

QUARTERLY MEETING

SUNY Global Center, 116 East 55th Street
New York, New York

Wednesday, September 18, 2013
8:30 – 10:30 AM

MINUTES

Board Members Present:

William Abramson	Rae Linefsky	Deirdre Scott
Don Ashkenase	Joseph McDermott	Maria Serrano (D)
Horace Barker	Thomas Moloney	Brenda Jenifer
Scott Berger	Kristin Morse	
Les Bluestone	John Moye (D)	
Reg Foster	Jeanne Mullgrav	
Katy Gaul (D)	Chris Neale	
Celeste Gudas	Jocelynn Rainey	

Guests Present:

Maritere Arce	Deldreana Peterkin	Florence Wong
David Berman	Katie Schwab	Leah Herbert
Karen Coleman	Cecil House	Judy Ramirez
Suzanne Lynn	Sideya Sherman	

Vice Chair’s Report

Standing in for Board Chair Kathleen Kearns, Mr. Barker welcomed the Board and guests. He provided updates on the recently-approved Program Year 2013 NYC Local Workforce Investment Area Local Plan and on the Congressional activities related to the reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). He thanked agencies and businesses that submitted letters in support of WIA reauthorization, including Burlington Coat Factory, Forest City Ratner, Whole Foods Market, Swisspost, Allen Health, Cooperative Home, and Partners in Care (Visiting Nurse Service). Mr. Barker also noted that Kyle Kimball, the newly-appointed President of the NYC Economic Development Corporation and new WIB member, will join the next meeting.

NYC Office of Human Capital Development (OHCD) Briefing

OHCD Executive Director, Michelle Light, opened with several stark statistics about the need for workforce development services. She highlighted OHCD’s first annual report and asked members and attendees to share the report with three people in their networks. She also provided an overview of OHCD’s new website. She then introduced the work of OHCD,

explaining that it builds on the vision for an efficient, effective, flexible, innovative, and data-driven system that Deputy Mayors Steel, Gibbs, and Chancellor Walcott have articulated.

Todd Levinson presented on OHCD's research agenda. He explained the work that has been done to date to understand how funding flows through the system and the next steps in the process, including an assessment of who is served by the system, what services they receive, and what outcome are produced. He shared that once the Wage Reporting System bill, A7911-B (2013), is signed into law by Governor Andrew Cuomo, OHCD and city agencies will have access to more information to enable a cross-system assessment of outcome measures.

Next, Cesar Cardenas provided an update on OHCD's work related to the Board. He shared OHCD's proposed plan for Board membership and encouraged the Board to reach out to OHCD about new members. He also explained that OHCD is preparing a new document to set forth Board member roles and responsibilities. In addition, Mr. Cardenas provided an update on the distribution and implementation of city-administered projects funded with federal Hurricane Sandy National Emergency Grants (NEG). He noted that SBS has done a good job administering the NEG grants in partnerships with other agencies and that the State and Federal Departments of Labor gave New York City positive monitoring reports. Finally, Mr. Cardenas reported that he is finalizing new Memorandums of Understanding for mandated partners and that the city will be requiring new financial disclosures for members. With regard to the financial disclosures, Commissioner Mullgrav asked whether these will apply to government members and Mr. Cardenas responded that he will ask the City Law Department how the disclosures relate to government members.

Katherine Klem then presented on OHCD's work to better understand the customer experience and to make system more customer centric to ensure there is "no wrong door". She explained that she is exploring ways to advance the Open Seat Locator pilot with seven adult education providers in Brooklyn. She noted the particular importance of having the NYC Department of Education participate in this system in its next phase. Ms. Klem also shared OHCD's work to research how New Yorkers find, navigate, and experience services and that the Ford Foundation has expressed interest in funding this work. In response to Ms. Klem's presentation, Ms. Linefsky pointed out that this research should consider the experience of people who have significant challenges (e.g., low literacy rates) because it is currently difficult to know where to refer such individuals. Ms. Linefsky, also noted that smaller providers, such as community-based organizations, need stronger connections to city agencies.

Finally, Elisabeth Voigt shared an update on the transition from the GED to a new high school equivalency exam. She provided an overview of the new exam and identified four challenges that have emerged from her discussions with agencies and stakeholders. These challenges are communications, professional development, computer infrastructure, and test readiness. She explained that OHCD is working with the NYS Education Department to develop a funding proposal to address needs in each of these areas. She noted that the communications issues are particularly urgent and that OHCD would appreciate any advice or resources Board members can share to help develop a plain language message around the transition. Ms. Voigt also provided an update on the WIA reauthorization bill that has been passed by the U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Policy Committee Update

Mr. Barker announced that there was not a quorum of Board members present and votes needed to be postponed. He also reported out that the Policy Committee has been taking a closer look at the Individual Training Grants and had adjusted the pricing limits for some programs based on SBS's recommendations.

Partner Agency Presentation – NYC Housing Authority (NYCHA) Zone Coordination Model

Cecil House, NYCHA's General Manager, joined the Board meeting to present on the work of NYCHA's Office of Resident Economic Empowerment and Sustainability (REES). He explained that NYCHA has historically duplicated services with other organizations. REES has changed that with a new model based on partnerships with external workforce development and educational services. Starting in 2009, REES also shifted from a narrow focus on employment services to a broader focus on empowerment, including financial literacy, asset building, and business development.

REES uses a zone coordination model with 15 zones each of which have a coordinator to partner with external service providers. This model, which he described as locally based and locally focused, has been successful. Mr. House outlined increases in Section 3 placements and job improvements and several examples of successful partnership. He highlighted the partnership with SBS to ensure that half of employees at the new Barclays Arena are NYCHA residents and the 441 temporary employment positions created through the Sandy NEG grant. Mr. House also described NYCHA's new web-based referral system, through which NYCHA staff can connect residents with the services provided through the zone coordination model. Through this system, over 1300 referrals have been made and 40% of residents who have made an appointment with a service provider have kept it. REES's goal is 3,900 new job placements or career advancements for NYCHA residents in target neighborhoods by 2015.

Mr. Neale asked Mr. House how NYCHA decided to shift from playing the role of service provider to service coordinator. Mr. House explained that this was a challenging decision but it came out of discussions with the US. Department of Housing and Urban Development and with an increased recognition of the broad array of service providers that are available to residents.

Mr. Bluestone then provided reflections on his visit to Green City Force in Red Hook, Brooklyn. He described this program as "one of the gem programs the city has to offer." He gave an overview of the 6 month training program in clean energy and sustainable economy. The program provides students with training, a certificate at completion, support resources, such as a Metrocard, and ongoing job counseling support for two years. Mr. Bluestone also talked about the Urban Farm Core program, which is funded by the Center for Economic Opportunity. This program teaches participants about healthy food and helps them develop leadership skills. He shared the stories of several participants and successes of the program. Notably, he stated that 75 percent of people who have gone through the program have moved onto jobs or education programs.

Updates from Agencies

Mr. Barker invited SBS and DYCD to share any updates. Mr. Neale stated that SBS is on track to keep pace with its job placements for the year.

Conclusion

Mr. Barker thanked all presenters and announced that the next meeting will take place on December 12.

The meeting was adjourned.