



City of Milwaukee

200 E. Wells Street
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
53202

Meeting Minutes AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE UNEMPLOYMENT TASK FORCE

**ALD. ASHANTI HAMILTON, CO-CHAIR AND ALD. TONY
ZIELINSKI, CO-CHAIR**

**Deborah Blanks, Sedgwick Daniels, Ald. Joe Davis, Joe
Fahey, Pam Fendt, Curt Harris, Wendell Harris, Ralph
Hollmon, Carl Jaskolski, Ossie Kendrix, Marc Levine, Arturo
Martinez, Gerard Randall, Michael Rosen, Tim Sheehy, Julia
Taylor, McArthur Weddle, Lenard Wells and Ken Wheeler**

**Staff Assistant, Linda Elmer, (414)-286-2232
Fax: 286-3456, E-mail: lelmer@milwaukee.gov**

Tuesday, October 26, 2010

12:00 PM

Room 303, City Hall

Meeting convened: 12:14 P.M.

*Members excused: Tim Sheehy, Ald. Joe Davis, Arturo Martinez and Pam Fendt
Members absent: Sedgwick Daniels, Ken Wheeler, Wendell Harris and McArthur
Weddle*

1. Review and approval of the minutes of the Sept. 28th meeting.

Curt Harris moved, seconded by Gerard Randall, for approval of the minutes. There were no objections.

2. The role of education - Milwaukee Public School, UWM and community colleges.

Ald. Hamilton noted the brain drain that exists due to a lack of opportunity for employment for those individuals who pursued a higher education. Steve Mahan, Community Block Grants Administration, noted that many of the schools have inactive tool shops, such as Custer High school has an inactive heating, ventilating and air conditioning (HVAC) shop. Mr. Eric Paulsen, Greater Milwaukee Committee, noted that Bradley Tech also has inactive tool shops.

Curt Harris would like to see a definition of "dropout" as he's only seen one definition that says that if a student enters 9th grade, but isn't there in the 12th grade, that individual is defined as a dropout. A member of the audience, Clarence Johnson, said that it is important to get kids started off right and have a strong program to address educational and illiteracy issues at all levels of education. Another member of the audience, Ptosha Davis, said that individual students can be tracked as to where they are currently attending school and where they've transferred from/to from the Wisconsin Dept. of Public Instruction. She also said that male-only schools or wraparound programs could also be looked at and use successful programs as a blueprint for new programs here in Milwaukee.

Deborah Blanks noted that the film "Waiting for Superman" said to her that the bottom-line is that one has to have a teacher who supports the students ensuring that they succeed. This body could also contact the Zilber Foundation as they are trying to recreate the Harlem Children's Zone.

Edward McDonald, Milwaukee Builds Initiative, said that the data needs to be qualified prior to entering the highly political arena of public education. He observed that the ratio of students to guidance counselors is 1000:1, versus nationally a ratio 150:1. The other deficiency he sees in Milwaukee is that there is no community goal of higher-education for students as a means of escaping poverty. He knows that the Milwaukee Promise is being created, modeled on the Kalamazoo Promise. Steve Mahan said that the whole system may need to be addressed, but he sees the lack of counselors as being a serious impediment to student success.

A member of the audience, Torre Johnson, said that schools used to offer woodshop and welding, but those are no longer being offered. The other issue is the poor quality of home and community lives of students which no teacher can counteract. Another member of the audience, Ruben Hopkins, said that many students don't understand why they're in school in the first place. He also sees an issue in that Maximus will reimburse an employer who hires specific employees \$7.25 per hour, but the employer must pay the full amount for about 6 weeks prior to reimbursement, so companies can't afford to pay the full amount for those first 6 weeks, resulting in individuals not being hired. People are looking for work, but it's hard to connect them without a pool of funds for companies to temporarily access. Because small businesses are decreasing the number of employees, the statewide aggregate decreasing from an average of 2.5 to 1.5, that means that fewer owners are unable to attend training or community-related events. Gerard Randall also thought a pool of money would be useful for matching funds for grants or for temporary loans. Gerard Randall also said that there needs to be an employer commitment to hire individuals post-training and fill the lack of certified teachers in specific fields as well.

