



City of Somerville Job Creation & Retention Trust Monthly Meeting

Vickie Choitz, Managing Trustee
Anika Van Eaton, Co-Manager
Trustees
Thomas Bent
Lisa Cook
Silvana Dinka
Thomas F. Galligani, Jr.
Colleen Moran
JT Scott
Rand Wilson

Meeting Minutes

Location: Online via GoToWebinar Platform

Date: May 17, 2022

Time: 6:10 PM

Attendance

- Trustees: Thomas Bent, Vickie Choitz, Tom Galligani, Colleen Moran, Anika Van Eaton, and Rand Wilson
- Economic Development Staff: Jennifer Mancina, William Blackmer

Meeting Minutes

- V Choitz: Meeting called to order at 6:10pm. Quorum established with 6 trustees in attendance.
- W Blackmer: House rules about technology delivered.

1. Review and Approval of April 26 Meeting Minutes

- Motion: A. Van Eaton makes motion to approve April 26, 2022 meeting minutes. C. Moran seconds the motion.
- Roll Call Vote: Motion passes by vote of 5-0 approving April 26, 2022 meeting minutes. T. Galligani abstained from the vote.

2. Review Estimated Linkage Fees for 2022 and 2023

- W. Blackmer: the document shows the estimated linkage fees that the JCRT is expected to receive in 2022 and projected to receive in 2023. Since its creation, the JCRT has over \$2.1M of which the Trust has spent more than \$1.7M. The JCRT has about \$400,000 uncommitted funds as of today. The JCRT has received \$472,000 so far this year and is expected to receive \$2M during the next quarter and those are the highlighted parts on the spreadsheet. We are projected to have around \$2.7M to arrive this year. The Trust is expected to receive over \$3.7M during 2023.
- A. Van Eaton: Is this calendar year?
- W. Blackmer: Yes calendar year
- T. Bent: Looking at contributors listed on the webpage, for example, I don't see Cambria Hotel listed but it is listed here.
- W. Blackmer: The reason for that is that the name on the check is often different. It is a company that is often associated with the project.
- T. Bent: Can more information be added to the website? More of a description of what the property is.
- W. Blackmer: One of the challenges is that the leasing information isn't always known. For example, in Boynton we have only recently learned who is moving in.
- T. Bent: The business community has been asking for this. Thank you for posting it.

- W. Blackmer: The estimated linkage fees will be updated and shared on every agenda.
- V. Choitz: Let's keep in mind that we have \$431,000.

3. Review Current Status of Investment Priorities

- V. Choitz: Co-Chairs worked with staff to create a spreadsheet showing the investment strategies under where each priority.
- W. Blackmer: The tracker shows the ranked priorities that the Trust voted on in Spring 2021 organized by Talent Equity Playbook Strategy and Individual Investment. It will be maintained and shared to show the Trust's progress toward each investment and strategy whether it is an agenda item at a given meeting or not. Asked if anyone had questions about this document. For example, Just A Start's status is listed as renewed since the Board voted to renew the Contract in December 2021, timeline indicates the contract is funded through March 2023, and the next steps column indicates the contract is eligible for a potential renewal vote in Spring 2023. This will be a routinely updated document to be able to reference where we are with each priority.
- V. Choitz: On priority number 2 has the money been set aside for the childcare program?
- W. Blackmer: Yes, it has been set aside.
- V. Choitz: Looking at page 2 some of the lower priorities we haven't done anything on yet. On page priority number 9 supporting employer ownership models, we haven't made any progress yet. Which is fine. This could stay on the list for next time we vote on priorities, or we could add other priorities.
- A. Van Eaton: stated that this document is very helpful.
- V. Choitz: This will remain as a standing agenda item.
- R. Wilson: I want to reiterate community concern about local hire. Maybe it's part of the suite of experiential learning opportunities.? Just want to make sure that local hire remains a priority for the Board.
- W. Blackmer: Local hire is a priority woven into a lot of our existing priorities. When we speak with the training organizations we are asking about the number of participants being hired by Somerville businesses and encouraging them to make more connections. Priority 5, the Good Municipal Jobs Training Initiative scope of work draft, does also has a clause in there related to the preference for local hire.
- T. Galligani: It's a great point, Rand, and want to provide some context. It's actually a SomerVision goal and part of the Mayor's 100 Days Agenda as well. J. Mancina and W. Blackmer work with Mobility planners on how to reduce trips to work. Some of the data we require is for employers to give us a report on how many local residents are being hired. We are using the information to ensure that businesses are affirmatively marketing to Somerville residents in alignment with our mobility and climate goals.
- R. Wilson: It seems like a great opportunity to mention to the public that we will be having a job fair. I am hoping that the Jobs Trust can contribute to this larger agenda. I know that for example the Community Benefits Agreement also requires reporting on local hire to the Union Square Neighborhood Association. The six sites that encompass that agreement maybe as a pathway to local jobs there can be something that we can help foster the relationship between developers and neighborhood associations.

