

City of Somerville, Massachusetts Job Creation and Retention Trust

Trustees

Thomas Bent
Vickie Choitz
Lisa Cook
Silvana Dinka
Thomas Galligani
Anika Van Eaton
Rand Wilson
Josh Grehan
Matthew McLaughlin

Minutes

Somerville Job Creation and Retention Trust
Tuesday, September 10th, 2019, at 6:00PM
3rd Floor Conference Room, Somerville City Hall

In attendance: Vickie Choitz, Anika Van Eaton, Lisa Cook, Thomas Bent, Silvana Dinka, Rand Wilson

Staff Present: Ben Sommer

Meeting began at 6:14pm

1. Approval of August 13th, 2019 Minutes

- Vickie Choitz, Anika Van Eaton, Lisa Cook, Thomas Bent, Rand Wilson, and Silvana Dinka approved the minutes.

2. Updates and Announcements

- Ben Sommer gave an overview of his meeting with staff from Boston's Office of Workforce Development. Key points on the Neighborhood Jobs Trust (NJT) were that Boston issues a single RFP every year, giving funds to approximately 15 training providers. Contracts are one-year awards and applicants are required to apply again. Boston has a household income requirement of which clients served must be at or below 80% AMI. Contracts are performance based with funds distributed after proof of placement and retention. 50% of funds given up-front, which Somerville cannot do. No evaluation for the NJT is included, though assessments are given of individual contracts.
 - Rand asked if a global RFP would be the best way to go for the JCRT.
 - Silvana asked if Boston could share any examples of successful programs.
- Anika gave an update on the Union Square Community Benefits agreement as it might relate to jobs and the JCRT. The draft CBA, which has not yet been voted on by the full

Union Square Neighborhood Council membership, includes language on union labor, funding for staff at Somerville Community Corporation's First Source Jobs Program and at Union Square Main Streets, partnerships with high school voc-tech, and support for high-road businesses, and \$1.5 million to the Jobs Trust in addition to the regular \$2.52/sf linkage fee. The membership will vote on the draft CBA on September 22 and 23.

- Lisa asked about the demographics of Union Square and figures on employment.
- Vickie gave a short run-down on updated budget numbers. Top-line figures suggest approximately \$3 million in linkage payments from the beginning of 2019 through 2020.

3. Design Exercise

- Ideas from last meetings brainstorming session strategies 2 through 4 were reviewed.
 - Tom asked about whether the Worklab Innovations project would require full-time staff and whether that would be at the City or another non-profit. Ben responded that it could be at a non-profit. It was also clarified at this project would likely be an employer-subscription model with funding from JCRT being used to support the first one to two years of launching and establishing the model, , as an example.
 - Rand asked to make sure that wage theft be highlighted more. For the exercise, the group agreed to make it a separate idea for investment rather than woven into other ideas.
 - Lisa noted that staffing for the CISCO training is not funded by the State and additional resources are needed to fund this program in the future (the State is providing the software and train-the-trainer training). Anika suggested a separate RFP could be issued to fund the CISCO training specifically. CISCO training could also be included in strategies 1 and 4, training programs and digital literacy.
 - Rand asked about tracking local hires at Somerville anchor employers like Tufts and Partners. City should be going to anchor employers and requesting this information.
 - Tom said that there are many barriers for students in training programs such as childcare. Vickie responded that funding for this could be included in an RFP. Anika noted that funding for other features like stipends could be included as well.
- Vickie explained the design exercise and Anika modeled what an example investment “package” might look like. JCRT board members in attendance asked for time to look at the investment ideas and to complete the exercise at the next meeting.

4. Public Forum

- Because of the delay on the design exercise, it was agreed that the public forum be pushed back to Tuesday, November 12th. Rand asked if it was possible for the design exercise to arrive at a consensus, suggested that a minority report, if applicable, could be a good idea. Board members agreed that this public forum would be a listening session for board members to hear input from the public but that final decisions on investments

rest with this board. Anika suggested that some background on the JCRT be included as well, such as the by-laws. Tom suggested that the presentation be put on the City website prior to the forum so the public could review it.

5. Adjournment

- Tom Bent made a motion to adjourn, Anika Van Eaton seconded the motion.
- Meeting adjourned at 7:55pm

APPENDIX A JCRT Ideation Summary

JCRT Ideas for Potential Funding

These ideas all emerged through the process of brainstorm and discussion. We have categorized the ideas according to the strategies outlined in the Somerville Talent Equity Playbook.

Ideas for Strategy #1: Coordinated system of education and training services

Online jobs board - a place for Somerville employers to post jobs that are open in Somerville.