Tamara Burkett, a member of the audience, noted that there was a program to recruit non-traditional teachers to Milwaukee Public Schools. That program was very demanding and hard to meet for individuals as many teaching courses were required, which the individual had to pay for, and complete while teaching.

Ald. Zielinski said that a link will be put on www.milwaukee.gov in the next couple of days where people from the public can make suggestions or comments for the task force.

3. Update from the various research groups of the body.

One recommendation was created by the working group of Pam Fendt, Ald. Hamilton, Michael Rosen and Deborah Blanks. The recommendations are attached to Council file 100425 and relate to the goals, purpose and framework of the task force. Ossie Kendrix said in the goals statement he would like to change "unemployment" to "joblessness", to which no-one objected. Mr. Fahey said that it implies that all of the solutions are in training unemployed African American males; he feels that employers may need to be trained to hire qualified African American males. Ms. Blanks noted that the training could be included as part of the "partnership" language mentioned later in the document. Gerard Randall noted that veterans may also need additional support or will be in the position of taking existing jobs and they should be their own separate category. Mr. Randall supports a separate category; Ms. Blanks suggested creating a "special population" category. Mr. Randall supported that. Number 4 will be changed to "Special category". Ossie

Kendrix recommended removing the word "employment" in the last sentence; there were no objections.

Mr. Kendrix movevd, second by Curt Harris, to accept the purpose, goals and framework. There were no objections. The approved document is attached to Council file 100425.

4. Discussion relating to the e-mails and information received for this meeting and the Oct. 19th meeting.

Fred Royal and Edward McDonald, Build Milwaukee, were present at the meeting as was Renee Booker, president of North Avenue CDC. It is anticipated that Build Milwaukee would employ 11,000 people at an average rate of \$17.50 per hour.

The target area is Burleigh St., N. 60th St., Fond du Lac Ave. and the Milwaukee River which includes 92,000 people with a civilian unemployment rate of 35%. The plan is to implement previously created development plans as part this larger project rather than as free-standing, non-implemented plans. This would be a city/county/state effort to deposit funds into the 10 banks located within the district for use by the district. Local businesses would support local residents and other local businesses as much as possible within the district and entrepreneurs would be supported, as well as green development initiatives. Housing and Urban Development money would be used for job training within the district and jobs would go to district residents and those who attended the job training component. There is also a plan to create 7 wealth-building businesses to assist residents in long-term financial planning. New construction and rehabilitation of existing housing would lead to job creation. Build Milwaukee would like the task force to ask the Legislative Reference Bureau to draft the appropriate legislation to make this project a reality. After the budget, the Legislative Reference Bureau can do a cost-benefit analysis of this project and a working group of this task force can review this proposal.

5. Discussion of potential use of reserved Large Impact Development funds.

This matter was taken up out of order as item #1 on the agenda.

Jim Owczarski, Deputy City Clerk, appeared and said that the Community and Economic Development committee adopted a recommendation yesterday by Ald. Zielinski to reserve \$425,000 in Large Impact Development funds. These funds must be spent with conditions set forth by the policy attached to Council file 100425. This file will be going on to the full Council on November 3rd. Ald. Zielinski anticipates that these funds are a beginning and these funds can be used to leverage and partner with other agencies.

Mr. Levine noted that tax incremental funds are often used for redevelopment and he wonders if all 3 criteria must be met or if it's an "or" rather than an "and" situation. Mr. Owczarski will clarify this with community block grant staff. Mr. Levine is also concerned with how blight is defined. Ald. Zielinski noted that this body would only recommend funding projects which would generate African American employment opportunities.

The use of these funds must be approved by the Council by March 31, 2011, per Ald. Zielinski.

6. Set next meeting date.

November 16th at noon.

Meeting adjourned: 1:35 P.M.

Linda M. Elmer

Staff Assistant