



METRO NORTH REGIONAL EMPLOYMENT BOARD MEETING NOTES

September 25, 2013

Present: Reed Brockman, Philip Bronder-Giroux, Andrea Donahue, Joanna Dowling, Madeline Hoffman, Polly Harold (representing Susan Jepson), Karen Sampson Johnson, Danny LeBlanc, Kambiz Maali, Mina Reddy, Larisa Schelkin, Cheryl Scott, Mark Tardiff, Tricia Tyler, Susan Walsh.

Absent: Lisa Anderson, Charlene Bauer, Kitty Bowman, John Drinkwater, Camille Ferrullo, William Hart, John Kendzior, Rose Lydon, Lisa Amaya Price, Paul Richard, Steven Sullivan, Sandra Smith, Mike Spinale, Mary Tighe, Juan Vega, Kerry Wollner.

REB Staff: Linda Bass, Priscilla Golding, Mike Hatfield, Kimberly Napier, Mallory St. Brice, Holly Vogel, Meelynn Wong.

Guests: Peter Farkas, Career Source; Katy Gentile, The Career Place; Karen Colón Hayes, City of Malden.

New Member Introductions and Announcements: Joanna Dowling

Joanna introduced new REB member Andrea Donahue, Director of Human Resources for Triumvirate Environmental in Somerville, and Karen Sampson Johnson, Area Director of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, also in Somerville. Joanna also introduced Polly Harold of the National Senior Network, who was sitting in for REB member Susan Jepson.

In addition, Linda announced that the REB had very recently been granted status as lead of an 8th STEM Network in Massachusetts, and as such will be receiving annual funding to help support STEM activities in the region.

Review of June Minutes

Joanna requested a motion to approve the minutes of the June 2013 REB meeting. The motion was moved and seconded, and the minutes of the June 2013 REB meeting were approved as presented.

Comments/Questions re: Committee and REB Update Reports

Joanna asked if there were any questions regarding the Policy, Funding, and Oversight Committee Report, the Youth Council Report, or the REB Update Report; there were none.

ABE College to Careers Transitions Committee: Mina Reddy

Mina Reddy announced the formation of a new REB committee that will focus on facilitating the transition of adult learners from Adult Basic Education (ABE) programs to a college experience, and include ABE representation from colleges, career centers, and businesses. She then provided some of the reasons for establishing this committee, as follows: 1) From the ABE side, there is an increased emphasis on helping students with career planning and determining their next steps after they leave the program; 2) On the community college side, there is an increased emphasis on college completion (rather than enrollment only); and 3) There is a growing need for workers with skills and credentials. Mina further added that the committee would be a useful forum to share information about different systems, identify barriers to transition as well as ways the REB can support transition, and perhaps develop a pilot project.

Mina has volunteered to start off as chair, and is looking for members who would like to join the committee. Linda will send out a follow-up email to all members. If interested, Kimberly Napier will be the REB staff person working on the committee. If you are interested, you can contact Linda, Mina or Kimberly.

Conflict of Interest Training

Linda then announced that all REB members are required to complete the online Conflict of Interest training ("for municipal employees") every two years. The training takes from anywhere between 20-40 minutes, and a certificate of completion is generated at the end. Please complete the training before Oct. 21, if possible, and send a copy of your certificate of completion to Linda.

Review/Approval - Strategic Plan FY2013 - FY2014 Benchmarking Chart

Linda summarized recent work on the REB Strategic Plan:

In the March 2013 REB meeting, it was suggested that the REB create more measurable outcomes and refine some of the timelines in the Benchmarking Chart. Kimberly Napier took the lead on this task, working closely with other REB Associate Directors. All of the objectives have been adjusted so that they are measurable; we can now see how the REB is performing against those objectives.

In addition, the REB received two comments from the public, and the narrative was adjusted slightly based on that input. One of the comments, from the City of Chelsea, was that the plan seemed oriented toward higher level positions, and that they needed to see that we were also going to provide opportunities at the entry level. Although entry-level opportunities were in the plan, a new section entitled "other industries and occupations" has been added for clarification. A brief question/answer session followed.

The REB then collectively decided that it would make the most sense to report on the progress of the strategic plan twice each year.

Joanna requested a motion to approve the Benchmarking Chart. The motion was moved and seconded, and Benchmarking Chart was approved as presented.

FY'14 Revenue Plan in Support of the Strategic Plan

Linda then explained that the Revenue Plan shows all of the REB's existing funding, as well as potential funding sources. The summary on the first page indicates the total amount of money devoted to each industry represented in the strategic plan priorities. This also reflects, to some extent, the kind of money that is available to the REB (such as for healthcare or advanced manufacturing). Linda also mentioned that, as part of the WIB Certification process, the REB conducted a gap analysis; what do we need, compared to what we have, in order to do the work outlined in the Strategic Plan?

Joanna requested a motion to approve the Revenue Plan. The motion was moved and seconded, and Revenue Plan was approved as presented.

Youth Unemployment Presentation and Discussion

Linda then introduced the next speakers: Katy Gentile, Director of Youth Services for The Career Place; Peter Farkas, Youth Services Manager for Career Source; Karen Colón Hayes, Community Outreach Manager for the Mayor's Office of the City of Malden, and Priscilla Golding, REB Associate Director. The purpose of this presentation and ensuing discussion was to identify solutions to youth unemployment that can be reasonably implemented in the Metro North region, and also to consider these approaches can be linked to the activities outlined in the REB Strategic Plan.

A lively discussion followed on potential ways to provide youth with skills and experience. Suggestions included:

1. Volunteering – “if youth can stick to it!”
 - a. Provides references
 - b. Direct youth to job banks with volunteering opportunities
 - c. MA Nonprofit Network
2. Employers can volunteer to speak to youth about industry and opportunities
 - a. Offer tours
 - b. Some private sector companies may have a volunteer services department – good “entry point” for youth
3. The REB can organize meetings with employers to share benefits and success stories/best practices (consider youth up to age 24 – recent grads)
4. Recognize a partner from a consortia/affinity group within an industry (not just “big” companies) – companies involved in these groups tend to “think outside the box.”
5. Create a “bank of projects” for youth to gain experience and build a portfolio (e.g., through Working Cities projects).

6. Continue to explore solutions to transportation barriers (e.g., jobs along MBTA line)

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned.

The next REB meeting will be held on Wednesday, December 11, 2013.