



JOHN DeSTEFANO, JR.
Mayor

COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES
CITY OF NEW HAVEN
165 CHURCH STREET
NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT 06510
(203) 946-7833 - VOICE (203) 946-8582 - TTY/TDD
(203) 946-8587 - FAX



DAVID HICKS
Chairperson

Commission on Disabilities Minutes

City Hall 4th Floor Conference Room

April 8, 2013

- Present: Jenifer Blemings, Cecile Brodsky, Christopher Hicks, Matthew Ranelli, Maria Rivera, Robin Tousey-Ayers, Jack Tsai
- Staff: Michelle Duprey, Paula Pernal
- Absent: David Hicks
- Guest: Joseph Carbone, President & CEO of The WorkPlace

Meeting was called to order at 5:26 p.m.

Presentation

Cecile introduces Mr. Joseph Carbone, President & CEO of The WorkPlace. Mr. Carbone distributes hand-outs of his presentation (see attached). Mr. Carbone states that he will discuss some economic trends that are fairly significant and how the trends affect the way that individuals with disabilities are serviced. Mr. Carbone states that his background includes experience in the Mayor's office in the 1980's and participation in the creation of the Disability Services Department. He states that sometimes the trend is a result of economic change and it is better to adjust ourselves to this change; whether it is demographic or economic change. Mr. Carbone discusses the recession and how it has caused society to reflect on the qualities of individuals we serve. Mr. Carbone states that The WorkPlace is an old Fairfield County non-for profit organization that has been in existence for more than 30 years. The WorkPlace has no restrictions as to which catchment regions it may serve. Historically it is a non-for profit that operates like a business. The WorkPlace serves more than 35,000 individual and 400 businesses. This includes several one-stops along Fairfield County. Mr. Carbone states that a one-stop is the doorway to the American workforce system. They are where constituents would access programs of a federal nature. They benefit anyone who is unemployed, underemployed or unemployable. Mr. Carbone discusses some of the economic trends and a program designed by The WorkPlace called Platform to Employment.

Mr. Carbone states the Connecticut is one of those states that have had a decline in the labor force. Labor force is the sum of individuals employed and individuals looking for work. He states that this number has sharply declined last year by 45,000 and another 4,000-5,000 since last year. Mr. Carbone states that we already lost all of the gains that we made in 2012. The number of unemployment in the New Haven region (called Workforce Alliance) is between 30,000-37,000 individuals. Like most of the regions in the State of Connecticut, the only sector of the economy that has shown consistent growth is in Healthcare, part of the fact is that Connecticut is an older state and we live longer. Mr. Carbone refers to the national data and

figures on unemployment. He states that we had more individuals employed three months ago. Mr. Carbone also refers to jobs lost based upon wages in three different categories, low, middle and high-wage jobs. He states that in terms of economic growth, wages are slowing and turning more toward hiring individuals on a part-time basis as part of the long-term culture.

Mr. Carbone states that The WorkPlace created a program called Platform to Employment. He states that long term unemployment can shatter a workers confidence. Mr. Carbone mentions that when the recession began he received a letter from the Acting Commissioner for Labor for Connecticut stating that on May 15, 2001, 12,000 individuals receiving 99 weeks of unemployment will expire and they are still out of work. She wrote to Mr. Carbone that on that day she will assign a Police Officer at every one-stop in Connecticut on that day. Mr. Carbone states that he spent that following weekend reviewing the first filings of unemployment for individuals. He states that he wanted to do something that would get the attention of others while helping people. Mr. Carbone states that sold 100 shares sort of an IPO type investment at \$6,000 per worker investment from private funders. He wrote the last 1,400 unemployed individuals about the program. He states that 392 individuals applied, 164 individuals were interviewed, and 100 workers were enrolled in the pilot program which began last summer. Mr. Carbone used certain criteria for eliminating individuals to make sure there was a diverse pool of applicants. Mr. Carbone states that program involved a subsidized employment opportunity for 8 weeks. He states that The WorkPlace offered companies in the community to subsidize the first 4 weeks, workers are on The WorkPlace payroll, and the employers may walk away at any point. Mr. Carbone states that this removes the liability, risk and paperwork for the employers often associated with on-the-job training. He states that we must respond to the destructiveness of the recession since the population of long-term unemployed make up a significant constituency seeking assistance. Mr. Carbone states the currently the national workforce system does not provide services which support the changing needs of the long-term unemployed. Additional supports are required to be successful. Mr. Carbone states that we must continue to elevate this constituency in the national discussion regarding employment. He states that there is no other program like Platform for Employment. Mr. Carbone states that out of 100 graduates, there were 9 drop-outs, and 65 were hired full-time after the first 8-week subsidized employment period or 89%. He states that he also did two other cohorts over 50 years old, with a success rate of 79% and 88% respectively. Mr. Carbone states that the model for Platform for Employment has gone national with classes in Dallas, Cincinnati, San Diego, and Chicago. He calls them Centers of Hope. Mr. Carbone mentions that while conducting his round-table workshops with individuals that have been unemployed for more than 39 weeks, he discovered a diverse group of individuals that were lost and abandoned. He states that in all previous recessions the unemployed generally went back to their original job with a surge, but not this recession. Mr. Carbone describes a characteristic of hopelessness. He states that there is no other feeling than to give an individual hope.

