

# EXECUTIVE BOARD COMMITTEE minutes

## 8.30.23

### Staffing

- There are currently 8 current position openings in the Career Center. They have made a request to pause any new grants while they are short staffed. The Workforce Board is currently managing a Healthcare/BH Grant that will need to be implemented in January 2024. Kevin feels confident the Career Center's staffing issues will be met, and they will be ready.
- The Workforce Board is currently made up of 7 employees. Cathy Sturtevant introduced our new Connecting Activities staff, Colleen Gabriel, and Brian Sok. Colleen Gabriel started in May for Connecting Activities. Brian Sok started in July for Connecting Activities/Behavioral Health. Abbey Serpais matriculated in July from Connecting Activities. We presently have job offers extended to two individuals to help support Connecting Activities and ultimately the Workforce Board. They are projected to start Mid-September. Once these new hires are added, the only position to fill will be the Assistant to the Executive Director role. The Workforce Board is currently managing the following:
  - Managing two regional grants: Health Hub and Behavioral Health Grants (one-half time)
  - Managing two Pilot Projects (Presently - 1 p/t facilitator) (Need 2 interns)
  - Managing for 4 Career Center audits: financial, program, oversight, and WIOA (January)
- Colleen Gabriel spoke about the Connecting Activities' DRAFT Plan, which is their list of upcoming events for students in Greater Lowell regional schools. These events will include a tour of LCHC, a job fair in November, a small trade fair in October, and a larger trade fair in April to name a few. Kimberly Bodkin asked how touring the LCHC is a benefit for students? The Workforce Board in general responded that our healthcare partners are eager for students to be fully aware of the career pathways in healthcare. Our board member from Lowell General (Tracey Meek) has also expressed interest in putting together a panel and going into LHS for a career day.

### Funding for FY24-25

- The Connecting activities allotment from Dept of Education has been confirmed. Monies for Connecting Activities have been confirmed from the Department of Education. Kevin spoke about moving forward with VR training for trade occupations. A pilot program started a year ago and has gotten great reviews. Our concept will also better connect us with Unions in our area. Kevin approached D of E to fund this for us. If they are unable to, we can use AARPA monies, should be less than \$30,000. Judy Burke would like to hear about Greg Bunn's feedback on working with the VR software. She is curious if it has been well-received by the adult population.
- The Career Center allotment notification for late September/October was delayed because of budgeting. We will need to go over goals and outcomes from last year, and we will come back to the Board for a full vote.
- One Stop monies have been slashed 60% in the State Budget. The Healey administration did push for it, but ultimately the gov't cut it by 60%. Supplemental monies will cover this, and we have enough discretionary funds that we can carry present staff through to next year. Kevin will have a more thorough update at the next Full Board meeting in September.
- ARPA – City funds (\$2million). These monies are unrestricted, if we run into a crisis, we can use it in an emergency.
- Miscellaneous revenue may be used to plan for staffing grant work.

### Grants

- We are regularly submitting through Commonwealth Corp and EOLWD.
- Re-entry Grant \$200K (July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024). Working with previously incarcerated citizens who are re-entering the workforce, with a focus on Recovery Coaching and manufacturing.
- Behavioral Health Planning Grant \$107K (July 1, 2023 – December 31, 2023). We are the lead on Behavioral Health, working with other workforce boards. We are identifying roles and training providers, with a focus on Recovery Coaches and Mental Health support roles for both new job seekers and incumbent workers. We are in the planning phase and will submit on 9/30. After that we will continue to finalize the plan through December. Grant will start in January and will last 3 years. North Shore is the lead on the Healthcare component of this grant.
- Behavioral Health Training Grant Approx \$300K/year - (January 2024 – 2027).

- QUEST Training Grant – \$1.3 M (Covid impact) (By Comm. of Mass on our behalf). This grant works with displaced workers because of Covid. We worked closely with the Career Center and submitted it to the state, and we were the only ones chosen. This grant is an excellent example of collaboration between the workforce board and the career center. Both Nancy Gagnon and Tim O’Connor helped Hunter with this grant. The Career Center requested no further grants until they can fill vacant employment positions.

### **Board of Directors**

- We have had matriculation on the Board, the retirement of Cynthia Smith. We are extremely grateful for her service and dedication. The Executive Board would like to celebrate Cynthia, maybe plan a dinner or an event.
- Our new nominations include David Daly, CEO, PrideStar Emergency Medical Transportation, in Chelmsford and Chris Dick also from Pridestar – they will share Board duties.
- Toly Chea is another new board member. He is the owner of the Aqualite Corporation in Tyngsborough. He is from Cambodia, and he went to Northeastern where he studied Finance. He successfully worked in finance then invested in Aqualite and is now the new owner of the company. Shaun, our Business Services Rep, is scheduling a tour of Aqualite, and Kevin extended an invitation to the Executive Board to join them on this tour. Aqualite has 2 products: one is a robot that cleans surfaces in everything from surgical rooms to plane interiors. The second product is a pro-active screener that sends out waves to attach and disable the corona virus. Very impressive.

### **Upcoming Meetings**

The Performance and Opportunities Committee meeting is scheduled for September 6, 2023, at 2-3 pm (Zoom). And our next Full Board meeting is scheduled for September 14, 2023, at 2 – 3:30 PM (Hybrid).

### **Adjournment.**