Career navigation - there are a few different ideas we discussed funding:

- Career navigator position at non-profits
- City-wide corps of job and career navigators
- Support the career navigation function in any funding opportunities

Definition: “Career navigation services: Activities intended to help individuals of any age and at any point in their lives make educational, training, and occupational choices and manage their careers. Specific services may include the provision of career information, assessment and self-assessment tools, counseling interviews, career education programs, internships, work-search programs, and transition services.” (Source: [Center for American Progress Career Navigation Report, 2010](#))

Education and Training programs - we discussed two possible ways of funding:

1. Contextualized integrated education and training program for English Language Learners. These could be employer-based or at an education/training provider (training provider could be Somerville HS Career Technical Education and/or Bunker Hill Community College). Specify target industries/occupations or at least require applicant to make strong data case for why focus on selected industry/occupation.
2. Training for underserved populations in in-demand industries or occupations.

Definition: “Integrated Education and Training (IET) is an education model that combines occupational skills training and basic or academic skills instruction to increase and expedite the educational and career advancement of participants.” (Source: [California Department of Education Integrated Education and Training brief, 2017](#))

Scholarships - Money directly to young people for training programs.

Planning and research grants (for the Board and for others) - funding for small research projects or to support staff to administer some of these projects.

Professional development for teachers (possible World Education in Boston) - training for the adult educators in Somerville.

Coordination

Somerville Economic Development Division collects information on employment and skill needs of incoming employers; convenes local education and training providers regularly (quarterly?) to share employer needs (as collected from incoming employers and providers in their interactions with existing employers) and to strategize as a group how to prepare Somervillians for jobs. Include employer groups such as Main Streets and Chamber, as well as willing employers, as possible.

Strategy #2: Employee engagement

Support worker-owned cooperatives

Initiative to support the development of worker-owned cooperatives. This could include targeting businesses who need succession planning, workshops, training, and technical assistance. This would need to include access to financing to support the businesses in transitioning to being worker-owned.

Definition: “A worker cooperative is a values-driven business that puts worker and community benefit at the core of its purpose. The two central characteristics of worker cooperatives are: a) workers own the business and they participate in its financial success on the basis of their labor contribution to the cooperative, and b) workers have representation on and vote for the board of directors, adhering to the principle of one worker, one vote.” (Source: [Democracy at Work Institute: US Federation of Worker Cooperatives](#))

Somerville joins the WorkLab Innovation Network

[WorkLab Innovation Network](#) - an employer-based employee assistance program (“Sustainable Workforce Model). This program has “resource navigators” with deep knowledge of local community resources to assist front-line/entry-level workers with services and strategies. For example, connecting employees to resources for housing, transportation, child care, as well as career and financial coaching. Fund a full-time staff person (based in City Hall or Main Streets?) to develop a Sustainable Workforce Model with employers in Somerville. Jobs Trust funds could provide the initial money in the first few years, and then have fees paid by employers cover program costs over time.

Training for Small Businesses and Entrepreneurs

Work with [MIT Good Jobs, Good Companies Initiative](#) to create a training / education / development program for entrepreneurs and small businesses to help them build their HR structures and policies, and incorporate practices that are good for employees into their business models and HR.

Wage theft training

Training for employers, workers, and the community on wage theft, proper employee classification rules, and other employment law basics.

Strategy #3: Experiential learning

Citywide IT instruction through CISCO Networking Academy at SCALE

Funding for SCALE to purchase routers and IT equipment and pay for staffing to teach Citywide IT instruction through CISCO Networking Academy (Intro, Intermediate, Advanced) instruction (in person and online). Governor Baker invested in the CISCO Networking Academy, which runs a train the trainer model. The curriculum is free, but the staffing and materials needed to run the program are not. CISCO is responsible for connecting graduates with employment after the program.

Strategy #4: Resiliency responses to the “future of work”

Continuous learning

Increase funding for digital literacy programs held by Somerville non-profits and institutions serving adult residents, such as the library, Somerville Media Center, or Artisans Asylum.

Workforce Innovation Pitch

RFP for under \$25,000 to seed a training program that addresses the future of work with a new or “outside the box” training model or emerging industry.

Rapid response and planning

City responds to businesses leaving or planning to leave Somerville. City coordinates planning meeting for service provider to understand the situation. Follow-up with RFP or Purchase Agreement with funding required to execute plan when needed.

Skill Up Somerville Competency Project

Build from [SkillUp Somerville digital competency project](#) by implementing a pilot project with the [Corporation for a Skilled Workforce \(CSW\)](#) to work with employers and education/training providers to create competency profiles for targeted occupations. One idea would be to start with customer service since it is a foundational occupation for many careers. The project would use competency profiles to provide a common language for job descriptions and education/training curricula. If the pilot is successful, we could expand profiling to more employers and providers. The goal would be a citywide competency-based labor market.