Ramsey County Workforce Investment Board
Communication, Advocacy and Oversight Committee

February 22, 2005
Minutes

WIB Members Present	Members Absent	Staff/Guests Present
Patricia Brady	Bill Fritts	Kitty Gogins, WIB CEO
Gary Christensen		Kate Bates, WIB Staff
Greg Lambert		Readus Fletcher, City of Saint Paul
Tom Macy		Jim Finley, DEED
Jackie Mlynarczyk		Nancy Hendrickson, DEED
Deborah Montgomery		Keith Reed, DEED
Paul Nelson		Jim Schultz, DEED
Willie Nesbit		Terry Zurn, Workforce Solutions
Phil Saari		

Call to Order
Greg Lambert, chair, called the meeting to order at 1:00pm.

Approve Minutes
Motion made by Gary Christensen with second by Willie Nesbit to approve the minutes of January 14 as written.
Motion passed

Review County Vision on WorkForce Centers
Commissioner McDonough requested a document outlining the County's vision on WorkForce Centers (WFCs) from Patricia Brady and David Twa. This document is fairly consistent with the research and recommendations from this committee. Going to two WFCs is recommended, with a WFC being defined by the presence of a resource room. It is suggested that the Downtown and Midway locations are consolidated to one, maintaining but enhancing the North Saint Paul location, creating two "super centers" in Ramsey County for all employers and job seekers. It is desired that these new "super centers" have space for employers to hold meetings, particularly small women or minority-owned businesses. The County envisions diverse partners in each center, such as local colleges, for profit businesses, ABE, temp agencies and childcare. The County identified a location for the center, around the eastside of University Avenue.

Also in the County vision is the possibility of a mobile WFC to serve customers. Patricia Brady was able to visit one of these centers, and she and her staff have collected information from across the country on different centers. The mobile WFC would have one or two professionals on board, with around 12 computer stations hooked up to a satellite for internet access, a dropdown screen for classes, and a private room for employers to use for interviewing. The center would have all of the resources available in a traditional resource room, could be driven to sites for use by employers and job seekers, and would serve as a rolling advertisement. It was suggested that the center could be rented out on a daily basis to help offset the cost of running it.

Discuss Mobile Workforce Center
The group discussed both the mobile centers and the county vision on all WFCs. While the committee agrees that the County should go to two WFCs, it does not agree with the County's decision to name a location. Instead, the committee would like to use selection criteria to choose the location, as opposed to a geographical location. The County agreed to include a "staff recommendation" and a "WIB recommendation" on the new centers. The County will add in the CAO committee's criteria to their document, as agreed upon at the December meeting. After discussion, the "staff recommendation" for a geographical location was changed from "around the east side of University Avenue" to "east of the current Midway WFC."

Keith Reed of the MN Dept. of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) was present to discuss the mobile resource room the department had a few years ago as a pilot project. While the center was successful, there are many aspects of running it that need to be considered. These include things such as cost of upkeep, need

in the community, making sure the center meets ADA standards, and making sure the center can handle cold weather. There were surveys done on the old mobile resource center that will be distributed to the committee. The group was concerned that with the declining funds for workforce, the County may not be able to afford a mobile WFC. The County indicated they would try to earn grants to offset the cost of the mobile center, with an estimated cost under $500K. It was requested that a cost analysis be done on the current WFC situation, and the future situation with two centers and a mobile center. There were questions on the cost per serving an individual in each type of center. The County had developed a budget of assumed costs for the new centers, but other partners were not factored in. The Core Partners of the WFCs agreed to meet and do a cost analysis of running the current and future centers by the next CAO meeting- March 11.

In order to make a decision on mobile WFCs, there is more information the group needs. Some questions are:

- What is the cost of the mobile WFC, in relation to cost of "super centers" and cost per individual served for each?
- How many people can access the center?
- What happens to the mobile center during downtimes?
- What are the costs of marketing the center?

The group agreed that getting two really good WFCs is priority, and the mobile center would be something extra to look into. Suggestions were getting a mobile center in conjunction with surrounding communities and getting grants or sponsors for the mobile center. It was also suggested that other options be looked in to for community use of WFC services- such as using computers and meeting rooms at schools and libraries. More information will be provided at the March meeting, where a decision will be made. Kitty Gogins is planning on attending a session on mobile workforce centers at the National Association of Workforce Boards conference next week and will bring back information.

Update on County Board Workshop for Workforce Centers

The workshop has been moved to April 5th after the County Board meeting, usually around 1:30. WIB members are encouraged to attend and show support.

Update on WIA Reauthorization

This agenda item has been postponed for the next meeting.

Discuss MWCA Minimum WorkForce Center Standards

This agenda item has been postponed for the next meeting.

Discuss Leasing Space in WorkForce Centers

An organization contacted the Midway WorkForce Center about leasing space. The Core Partners were asked to make a recommendation on outside organizations leasing space in WorkForce Centers. Their recommendation is that the 19 WorkForce Center partners have an opportunity to lease any extra space in the centers, and after that the space can be offered to others in the community.

The group was also informed that the lease at the Midway center was extended to expire the same day as the Downtown center, at the end of 2006. This will allow more time for a long-term decision to be made on the WorkForce Centers.

Adjourn

Motion made by Willie Nesbit with second by Phil Saari to adjourn the meeting at 2:31 p.m.
Motion carried

Next Meeting- March 11, Midway WorkForce Center