

Buffalo and Erie County Workforce Investment Board
Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

DATE, TIME: October 12th, 2021, 9:00 AM

LOCATION: Zoom and BECWIB Conference Room

ATTENDEES: Fred Boheim, Charles G. Jones, Jr., Brenda W. McDuffie, Oswaldo Mestre, Jr., Patricia Riegler and Myrna Young

EXCUSED/
ABSENT: Andrew Federick, Michael Martin, Robert Mootry, Jr.

STAFF
ATTENDEES: Kit Brown, Jessica Corrigan, Mark Cosgrove, David Kaczor, Francine Nicholas, Joseph Ricchiazzi, Anthony Scello, Russell Sferlazza, Lavon Stephens, Geoffrey Szymanski

GUESTS: Cheryl Fisher

TOPIC	DISCUSSION	ACTION
Call to Order	Mr. Jones called the meeting to order at 9:06 AM and verified a quorum was present.	
<p>1. Executive Director's Report</p> <p>2. Minute Approval for June 8th, 2021 Meeting</p> <p>3. Summary of Recommendations for Gun Violence Prevention Initiative</p>	<p>Mr. Szymanski introduced the new Erie County Healthcare Careers program (EHC) which is replacing the Health Profession Opportunity Grant (HPOG). County Executive Poloncarz and the Erie County Legislature have decided to utilize \$1.6 million from the American Rescue Plan Act funding to continue the program. Mr. Szymanski announced BECWIB/WDC has been awarded \$50,000 to overhaul the Workforce Buffalo website through a new federal grant, the CAREERS Grant, which is also an American Rescue Plan Act program. Mr. Szymanski introduced the Gun Violence Prevention (GVP) initiative which was hastily created by former NYS Governor Cuomo. BECWIB/WDC was awarded \$2.65 million to reach 530 eligible City of Buffalo youth within ten zip codes. Mr. Szymanski explained he directed the team to put out a Request for Proposal (RFP) for this program because of the time restraints and he furthered that four agencies accepted the challenge: The Service Collaborative of WNY, Buffalo Urban League, Catholic Charities and 4Ward Inclusion Consulting. Mr. Szymanski also presented the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for Legal Services, which he directed be advertised upon noticing it had been eight years since BECWIB/WDC solicited legal representation. Mr. Szymanski recommended the board consider Hurwitz & Fine, P.C. to be the BECWIB/WDC legal counsel as they were the majority number one pick among the Review Committee. Mr. Szymanski also announced the BECWIB Local Plan has been reviewed by the New York State Department of Labor (NYSDOL) and found to be in compliance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Mr. Szymanski also welcomed new Special Assistant Kit Brown to the team.</p> <p>Mr. Scello elaborated on the GVP initiative, providing an overview of the four proposals received from The Service Collaborative of WNY (TSC), Catholic Charities of Buffalo (CC), Buffalo Urban League (BUL) and 4ward Inclusion Consulting (4IC) and gave the following recommendations after proposal review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Service Collaborative be awarded \$299,506 with a goal of serving 100 participants at a cost of \$4,992 per participant (based on 60 participants). 	<p>Motion to approve the minutes from the June 8th, 2021 meeting was led by Ms. McDuffie and seconded by Ms. Riegler. All were in favor. Motion carried.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Catholic Charities of Buffalo be awarded \$400,000 with a goal of serving 100 participants at a cost of \$5,000 per participant (based on 80 participants). - Buffalo Urban League be awarded \$500,000 with a goal of serving 100 participants at a cost of \$6,667 per participant (based on 75 participants). - 4ward Inclusion Consulting not be awarded any funds based on their proposal not meeting minimum scoring requirements. <p>Members requested a more detailed summary of each proposal and Mr. Scello agreed to provide this information. There was discussion among committee members and staff about the timeframe of the initiative and how remaining funds would best be utilized in the local community. Mr. Scello suggested a Youth Standing Committee (YSC) meeting be held to further discuss this initiative.</p>	<p>Motion to approve the recommendations for the GVP initiative was led by Ms. Riegle and seconded by Ms. Young. Five voted in favor and one voted against. Motion carried.</p> <p>A motion to amend the previous motion to reflect approval of the recommendations of WIB staff with a caveat that remaining GVP funds only be awarded after further discussion was led by Ms. Riegle and seconded by Ms. Young. Five voted in favor and one voted against. Motion carried.</p>
<p>4. Resolution Awarding Letter of Engagement for Legal Services</p>	<p>Ms. Nicholas began by thanking Ms. Fisher for her many years of service and explained on September 2nd, 2021, BECWIB issued a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for Legal Services. BECWIB published Notice in the Buffalo News, the Challenger, and with the Erie Bar Association. Although BECWIB sent emails to the Minority Bar Association of WNY and the Women’s Bar Association of the State of New York - WNY Chapter, requesting that the Notice be posted to their association’s website or through an e-mail blast to members, no response was forthcoming. On September 24th, 2021 the deadline for submission, BECWIB received five responses. The five legal firms that responded consisted of highly respected and qualified attorneys in the community. These five firms were Philips Lytle, LLP, Hurwitz & Fine, P.C., Hodgson Russ, LLP, Feldman Kiefer and Gross Schumann. On October 7th, 2021 the BECWIB RFQ Review Committee, consisting of five members, met to review and discuss the responses received. After a robust discussion and based on the criteria in the evaluation form – required certifications, equal opportunity policy statement, attorney qualifications and experience, scope of legal services and hourly billing rates and charges for disbursements – the Review Committee determined, by majority vote, Hurwitz & Fine P.C., with Joseph S. Brown, Esq. as the lead attorney, to be the best qualified to serve the legal needs of BECWIB and the WDC. Therefore, the Review Committee recommended the Board authorize BECWIB to enter into a Letter of Engagement for Legal Services with Hurwitz & Fine, P.C. Board members requested a summary of each of the five applications and Ms. Nicholas agreed to provide this information.</p>	<p>Motion to approve Resolution awarding a Letter of Engagement for Legal Services to Hurwitz & Fine, P.C. was led by Ms. Young and seconded by Ms. Riegle. Five voted in favor and there was one abstention. Motion carried.</p>
<p>5. First Quarter Budget Report</p>	<p>Mr. Ricchiazzi presented the Program Year (PY) 2021 1st Quarter Budget Report and indicated it has been a better first quarter as compared to last year. There has been nothing that stands out as too high or low. Total Salaries and Fringes were \$835,677, Total Operating Expenses were \$215,010 and Total Training and Support Expenses were \$353,750. 82% of the budget remains for WIOA funds. 27% of the budget remains for the Health Profession Opportunity Grant (HPOG). As HPOG ended 9/29/2021, additional closeout costs are planned to be incurred through 12/31/2021 and an update will be provided at the next board meeting. 90% of the budget remains for other grants which include Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) and Employment Recovery Dislocated Worker Grant (ER-NDWG). A budget modification is anticipated for next quarter.</p>	
<p>6. Nominating Committee Recommendations for 2021-2022 Slate of Officers</p>	<p>Ms. Young, Chairperson of the Nominating Committee, indicated the Committee met on October 6th, 2021 and discussed member attendance and involvement. The</p>	

