

SA: Ready to Work Advisory Board

Meeting Minutes

WebEx Meeting

Thursday, May 27, 2021

1:00pm - 3:00pm

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Peter John Holt

Ben Peavy

Cynthia Teniente-Matson

Vice Chair, Doug McMurry

Chair, Jerry Graeber

Councilmember Rebecca J. Viagran

Councilmember Adriana Rocha Garcia

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Daphene Carson

Sonia Garza

Rosa Santana

Emily Spurlock

STAFF PRESENT:

Alejandra Lopez, Assistant City Manager

Christina Ramirez, City Attorney's Office

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

Heber Lefgren, Director, Animal Care Services

Amy Contreras, Economic Development Manager

Ana Salazar, Workforce Development Manager

Mary Mills, Advisory Board Staff Liaison

GUEST PRESENTERS:

Caitlin Cowart, Marketing & Public Relations Manager, Economic Development Department

Kevin Goodwin, Chief Technology Officer

Matthew Reat, Senior Innovation Specialist, Office of Innovation

A. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Graeber called the meeting to order at 1:09 p.m. 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 April 30, 2021. Mr. McMurphy moved to approve the meeting minutes. Mr. Peavy seconded. The Board voted unanimously to approve.

D. INDIVIDUAL ITEMS

1. Overview of IT Case Management Solution for SA: Ready to Work.

Mr. Lefgren presented to the Board on the planned IT case management system for the Ready to Work program. Mr. Reat continued with an in-depth presentation on how Signify was selected as the IT solution for the program, and its capabilities.

Mr. Peavy asked if Signify's system will be adopted as-is for Ready to Work, or if they will be helping to develop a customized version for the program. Mr. Lefgren explained that the system can be adjusted to fit the needs of Ready to Work. Mr. Peavy then suggested that the City start working with Signify as soon as possible to identify a user group of entities and individuals to start providing feedback on the system build-out. Mr. Lefgren clarified that City staff is already working on building the system, and that program partners will easily be able to integrate it to their own processes after they are selected. Mr. Peavy stressed the need to communicate the security of the system to stakeholders and the public, and offered that the Board members can help develop data dashboards and reports for the program in the future. Mr. Lefgren introduced

Mr. Goodwin, who explained that one main reason Signify was chosen for this program is their data security capabilities.

Councilmember Viagran asked how City Workforce staff engaged with local entities already using Signify for their feedback on the system, and what feedback they had. Mr. Goodwin explained that most of the work of collecting community input on the system was done by the Department of Human Services when they first started working with Signify. Mr. Reat followed up by mentioning that Autism Lifeline Links has been a useful source of information about the capabilities of Signify. Councilmember Viagran clarified that she wanted to know whether organizations using Signify are having positive or negative experiences with it. She also asked whether the up-front adoption of Signify will be detrimental to entities responding to the Intake & Case Management RFP. Mr. Lefgren responded that agencies will have the choice whether to use Signify as their case management tool, and that adoption of Signify will not factor into the evaluation criteria for the RFP. Councilmember Viagran suggested that the Workforce team to ask Human Services to share the feedback on Signify that they received from community partners.

Mr. McMurry asked if the program is still scheduled to be rolled out in fall 2021. Mr. Lefgren responded that the plan is still to begin in the fall, and that the adoption of Signify should not delay the process. Mr. McMurry clarified that he wanted to know how the delay of the RFP releases would affect the timeline. Mr. Lefgren responded that the delay of the RFPs is due in part to an effort to collect community feedback on the program.

