nova

**WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT**

NOVA WORKFORCE BOARD
Draft MINUTES
July 25, 2018 Study Session

PRESENT: V. Dang, R. Foust, P. Guevara, B. Guidry-Brown, J. Hill, B. Knopf, S. Levy, A. Manwani, M. Merrick, J. Miner, J. Morrill, A. Switky

ABSENT: T. Baity, S. Borgersen, J. Chu, C. Cimino, L. de Maine, L. Dalla Betta, B. Field, C. Galy, J. García, H. Goodkind, E. Hamilton, K. Harasz, L. Labit, M. Lucero, J. Ruigomez, and J. Sugiyama

ALSO PRESENT: K. Stadelman, E. Stanly

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

   Co-Chairperson J. Morrill called the meeting to order at 12:05 p.m.

2. **PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS**

   No public announcements.

3. **STUDY SESSION**
   Discussion Topic: Corporate Responsibility: Tech businesses are expanding and evolving in Silicon Valley, which has an impact (both positive and negative) on the community. What role could the business community play to:
   - prepare workers for employment or reenter employment after a layoff;
   - assist workers find affordable housing close to work; and
   - facilitate workers' commute through alternative transportation options?

   Highlights of the discussion included (but were not limited to):
   - It's important not to rush to solutions on any of the issues, but to begin with a vision first about what are the changes that the Board would like to see happen. Is there a set of agreements the Board can identify that will rebalance the issues? What does corporate responsibility look like?

   - Companies, as members of the community, do have a responsibility to ensure that workers have the skills to succeed, are able to find affordable housing and can access transportation to get to/from work. But what is the company's responsibility? They are looking ahead to the next business cycle, but corporations are not just about profits. There has been a lot of discussion in the corporate sector about "from great to good" and how companies can be good citizens. How can we define "good" in the context of our customers?

- For companies, if it makes sense for them to do something good then they will. An example of this is the Google shuttle. Google identified an issue with transportation for its workers and launched the shuttle program to address this problem. Google and Facebook are renting apartments in Mountain View for its workers to offset the rent costs, but will this make a difference for the disadvantaged workers who live there? Gentrification is still taking place so there are unintended consequences.

- Government officials are not going to advocate for affordable housing if its residents oppose it. In some communities, residents want to keep the housing situation the way it is and are resistant to potentially changing their lifestyle in the interest of building more affordable housing in their community. But is it government's responsibility to find the right balance? Government is the only one with the power to enforce a solution. One example of government stepping in is Brisbane putting a measure on the ballot to support a major housing development for the first time. Another example is Mountain View's recent requirement to restrict companies from providing free food to its employees for the benefit of local restaurants.

- It's up to voters to make a difference in the housing crises by supporting zoning changes. The reason for residents' resistance may be that advocates aren't telling a compelling enough story about the need. If they did, perhaps residents would join the effort. An example of residents taking action on the housing crisis is the rent control measure that passed in Mountain View that was spearheaded by the community but not initially supported by the City Council. The Council has since started working with Google on a housing development that will contain Below Market Rent units. The question is what do we expect from each other? What is the common good?

- Personal responsibility should be considered. People make decisions about their careers (and the income that comes with it) and where they choose to live and it is not the community's responsibility to take care of them if they can't find housing. Another perspective is that it's not about the decisions that people have made but rather about the circumstances that have changed around them with the escalating rise in the cost of living and housing. People's current housing crisis may not have initially started out that way when they first moved to the area.

- The housing crisis has affected recruitment of quality candidates in education. A model that is being explored is faculty housing for those working in education, where colleges are becoming landlords. Paying people more is not a solution because of the restrictions around funding and collective bargaining agreements. The housing crisis also affects the quality of education for youth. If teachers have to commute long distances to reach their jobs, it affects the quality of education for the youth they teach, especially in disadvantaged communities, where teachers are disconnected from their students, parents and the community in which they work.

- What is the Board members' personal responsibility to tackle these issues? It's up to the Board to decide what they want to do. Should the Board approach companies and what can companies do? What can NOVA do from a training perspective to get companies to act? The Board needs to focus the conversation to identify what it can do in the context of its customers in order to achieve something good.

- Improving the skills of workers is an unambiguously good thing to do. The Upskilling Playbook for Employers (https://www.aspeninstitute.org/publications/upskilling-playbook/) was created by the Walmart Foundation and Aspen Institute. The Board could play a role as ambassador helping companies to implement this playbook. The Skillful Initiative (https://www.markle.org/rework-america/skillful/#overview), created by the Markle Foundation, is forging new ways of creating and accessing opportunities for workers through partnerships between business, government, nonprofit and education sectors.

- NOVA is currently working with Hack-the-Hood to better understand the barriers that are preventing youth from accessing the tech industry. When the project first began the goal was to serve 60 youth, but it has only been able to serve 16 youth because of the significant challenges these youth face, specifically, income to support basic needs. The goal has now shifted to serving 20 youth with a focus on addressing the barriers they face with the intent of duplicating this model elsewhere.

- The Braven program (https://bebraven.org/) is offering a three-unit course that focuses on low-income, underrepresented college students to teach career readiness skills, so they can stay on track, complete their degree and secure employment.

- Immigrant workers (1.7 million undocumented) are also important to integrate into the workforce as they represent a solution to the community's skilled workforce problem. Employment will also improve the lives of their families.

- How do we get people off of unemployment with the skills they need to succeed? A model in Milwaukee developed an app to connect people to jobs. We should be forward thinking and proactive about how to support these laid-off workers.

- It's not clear how much the Board can really impact housing, as government plays such a large role in its regulation. However, the Board can make a difference on upskilling disadvantaged workers and targeting companies to accomplish this. This should be the Board's platform. Board members have contacts with companies that can be used to leverage this effort. It's important to keep housing in context, but the focus should be operationally on the workforce. However, training shouldn't be the only focus of the workforce issue. Also, disadvantaged workers shouldn't be the only target population, as middle-income workers need to be considered as well.

- It's important for the Board to grapple with these issues, but the expectation is not to necessarily achieve consensus. The ideas from this study session will set the context for future discussions from the Board and through the Board's committees and task forces. There are many different approaches that can be taken that could include more research to delve into these issues in greater depth, host future dialogues, and invite experts to participate in a forum.

4. **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 1:30 p.m.