Comment [GMR1]: Is this correct?
It does not come out to 89 %

Mr. Carbone mentions that The WorkPlace funds the only Disability Center in Connecticut. He states that an individual regardless of your disability can converse about the workforce like everyone else. Mr. Carbone states that he has several competitive programs all based on federal grants received by The WorkPlace that offer a larger base of services. He states that in this economy everyone must repackage the human capital. Mr. Carbone states that the days when companies went beyond their share to accommodate individuals are over. He states that it is a very competitive world now. Mr. Carbone suggests to individuals with disabilities to rethink how you perform your business. He states that you must find ways to deal with the issue of a growing, part-time work trend as the healthcare bill rolls out. Mr. Carbone states that there is a benefit to hiring part-time employees. He suggests developing the skill precisely as needed.

Robin asks Mr. Carbone about determining part-time employment. Mr. Carbone states that we must figure out a way to position individuals with disabilities in the best way for the new, long-term culture. He states that there is no stigma in part-time work. He states that it removes you from the unemployment rolls. Mr. Carbone states that you must reinvent yourself.

Matthew asks about the type of skills that his employees possess and could they be replicated in a municipality. Mr. Carbone states that The WorkPlace is a non-for profit organization with 75 employees that has had years of endowment funds with access many resources. He states that it is run like a business and it goes through a reinvention process every year based upon the goals and objectives set for the following year some employees go and some come. Mr. Carbone hires smart individuals-73 employees have graduate work; 100% on bonus; 53% are minority; many can speak different languages. He states that The WorkPlace received about 85 Million in grants and it has a For-Profit Division that writes non-for profit grants all over the country that has won 50 Million. He states that he has a 65% success rate. He states that they raise a lot of pro-private sector funds from businesses. Mr. Carbone states that what The WorkPlace is doing could be done anywhere, especially in New Haven, due in part to Yale University and Yale New Haven Hospital.

Matthew asked about how the commission could convince the New Haven Board of Aldermen to be more receptive to employment issues for individuals with disabilities. Mr. Carbone responds that he recently spoke to the Head of The Jobs Pipeline, Marie Reynolds, who is committed to employment issues. Mr. Carbone states that the Commission should create some goals that are practical and achievable. Robin states that she was at an expo last week where she met a woman who has a son with a disability who is graduating from college and can't find a job. Mr. Carbone states that unlike the long-term unemployed these individuals never went to work and they have to stop being unemployed. He states that they must accept jobs under their wage bracket, education level, and expected benefit package. Mr. Carbone states that this means hiring individuals at lower wages.

Michelle asks Robin about the buy-in for Medicare. Robin is not aware of this as of yet. Robin mentions about the State law that you can have insurance on your children under 26 years old. Mr. Carbone states that this pertains to the Affordable Care Act, excluding federal employees.

Minutes

Matthew asked the commission members if they had a chance to review the March minutes.

Robin had one change to the March minutes. Robin stated that "Disability Month" noted on Page 3, Section Old Business is actually "Disability Awareness Month".

Cecile made a motion to accept the March minutes as amended.

Robin seconded the motion.

March minutes are approved unanimously.

Chairman's Report

None-David is absent.

Department Report

Michelle reports the following updates to the commission members:

1. Michelle states that she presented her Department Budget at the Budget workshop before the Board of Aldermen Finance Committee last week. She states that her Budget is stagnate from last year with only one minor change to cover the new training requirements.
2. Michelle states that the New Haven Police Department ("NHPD") passed a new General Order that dictates how they deal with the deaf and hearing impaired. She states that as a result of the General Order, she has started to train the police officers every week with in-service training through the end of June. The Americans with Disabilities Act ("ADA") requires effective communications for people who are deaf or hearing impaired in a low level interaction, pen and paper, higher level equipment such applications for I-Phones, or sign-language interpreters. Michelle states that an education policy is being developed and that the police officers must obtain her permission not to use a sign-language interpreter. She states that it is consistent with the policy by the Department of Justice ("DOJ") but more specific to New Haven. Michelle states that she will give the NHPD a new TTY.
3. Michelle mentions that she was asked to perform a 4-hour training session for the NHPD Recruits to be scheduled in May.
4. Michelle states that she usually trains the Department Heads and front-line employees, but she is waiting until after the election since many are leaving City Hall.
5. Michelle reminds the commission members that the next meeting is on May 6, 2013. She states that will notify the City Clerk's Office.
6. Michelle states that she testified for the following Legislative Hearings:
 - a. Centers for Independent Living-She supported
 - b. Commission on Aging-The primary advocates for institutional aging that she supported twice
 - c. Robin asks Michelle about the Assisted Suicide Bill. Michelle states that this Bill died on Friday, April 5, 2013, but she did not oppose or support it
 - d. Michelle mentions that Handicapped Parking has not come out of Committee
 - e. Michelle asks Jenifer about the New Gun Bill. Jenifer states that it is a divided issue in the mental health community.

Old Business

None

New Business

Matthew mentions that the Mayoral election is coming up and the Commission might wish to have the candidates complete a questionnaire and attend a meeting. He mentioned some topics for questions: jobs, transportation, and training staff. He suggested that everyone bring questions to the May meeting to discuss and provide to David.

Matthew also mentions inviting Bitzie Clark from Home Haven to a meeting to discuss if there were services to the elderly that are common to the disability community and to see if Home Haven could play a role in such services.

Other Business

None

Public Comment/Announcements

None

Matthew made a motion to adjourn meeting.

Cecile seconded the motion.

Motion to adjourn the meeting was approved unanimously at 6:52 p.m.