

Ramsey County Workforce Investment Board
Communication, Advocacy and Oversight Committee

July 11, 2008
Minutes

WIB Members Present

Patricia Brady
Bob de la Vega
Kathy Engesser
Barbara Mednick
Jim Schultz

Members Absent

Trixie Golberg EA
Kristina Hamann
Lee Helgen

Staff/Guests Present

Melanie Huggins, Saint Paul Public Library
Kate Raleigh, WIB Staff

Call to Order

Bob de la Vega, Chair, called the meeting to order at 11:32am.

Approve Minutes

Motion made by Patricia Brady with second by Jim Schultz to approve the May minutes as presented.

Motion carried.

Approve Nomination for Vice Chair

The Committee is need of a Vice-Chair. Interested members may contact Mary Jo to further discuss the opportunity.

Introduction to Library Workforce Services

Melanie Huggins, Library Director, Saint Paul Public Libraries, was present to discuss resources available through the libraries and how workforce can better partner with the libraries. Melanie distributed many brochures, including a map of libraries in Saint Paul, a brochure of job seeker resources available through the libraries, resources available for businesses through the libraries, and a booklet of classes available through the libraries. Melanie also presented a map of the “Invest Saint Paul” areas in the city; all of the “high need areas” in Saint Paul have a library in the neighborhood. The library system is currently working towards ensuring the libraries are a customer-driven resource. Melanie stated that the libraries have customers everyday that come to the library asking for help looking for a job. When appropriate, the customers are directed to the WorkForce Centers, though many individuals seeking help are not eligible for program services. The local libraries have been audited to see what they are doing for these customers. In October library staff will be tracking individuals who ask for job seeking resources and will track the specific questions customers ask. This will help the libraries to define and address the needs of the community.

The library hosts events for customers and subscribes to several databases that anyone with a Saint Paul Library card can access. By the year 2010 the library will spend \$500k on technology resources for their customers. An additional benefit of the libraries is their business hours- most libraries are open until 9pm on weeknights. The library at Sunray has received a grant to pilot a “resource center” for job seekers. The libraries are looking for opportunities to partner with the community and share their resources of technology, meeting space, databases and lecture series. A key piece in partnering will be the marketing and PR of services available at the libraries. It was suggested that the library contacts the Star Tribune and have them report on the resources for job seekers at the libraries in the Star Tribune’s Sunday jobs section. There is a similar resource in the Pioneer Press.

Patricia Brady expressed interest in meeting with Melanie again to find other ways the WorkForce Centers can partner with the libraries, including discussing library training for WorkForce Center staff and workforce training for library staff. Melanie indicated that within the next year, the library will be developing a “mini-site” on their website that contains the resources available for businesses and job seekers. In addition to looking for more partnerships within the community, the library is looking for ways to fund these opportunities, most likely through grant requests.

Melanie gave out her contact information for anyone who has further questions or opportunities for partnership- Melanie can be reached at 651-266-7073 or Melanie.Huggins@ci.stpaul.mn.us. It was suggested that Mary Jo contact Melanie to present this information at a full WIB meeting.

Discuss WIB Attendance Policy

The committee was asked to review the WIB's attendance policy to consider allowing for some flexibility for members who are actively engaged with the WIB, though may not always attend committee meetings. There was discussion on whether or not a new policy should be formalized in the bylaws. With the reduced membership, members expressed the importance of engagement at all levels of the board. It was also stressed that attendance needs to be reviewed on a regular basis (monthly was suggested) and letters should be sent to members who violate the attendance policy. A suggested update to the bylaws was that members missing 3 or more meetings unexcused were in violation of the attendance policy, "unless otherwise recommended by the Executive Committee". It is important to hear from the diverse perspectives on the board and that the various categories are represented. The full board needs to be reminded of the attendance policy, understand the importance of engagement on the board, and understand that the policies will be more strictly enforced.

The committee recommends that the Executive Committee review the attendance policy and modify it to allow for members' alternative contributions to be considered when enforcing the policy. Additionally, the Executive Committee may want to consider allowing staff to enforce the attendance policy by sending out letters monthly to those who are not in compliance with attendance.

Update on WIB Fund Development Plan

The WIB is looking for 3 or 4 volunteers to serve on an ad hoc that will guide the fund development plan of the board. If anyone is interested, please let Bob de la Vega or Mary Jo know. The fund development consultant is going to conduct interviews of WIB stakeholders to get more background information, and then will work on next steps. The VISTA volunteer will start with the WIB in August and her major focus will be fund development.

Update on WIB Website

Barb Mednick presented the site map developed by the website ad hoc. The new WIB website will be structured to address specific audiences- funders, business, WIB members, job seekers and the community at large. A big piece of the website will be the key initiatives and accomplishments of the WIB, and how business and funders can help further the work of the WIB. A key goal is to make the site easily understood by people not involved with the workforce development industry.

Barb was thanked for all of her work with the site. The ad hoc looked at templates and none met the WIB's needs, so in-kind web design services are being pursued through a nonprofit called Grassroots that works with other nonprofits on these types of projects. The WIB will receive an update on the site when more work has been accomplished.

Tri-WIB Meeting Update

Members from the Dakota-Scott, Washington and Ramsey Counties' WIBs met on June 13th to discuss workforce needs in the greater east metro and discuss opportunities for partnership. WIB Chair Paul Nelson was involved in the planning of this event. Speakers included representatives from education, business, DEED, and the State Demographers' office, as well as Representative Betty McCollum. The speakers' presentations focused on the changing workplace and the need for skilled workers. The attendees brainstormed ideas on what initiatives could be worked on over the next year with the collaborative group, and the ideas were voted on. The initiative that was of most interest to the group was working with youth and mentoring. Next steps are forthcoming.

Adjourn

Upon completion of the agenda, the meeting adjourned at 1:13 p.m.

Next Meeting- September 12, 2008