Dr. Matson asked whether current Train for Jobs partner agencies should be able to provide feedback in the process of building out Signify for the Ready to Work program. Mr. Lefgren responded that meetings have been held with the partners already. Dr. Matson asked whether meetings with Workforce Solutions Alamo or Alamo Colleges have taken place, and Mr. Lefgren responded that they have, but that the meetings were high-level and that Signify specifically was not mentioned. Mr. Lefgren then elaborated that the talks with Train for Jobs agencies on requirements for a future IT solution are ongoing. Dr. Matson suggested that a dedicated meeting be held with the larger Train for Jobs partner agencies to ensure that Signify can suit the large volume of clients that are anticipated through Ready to Work. Mr. Lefgren replied that the Train for Jobs agencies have played a large role in informing improvements from the current system used for Train for Jobs.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia mentioned that continuing to collaborate with the current partner agencies in the planning process is key to ensuring that excess burden is not placed on the agencies participating in Ready to Work, especially those who may not have a strong internal IT team. Mr. Lefgren explained that the City will have the budget to provide IT support to the agencies to ensure they can integrate with Signify. The Councilmember then asked how the City first discovered Signify. Mr. Lefgren responded that ITSD provided the connection with Signify through their work with the Human Services Department. Councilmember Rocha Garcia then asked if nonprofit partners in Ready to Work will have to pay to use Signify, and Mr. Lefgren responded that they will not. The Councilmember asked who will be responsible for maintaining data security within the system. Mr. Goodwin responded that most of the security is built into the system, which allows segmented access to private information depending on who the user is.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia acknowledged that this meeting would be Councilmember Viagran's last, and thanked her for her service to the City.

Mr. Peavy suggested that the City allow respondents to the Intake & Case Management RFP to provide input on the use of Signify for Ready to Work, and give the applicants a draft document outlining the technical requirements for integrating with Signify, if possible. He also stressed the importance of making Ready to Work partner agencies aware that Signify will be the system of record for the program, so all data on the program published in reports will need to be pulled from Signify. Finally, he suggested that the City team be mindful of setting up unique Case IDs for each client, to avoid duplication between systems if agencies will not be using Signify internally.

Mr. Graeber requested that an update on the status of setting up Signify be provided by staff in a future meeting. Ms. Lopez replied that City staff would be happy to provide an update in two months' time.

2. Discussion and possible action related to Board members' role as program ambassadors and formation of Community Outreach Subcommittee.

Ms. Cowart presented on current community engagement and marketing plans for SA: Ready to Work, and the proposed role of the new Community Outreach Subcommittee in that strategy.

Mr. McMurry volunteered to co-chair the new subcommittee. Mr. Graeber mentioned that Ms. Garza had expressed interest in serving as co-chair prior to the meeting. Mr. Lefgren clarified that a motion needs to be made to create the subcommittee first. Mr. McMurry moved to create the subcommittee, and Mr. Peavy seconded. The Board voted unanimously to create the subcommittee.

Mr. Graber asked the Board members if any others present would be interested in a co-chair position or serving on the subcommittee. Mr. Holt volunteered to nominate a representative from HOLT CAT to serve on the subcommittee. Mr. Peavy also expressed interest in serving on the subcommittee.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia mentioned that Dr. Matson had heard that Ms. Santana was also interested in serving on the subcommittee. She also volunteered to serve if there is room for her to participate.

Mr. Graeber asked Ms. Ramirez if Ms. Garza expressing interest in the co-chair position prior to the meeting would suffice in lieu of an in-person acceptance of her nomination. Ms. Ramirez responded that while in-person acceptance is the norm, an exception can be made in this case.

Mr. Graber then called a vote for Mr. McMurry to serve as the first co-chair of the new subcommittee. The Board voted unanimously to appoint him. Mr. McMurry then called a vote

for Ms. Garza to serve as the second co-chair of the subcommittee, and the Board also voted unanimously to appoint her.

Mr. Lefgren suggested that the Board establish a fixed size for the subcommittee. Mr. Graeber posed to the Board members the suggestion of nine members for the Community Outreach Subcommittee. Mr. McMurry expressed his agreement with that size. Mr. Lefgren suggested that the official language read as “up to nine” members. Dr. Matson suggested that other subcommittees may be formed in the future to assist with more targeted outreach strategies, and to incorporate community members who are outside the Advisory Board.

