

Ramsey County Workforce Investment Board
Communication, Advocacy and Oversight Committee

July 14, 2006
Minutes

WIB Members Present

Amy Brenengen
Gary Christensen
Nancy Hendrickson
Greg Lambert
Tom Macy
Jackie Mlynarczyk
Willie Nesbit
Bob de la Vega

Members Absent

Patricia Brady
Tom Klas
Deborah Montgomery
Paul Nelson EA

Staff/Guests Present

Mary Jo Gardner, WIB CEO
Kate Bates, WIB Staff
Janet Guthrie, Workforce Solutions

Call to Order

Greg Lambert called meeting to order at 11:30.

Approve Minutes

Motion made by Tom Macy with second by Nancy Hendrickson to approve the minutes from May 12 as written.

Motion passed

Nominate Committee Chair/Vice Chair

Tabled.

Update on WorkForce Center Location

The County approved 540 Fairview Ave N as the new Ramsey County WorkForce Center. They had questions on the financial aspects of the space. Sue Estes from the MN Real Estate Management division said that the lease negotiation is going well and is anticipating a lease signing very soon. Build out is expected to start in August.

WIA Funding Update

Tom Macy gave an update on WIA funding issues for the next program year. The House committee is proposing a budget that has \$11 million less for workforce programs, though a resolution will probably be passed that maintains the 2006 funding levels. Additionally, there has been a proposal to rescind \$325 million in carryover funds going into 2007. If this rescission goes through, it would result in a total loss of \$2.2 million for Title 1 programs in Minnesota.

The new WIA legislation passed the Senate and they are having a pre-conference hearing to work out the two major differences between the House and Senate versions of the WIA legislation. These differences are a piece in the House version that allows faith-based organizations receiving federal dollars to be exempt from federal funding laws. Additionally, the House has consolidated Title 1, 2, and 3 funds into a block grant given to the state. There is a document that compares the two bills side-by-side if anyone is interested in seeing the differences.

Building Lives Funding Effort

The Executive Committee decided to pursue funding for the Building Lives project. An ad hoc of the Youth Council has been meeting to discuss the best way to go after these funds, and have determined to go for a legislative appropriation. This will be going to the WIB in August for approval and support. There is no action requested as of yet, but it is expected to pick up greatly after the election. There may also be a tie-in with the Saint Paul Mayor's Second-Shift program.

Update on WIB Membership

At the end of July there will be several openings on the WIB, with 5 City and 8 County Business openings. The goals are to fill from our priority sectors and get more representation from the suburbs, as requested by the County Board. If anyone has any leads, please let Mary Jo know.

Update on Orientation

An ad hoc committee has worked on updating the WIB orientation session to be easier to understand for new members, keeping in mind the large learning curve that exists in this field. The orientation now consists of a few basic questions answered- such as: what is the WIB, who is on the WIB, what is the function of the WIB, what is the role of a WIB member? There has been one session so far, and it went well.

MFIP Allocation

The WIB serves in an advisory role to the MFIP Program, and Janet Guthrie came from the MFIP program at Workforce Solutions to discuss the issues surrounding one piece of the program. This piece is the services to teens in the program, and the funding/service disparities that exist amongst the providers. All teens in the program are either pregnant or parenting, with the majority of them being between 17 and 20 years old. In 2003, Public Health was selected to serve the majority of the teens on MFIP- with the exception of the new Hmong refugees and those who were enrolled in the program at age 19 or above. In 2004, Public Health served 4% of the clients enrolled in MFIP and received 12% of the funding. This client to funding ratio is less than all other MFIP providers. The extra cost in using Public Health highly represents their staff costs, as all counselors are nurses and they have small case loads (18 cases per FTE vs. 80-100 cases per FTE from other providers).

In their program, Public Health provides services like child development, mental health, parenting, family planning, child abuse/neglect, etc. Most of the other providers focus more on high school or GED completion, work skill development and career exploration. Due to this disparity, many Public Health clients need to receive services from another provider when their time with Public Health is up so they can get the job skills they need to obtain and retain employment. Public Health was originally chosen because it was found that home visits were a best practice in serving this population, though at the time Public Health was receiving much of their funding for home visits from another source. A few months before they were to begin providing services, they lost their home visit funding, and Workforce Solutions used their funds to make up the difference. Workforce Solutions is looking at new ways to structure the program and are planning a collaborative meeting with various service providers to see what everyone is providing- ideally there will be a new plan for the program by next July.

Janet is requesting that a WIB member serve as a champion for MFIP, meeting with Janet bimonthly to discuss the program, serve as a sounding board for ideas for the program, and help speak for the program at the City, County or State level when necessary. No one volunteered at this point, though we will be sure to ask for volunteers at the next WIB meeting.

Open Forum

Mary Jo informed the group that Rick Caligiuri, Director, Job Seeker Services, DEED, has asked the WIB to oversee a new grant project. The State received funding to help organizations that assist foreign medical professionals to obtain licensure in the US. The \$450,000 received by the state was granted out to three organizations, receiving \$150,000 each. Two of these organizations, the International Institute and the African American Friendship Association for Cooperation & Development, are located in Ramsey County. Rick asked that we serve as the oversight committee for these organizations, and hear reports from them quarterly and then report back to DEED. This is a one-year project, and the board will meet with the providers four times. We are not receiving funding for this, but all agreed it sounds like a very interesting project.

Motion made by Jackie Mlynarczyk with second by Willie Nesbit to accept the oversight of these two organizations.

Motion carried.

Greg Lambert and Gary Christensen, who will not continue on the board after their terms are up on July 31, were thanked for all of the hard work they have put into the WIB over their time as members.

Adjourn

Upon completion of the agenda, the meeting adjourned at 12:52 p.m.

Next Meeting- Friday, September 8, Midway WorkForce Center