

**SA: Ready to Work Advisory Board**

**Meeting Minutes**

WebEx Meeting

**Friday, April 16, 2021**

**8:30am-10:00am**

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Sonia Garza

Peter John Holt

Ben Peavy

Rosa Santana

Cynthia Teniente-Matson

Vice Chair, Doug McMurry

Chair, Jerry Graeber

Councilmember Rebecca J. Viagran

Councilmember Adriana Rocha Garcia

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Daphene Carson

Emily Spurlock

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Alejandra Lopez, Assistant City Manager

Amy Contreras, Economic Development Manager

Christina Ramirez, City Attorney's Office

Christina Reck-Guerra, Pre-K 4 SA West Center Director

Heber Lefgren, Director, Animal Care Services

Mary Mills, Advisory Board Staff Liaison

Olympia Cuellar, Senior Economic Development Specialist

**GUEST PRESENTER:**

Dr. Edith Westfall, CALCO Consulting

**A. CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Graeber called the meeting to order at 8:36am after quorum was established.

**B. PUBLIC COMMENT**

No citizens registered in advance to make public comments.

**INDIVIDUAL ITEMS**

**C. Approval of Minutes**

Mr. Graeber asked members to review Advisory Board meeting minutes of March 30, 2021. Mr. Peavy moved to approve both meeting minutes. Mr. McMurry seconded. The Board voted unanimously to approve.

**D. Individual Items**

**1. Discussion related to upcoming SA: Ready to Work solicitations.**

Mr. Lefgren provided an overview of each upcoming Request for Proposals for SA: Ready to Work services, as well as the second upcoming Request for Information on Training and Education Courses (See **Attachment A**, Board Presentation).

Following the presentation, City Manager Walsh introduced himself and thanked the board members for providing feedback on these important decisions regarding the new program. He also iterated the need for flexibility in the development of the program depending on how many proposals are received and from which organizations.

Mr. Holt asked if there is a budget for each RFP. Mr. Lefgren replied that a high-level estimate of each RFP will be presented in the pre-solicitation conferences, as well as to Council and the Advisory Board in coming weeks. Mr. Holt then asked if CoSA Workforce staff would be writing the RFPs, and whether or not the Advisory Board members could view the RFP documents. Mr. Lefgren replied that once they are shared publicly, CoSA staff will send Advisory Board members a link to access the RFPs. Mr. Holt asked whether Advisory Board members will have access to the documents at the same time as the general public, and Mr. Lefgren confirmed.

City Manager Walsh asked Mr. Holt whether he would like for the Advisory Board to see the RFP documents ahead of their public release. Mr. Holt replied that he would like more clarity on the Board's role regarding the solicitation process, and hiring of the Workforce Office Executive Director and staff positions. City Manager Walsh acknowledged the need for Advisory Board input at each step of the solicitation process, and confirmed that the draft RFPs could be shared with the Board members.

Mr. Holt then asked who would be a part of the RFP selection committees. Ms. Lopez responded that selection committee members are being identified, and that the City will consider external individuals for the committees. Mr. Holt suggested that Advisory Board members should be a part of the selection committees.

Ms. Santana asked if there is documentation of the Advisory Board's role, and whether the Board should create its own by-laws. Ms. Lopez clarified that while the Board does not currently have by-laws, an outline of the board's charge was included in the Council Resolution that created the Board. She mentioned that the Board could still create by-laws if the members chose to do so.

Mr. McMurry mentioned that the Board's charge was discussed in previous meetings and asked if that slide could be shared again.

Mr. Peavy then asked if bonus points will be awarded in the solicitation process if applicant agencies have the capacity to provide more than one service being solicited. He also asked if there is an established process for reviewing the proposals, and to let the Board know where they can be involved in the review process. He also suggested having a strong termination clause in the agency contracts, and asked to clarify whether one agency can apply for multiple RFPs, and how work will be allocated if multiple vendors are providing one service.

Mr. Lefgren explained that points will be awarded based on the applicants' work history and their proposed service plan. He then confirmed that language regarding vendor termination can be made a part of SA: Ready to Work agency contracts when they are written. Mr. Lefgren then outlined the basic process for reviewing RFPs, including oral presentations from prospective vendors and final City Council approval. He confirmed that this RFP process will align with existing City guidelines for fair review of proposals.

Ms. Garza asked whether the review process includes vetting services provided by the applicants. Mr. Lefgren confirmed that this vetting is a possibility, but that will be determined by the Purchasing Department.