4. Industry-Specific Training Grantee Updates

- a. Vote to renew AACA, awarding \$220,540 to provide job training and placement to 20 residents.
- V. Choitz: just to remind folks we need 6 out of 9 board members to approve funding votes and we have 6 trustees in attendance.
 - W. Blackmer: AACA's final report was shared with the Board on April 29th. AACA concluded the contract with 20/20 enrollments and 18/20 job retentions. 90% attained a job for more than 3 months. The average placement wage was \$20.93. City staff are recommending a vote on awarding \$220,540 to AACA to provide 20 more Somerville residents with job training and placement services in the coming year.
 - V. Choitz: Any questions or comments?
 - T. Bent: Would like to make a motion and then have a discussion.
 - V. Choitz: Last meeting we had agreed to have the discussion first before the motion. Any questions?
 - T. Bent: Is AACA going to provide training at Somerville High School
 - W. Blackmer: I don't have any updates. AACA ended up partnering with another institution that had the space that was required to facilitate their trainings.
 - R. Wilson: Has anyone every benchmarked if we instead just gave people \$10,000 to 20 individuals to find training on their own.
 - V. Choitz: Yes, we are exploring this with the Job Training Scholarship idea. If there are no further questions or concerns, I'd like to see if anyone wants to entertain the motion to renew AACA's grant.
 - Motion: T. Bent makes motion to approve awarding \$220,540 to AACA to provide 20 more Somerville residents with job training and placement services in the coming year. April 26, 2022 meeting minutes. A. Van Eaton seconds the motion.
 - Roll Call Vote: Motion passes by a unanimous roll call vote of 6-0.
- b. Vote to renew Per Scholas, awarding \$107,100 to provide job training and placement to 15 residents.
- W. Blackmer: Per Scholas's final report was shared with the Board on May 13th. Per Scholas concluded the contract with 15/15 enrollments and 11/15 job retentions. The average placement wage was \$26.54. City staff are recommending a vote on awarding \$107,100 to Per Scholas to provide 15 more Somerville residents with job training and placement services in the coming year.
 - V. Choitz: I was initially a little nervous about the 11/15 job retentions, because of the strong retention results we are seeing from the other grantees. But they have met their outcome obligations for their first year. Any questions or discussion?
 - C. Moran: How long is the training and are participants paid?
 - W. Blackmer 3 to 4 months training. They do receive a stipend. One reason for increase in contract size is, because they are increasing stipend amount.

- V. Choitz: You may recall that we had a graduate come and speak with us at a previous JCRT meeting and she mentioned that the stipend was one of the important components of the program.

Motion: C. Moran makes motion to approve awarding \$107,100 to Per Scholas to provide 15 more Somerville residents with job training and placement services in the coming year. T. Bent seconds.

Roll Call Vote: Motion passes by a unanimous roll call vote of 6-0.

5. Good Municipal Jobs Training RFP Discussion

- V. Choitz: Board had voted in list of prioritized investments to invest in a feasibility study for an apprenticeship program. Had discussions with the Board and community members who proposed this idea. We decided to continue to study the municipal apprenticeship idea and better understand what it could look like, but in the meantime not stall folks from access to good municipal jobs. William sent a draft of a proposed scope of work to the Board. We are proposing and integrated education training model paired with workplace readiness programming. Other program factors were included, like wrap around services, career navigation and stipends. We said that this program requires partnerships, outlined key partners that we have seen in the field. Wanted to prioritize placements in City of Somerville openings, but not penalize providers for getting participants jobs in Somerville. We set a goal all participants being interviewed by the City of Somerville and have a goal of at least 50% being placed with the City of Somerville employer. Would suggest that we bump up the fund to \$200,000. There is a lot of funding coming in and could give larger stipends. Any changes could be made. Should we vote to approve, this would be the scope of work. Would love thoughts and comments.
- R. Wilson: How do you see the RFP being drafted? This seems like a vision instead of an RFP.
- V. Choitz: This would be the scope of work that is placed within the larger RFP. We are just having a conversation tonight. Folks can absorb it more.
- T. Bent: I thought there was mention of training for hoisting licenses and CDL. On the technical training accounts payable and digital literacy. Could our ESOL providers modify their program to comply with this RFP? It will be interesting to see who applies for this.
- W. Blackmer: Yes, those specific trainings are mentioned in the RFP. Collaboration is a big consideration and many of the providers you mention would have the opportunity to work together.
- V. Choitz: It would be interesting to build the beginning of the pipeline to these job opportunities.
- C. Moran: This is a unique and novel approach.
- R. Wilson: Is this idea partially initiated with the Somerville Municipal Employees Association? Is this draft something that can be shared with them before we go further?
- V. Choitz: Yes, this is a public document. It is available on the website and can be shared via link. If we wanted a couple of robust programs, we could get two programs going. Don't limit your vision to the numbers on the paper.