	<p>Committee requested letters be sent out to board members thanking them for their participation and emphasizing the importance of attending meetings. Record of attendance for 2020-2021 meetings will be included in the letters. It was suggested a strong appeal be made to the Board at the upcoming WIB meeting for recommendations of board members, especially business leaders and not-for-profit leaders, asking the board to keep in mind the importance of diversity as well as maintaining the required balance of public and private sector members. The 2021-2022 Slate of Officers to be presented at the upcoming WIB meeting will be: Chair: Charles G. Jones, Jr. 1st Vice Chair: Fred Boheim 2nd Vice Chair: Brenda McDuffie Secretary: Patricia Riegler Treasurer: Robert Mootry, Jr.</p> <p>7. 2021-2022 Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement Mr. Jones reviewed and asked the group to complete and submit the 2021-2022 Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement.</p> <p>8. Erie County Healthcare Careers Mr. Cosgrove elaborated on the new Erie County Healthcare Careers program (EHC). There will be notable differences between EHC and HPOG – there will no longer be a lottery style restriction and the main focus will be longer-term, higher-end trainings like Licensed Practical Nurse, Registered Nurse, Surgical Technologist and Respiratory Therapist which offer more livable wages closer to \$20/hour and above. There is a great demand for these types of healthcare workers in Western New York. The program will continue to include support in the form of childcare assistance and travel allowance. The goal in the next year is to enroll approximately 200 people in these trainings.</p> <p>9. Business Services Update Ms. Corrigan introduced two new team members who recently joined the BECWIB/WDC Business Services team – Mauricio Perez joined the team as a Business Services Specialist in July 2021 and Leslie Ayer joined in September 2021 (upon the conclusion of HPOG) as a Program Coordinator which brings the total to five team members and significantly increases capacity. Ms. Corrigan shared that it has been a busy few months and everything is moving in a positive direction. Pathways Programming update: Three programs are scheduled for Program Year 2021-2022 with one additional program budgeted; Minesh Patel, Business Services Specialist – Project Manager, has worked to implement a new vetting process for training providers to ensure the highest possible outcomes. OJT update: Bukola Mallia, Business Services Specialist – Business and Workforce Development worked closely with Ms. Corrigan to revisit the process of conducting outreach for the OJT program. Because of these efforts there has been a significant increase in interest and participation around the program. There are ten open OJT applications and two open contracts with a third to be signed this week. Business and Partner Outreach update: The increase in team members has effected an increase in capacity with a diverse assemblage of industries served.</p>	
<p>Adjournment</p>	<p>Mr. Jones expressed his gratitude to County Executive Mark Poloncarz for his dedication to pushing through the grant for the Erie County Healthcare Careers program which should be very effective and successful. Mr. Jones thanked members in attendance for their time and participation and called for a motion to adjourn.</p>	<p>Motion to adjourn led by Ms. Young and seconded by Ms. Riegler. All were in favor. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 10:40 AM.</p>