remaining. \$9,000 will be encumbered by EPA stipends and an additional \$55,000 will be encumbered by NETTTS. F Taylor asked to discuss the NETTTS contract as the committee has previously expressed concerns about NETTTS results. A Drummy shared that one of the students have passed on their third attempt. NETTTS continues to cite the state troopers' increasing strictness as the main reason for the lack of student success. K Pelletier recommend we arrange a meeting with our representatives to discuss whether this failure is across the board or specifically seen with NETTTS trainees.

#### WJF Program Update:

A Drummy shared that the final count for FY 23 enrollment is 98 students. She then reviewed the student demographics and the pre- and post-training job placement statistics. Before training, students

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on average make \$17.66/hour, with 41% of trainees receiving benefits. After training, their average wage is \$22.23/hour with 81% receiving benefits. There are currently 7 CCMA trainees, 9 Phlebotomy trainees, 20 School Bus trainees, 4 CDL A trainees and 13 CDL B trainees. There are 8 CCMA graduates, 7 Phlebotomy graduates, 10 Building Pathways graduates and 1 CDL A graduate. Out of the graduates, 6 from CCMA have been placed, 3 from Phlebotomy, 2 from Building Pathways and 1 from CDL A. A Drummy shared that an additional Building Pathways graduates just got into the Carpenters' Union and another student got into the Electricians' Union Local 226. A Dao shared that she just received an email from a School Bus student who officially passed the road test and completed the program.

A Drummy reviewed the ongoing CDL A cohort. 2 students are on their fourth attempt and 1 student is waiting to take their first attempt. Unfortunately, 1 student has been unreachable so we cannot report on their status. She then reviewed the CDL B cohort. One student passed, one is going for their third attempt and three are going for their fourth attempts. A Dao then reviewed the Clinical Medical Assistant cohort.

A Drummy reviewed the Phlebotomy cohort. They are excelling academically and are excited to start externship. 5 students will be going to UMass and 4 students will be going to Heywood Hospital. She then reviewed the School Bus students. One student has passed their road test, most of the first cohort is doing behind the wheel training and students from the second cohort are either already doing behind the wheel training or working on passing their permits. A Drummy reviewed the EPA April cohort. A Drummy reviewed the CDL B cohort scheduled to start in May.

#### Committee Vacancies:

K Pelletier shared that as per committee guidelines, committee members who miss multiple consecutive meetings were contacted by R Seward and herself. Those committee members decided to step down as they could not uphold their commitments to the Worcester Jobs Fund committee. K Pelletier reviewed the makeup of the board and asked whether we should revisit the intended make up of the board since turnover has indicated the pipeline may not exist for those individuals to join the committee. F Taylor emphasized that we should maintain the chemistry of the board and we want to make sure to strike a balance to bring in a committee member that will express their opinions without bringing in unnecessary tension and conflict. K Pelletier agreed and noted that she has seen that on other committees. Part of what makes the Worcester Jobs Fund committee function is that all the members have a common interest in the mission of the Worcester Jobs Fund. F Taylor commented that some folks think committee members can just be individuals, but he wants to emphasize the value of belonging to an organization that can represent an industry or community. K Pelletier recommended the committee take time to brainstorm organizations to reach out to and setting up an additional meeting to discuss potential replacements.

#### Member Announcements

F Taylor suggested taking July off for summer. K Pelletier agreed.

#### Adjourn:

- No quorum reached. The meeting adjourned at 11:15 AM.

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The next monthly meeting will be Thursday, May 25 2023, at 10:00 a.m.

*Respectfully submitted by Anh Dao*

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