6. Review and Discussion on Board Processes and Parameters

a. Schedule for Establishing and Implementing Jobs Trust Board Funding Priorities

- V. Choitz: Reviewing process. There are a few new members and two new staff. As we were looking at how we were doing things it's good for us to codify things. We developed two documents. The first lays out the voting schedule for establishing and implementing investment priorities. Not saying this is what we must do moving forward. The way we have been operating so far is:
 1. Spring or summer: vote on Priority Investments to select and rank them, there was a big calculation and there was an aggregated number. In general we have tried to follow the list in order when making awards.
 2. September: Annual Meeting every September and present an Annual Report at the Annual Meeting. It's standard operating procedures attached to the bylaws. There are two annual reports on the website for 2020 and 2021.
 3. Fall: Annual Public Meeting to present the Annual Report and get input and feedback on priority investment ideas for the coming year. The annual report is presented. It is not required by the bylaws but is a tradition. After the public meeting we consider implementation of ideas generated by the public.
 4. Winter-Spring: Hold 2-3 Board meetings to discuss potential new priority investments for the coming year.

Would love feedback and suggestions. Don't need to codify it in the standard operating procedures, but it should be written down and clearly understood.

- A. Van Eaton: This is helpful.
- C. Moran: Thank you for laying it out. It's great.
- W. Blackmer: I recommend a clause about considering the asks that we do receive due to emergency situations or that arrive at other points in the year. We should include a sentence about how the Board may consider these items as they arise.
- V. Choitz: Noted this and will add a sentence.
- T. Bent: It's laid out well. Thank you.
- V. Choitz: Will use moving forward and can revisit.

b. Parameters for voting

- i. Vote on amending JCRT Operating Procedures
 - V. Choitz: We want to review the parameters for voting. Suggesting codifying the procedure by amending the operating procedures. It fits best under Article 4. Need to do three votes for every prioritized investment. Every year we would put forth a dozen ranked items and would vote on those and the estimated funding amount for each. One example was funding rapid response and said maybe \$50,000 would be allocated. But then staff connected with a state agency and the \$50,000 wasn't needed. According to bylaws a funding vote would require a 2/3 majority. Non-funding votes like changing operating procedures, just need a simple majority, which would be 3 out of 5 members if a quorum is just reached. The second vote would be once we have a very clear description of the ranked items, we would obligate the number and voting on the release of an RFP. This vote is not distributing money but it would set aside funds. After

a subcommittee reviews the responses to proposal and suggest grants to fund we will then distribute funds. We would need 2/3 board members to vote to distribute funds.

- T. Galligani: This is helpful. One suggestion in terms of voting for those in the future would be to name what each vote is. It would be easier to read. Example: Vote one could be the “Ranked Priority Investment Vote.”
- A. Van Eaton: I am wondering what votes we would take on an emergency item or item that for another reason is not part of the ranked priority vote. The second and third vote would make sense to happen off cycle. Wondering how it would offset with the first vote.
- V. Choitz: Can add language in number 2 and 3 to address off cycle votes.
- T. Galligani: We should have a 2/3 of all eligible board members would have to approve the ranked items.
- V. Choitz: We would want to be consistent to have 2/3 of the board vote on non-ranked items as well.
- T. Galligani: Non-ranked items in my opinion should be unanimous vote. Would love to keep to the once-a-year cycle. But understand am probably in the minority.
- V. Choitz: I also prefer that.
- T. Bent: I agree. A 2/3 should be minimum.
- A Van Eaton: I agree this sets the foundation for everything we do. Also like the idea of 2/3 votes. Can adjust around the edges. There are benefits to their being super majority support on these votes.
- V. Choitz: Given this discussion, let’s hold off on voting on this tonight as I would like to give everyone a clean copy before voting.

7. Interesting Articles, Reports, or Workforce Development Trends

W Blackmer: I’d like to mention the job fair happening on May 26th @ the Mystic as a great opportunity for residents to connect with opportunities at local employers and resources providers.

V Choitz: In foreshadowing for next month’s meeting on June 21, 2022, assuming we have additional funding, we’d like to vote on the proposal and workplan that we received from SCALE. I will be sharing updated versions in relation to item #6 above.

8. Additional Items not reasonably anticipated by the Chair

- a. None.

9. Adjournment

Motion: V Choitz makes motion to adjourn. Seconded by R. Wilson. Vote passes unanimously by roll call.

Meeting Materials:

- draft Job Creation & Retention Trust Meeting Minutes 4.26.2022
- JCRT Estimated Linkage Fees 2022-2023
- JCRT Investment Priority Tracker
- Good Municipal Jobs Draft
- Proposed Amendment – Process for Voting on Funding Investments

- Schedule for Establishing and Implementing Jobs Trust Board Funding Priorities