Dr. Matson suggested that conversations be had with agencies currently part of Train for Jobs SA who are serving a large number of participants to identify strategies to effectively scale up services for SA: Ready to Work. She also suggested that prospective RFP applicants should be able to discuss in advance of RFP submission how they can potentially continue working together in the new program, rather than starting from scratch. Dr. Matson also mentioned that leveraging pre-existing City, County, and Federal resources can help strengthen the program.

Dr. Matson expressed concern about the feasibility of expecting a variety of agencies to adopt a common system for data management. She suggested that applicants have the ability to provide input on how this process should look. She also emphasized prioritizing training programs that will provide participants with stackable credentials.

City Manager Walsh acknowledged Dr. Matson's suggestions about scaling up the program in an informed way. He reiterated the flexibility within the RFP process to allow for agencies to work together to provide the best service and brought up the importance of having employers be involved in this initiative to ensure participants are getting the credentials they need to enter in-demand jobs.

Ms. Lopez addressed the question about the data management system by explaining that workforce partners can keep their own data systems if they prefer, because the new system will be able to integrate with others.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia thanked the members for their participation and offered her support and time to meet with them to discuss any new ideas they have.

Councilmember Viagran mentioned that City Council has previously had conversations about the importance of stackable credentials in this program, which may reflect why this topic is not being presented in detail by City staff.

Mr. Holt asked if the Ready to Work staffing plan will be discussed in future meetings, and if City staff has any updates on hiring of the Workforce Office Executive Director. Ms. Lopez confirmed that the staffing plan will be part of the larger budget consideration for Ready to Work. City Manager Walsh explained that the City hopes to have a Director in place by the end of June.

Mr. Holt then asked for an estimated date when the solicitation would be finished and vendors hired, and City Manager Walsh replied that the City hopes to have agencies selected by late August.

Dr. Matson suggested that Board members should be able to recommend applicants for Executive Director, and City Manager Walsh indicated that those recommendations could be shared with Ms. Lopez.

Mr. Peavy asked when SA: Ready to Work is scheduled to begin. Ms. Lopez replied that it will begin sometime this Fall, ideally in October. City Manager Walsh followed by mentioning that the start date will depend on the preparation that the partner agencies need. Mr. Peavy suggested that a process to ramp up the program be implemented, so that the whole program does not get delayed.

Ms. Santana volunteered to lend her support to selecting an Executive Director.

## **2. Discussion and possible action related to target occupations for the SA: Ready to Work program.**

Dr. Westfall reviewed the previously discussed target occupations. (See **Attachment A**).

Ms. Garza expressed concern with the program's ability to adequately prepare participants for being able to meet minimum requirements for jobs in the healthcare field, especially participants who may be justice-involved. She also emphasized the need to avoid "silos" between various entities making decisions about SA: Ready to Work: the Advisory Board, RFP selection committee, etc.

Mr. Peavy brought up the idea of training participants for leadership and management in the hospitality field. Ms. Lopez mentioned that many workforce agencies have soft skills and leadership development as part of case management services.

Ms. Lopez addressed Ms. Garza's question by affirming that educating participants in the case management process about what expectations exist in their chosen field, such as background checks, drug screenings and required security clearance, are very important. Mr. Graeber asked whether the case management agencies would be able to assist clients who cannot meet expectations required in their field. Ms. Lopez confirmed that some of this work can be done by referring clients to outside agencies for additional services, especially with issues such as financial literacy and credit repair.

Mr. Holt suggested that an exercise to establish participant data-driven "personas" can help align demand for jobs with supply of residents who may be interested in them. He asked whose responsibility such an exercise would be, and Ms. Lopez replied that it would be a shared responsibility between City staff, the Board members, and the Outreach & Marketing agency. She also referenced a similar exercise that City staff and Dr. Westfall already performed and offered to share that persona exercise with the Board.

Mr. McMurry made a motion to approve the target occupations list that had been developed with Board input. Mr. Holt seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.

Ms. Garza asked about the permissibility for screening of participants in regards to record expungement, because in previous discussions it was said that mandating drug screenings for participants was not allowable in this program. She suggested that these screenings and background checks could be incorporated as a voluntary part of the case management process. Mr. Graeber agreed with this idea.

Ms. Ramirez indicated that this topic could be discussed further at another meeting.

Mr. Graeber tabled item 3 until the next meeting.

### **3. Discussion and possible action related to allotment of certificates versus two- and four-year degrees offered through SA: Ready to Work.**

Due to time constraints the Board did not cover this item.

## **E. STAFF COMMENTS**

Ms. Lopez thanked the Board members for their input and said that City staff intends to follow up with each member individually to address questions or concerns they have about the solicitations. She also indicated that drafts of each RFP will be shared with the Board before they are released.

## **F. MEETING ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Peavy moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Santana seconded.

Meeting adjourned at 10:01am.

**APPROVED:**

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