Mr. Graeber mentioned that there may be the need in the future to expand the number of members for this or other subcommittees, and encouraged the Board members to express this need if necessary. Ms. Ramirez clarified that the Community Outreach Subcommittee can include individuals who are not Advisory Board members. Mr. Graeber then asked the group what the next action will be for the new subcommittee. Ms. Lopez asked for a list of Board members who have already expressed interest in being part of the subcommittee. Mr. Graeber listed Mr. McMurry, Ms. Garza, Mr. Peavy, himself, Ms. Santana, and Councilwoman Rocha Garcia. Ms. Lopez also reminded the group that Mr. Holt had offered a HOLT CAT employee to serve. Mr. Graeber then offered that he would be willing to step down from the subcommittee to allow others to serve. Mr. Peavy agreed that he would be willing to do so as well.

Mr. Lefgren suggested that the Board establish a process for filling vacant subcommittee positions. Mr. Graeber suggested that the subcommittee handle the nomination process, and then bring their recommendations to the full Advisory Board for a vote. Ms. Ramirez confirmed that this is an allowable process. Mr. Peavy agreed that the subcommittee members should nominate prospective members to suggest to the full Board, but encourage all the Advisory Board members to recommend community members for the subcommittee to consider for membership. Mr. Graeber called for a vote on this proposed process, and the proposed number of subcommittee members. The Advisory Board voted unanimously to approve the items.

Ms. Ramirez mentioned to Mr. Graeber that the official charge of the subcommittee and the length of the subcommittee’s charge would need to be agreed upon during the meeting as well. Mr. Graeber stated that he thought the charge as outlined in the presentation by City staff was acceptable, and asked for input from the other members. No one had additional feedback. Mr. Graeber then motioned to accept the charge as stated in the presentation. Mr. Peavy moved to approve it. Dr. Matson seconded.

Regarding the duration of the subcommittee, Mr. Graeber acknowledged that the subcommittee’s work will be especially important to inform the community on Ready to Work before the program’s launch, but that ongoing support will be needed throughout the program as well. He suggested that the Board members may need to decide the dissolution date of the subcommittee later on in the program. Mr. McMurry expressed agreement with Ms. Ramirez’s suggestion that the official duration of the subcommittee could be “until their job is complete”. Mr. Graeber then motioned to approve the dissolution date of the Community Outreach subcommittee as a later date at the discretion of the greater Advisory Board, when the subcommittee’s charge has been

completed. Mr. McMurry motioned to approve, and Dr. Matson seconded. The Advisory Board voted unanimously to approve.

E. STAFF COMMENTS

Ms. Lopez congratulated the group on City Council's recent approval on the SA: Ready to Work program's budget. Councilmember Rocha Garcia mentioned that the City Council's main feedback items about the program were establishing sound metrics to track the program's success, ensuring that the Advisory Board members were involved in the planning process, and that best practices from the wider workforce development landscape be implemented in the program.

Ms. Lopez also mentioned that the budget approval has allowed for additional personnel to start being hired. She then introduced Ana Salazar, the new Workforce Development Manager. Ms. Salazar provided the Board Members with information on her professional background, and expressed gratitude for the opportunity to work with the Ready to Work Advisory Board.

Mr. McMurry asked whether the Board's suggested allotment of workforce certificates to two- and four-year degrees was approved by Council as well. Ms. Lopez confirmed that it had.

Ms. Lopez also let the Board know that the recruitment for the Workforce Office's Executive Director is ongoing.

Dr. Matson asked Ms. Lopez whether the program is still scheduled to begin in the Fall. Ms. Lopez confirmed that timeline, but advised that the process of awarding contracts for the selected partner agencies may have to wait until after the City's next budget is approved. Dr. Matson asked whether any RFPs were released yet, and Ms. Lopez responded that none had been released.

F. MEETING ADJOURNMENT

Dr. Matson moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. McMurry seconded.

Meeting adjourned at 2:36pm.

APPROVED:
