

Ramsey County Workforce Investment Board
Executive Committee

August 21, 2009

Minutes

Committee Members Present

Patricia Brady
Butch Howard
Doug Hubbard
Robert Morse
Mary Russell
Dan Strittmater

Members Absent

Craig Anderson EA
Robert de la Vega EA
Dave MacKenzie EA

Staff/Guests Present

Mary Jo Gardner, WIB CEO
Kate Raleigh, WIB Staff

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:07 am.

Approve Consent Agenda

- Approve July 17th Minutes
- Accept July Financial Report

Motion made by Robert Morse with second by Butch Howard to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

Motion carried.

Mary Jo discussed updates to the WIB's approved 2009 budget. The County needs to modify the payment schedule of the WIA funds the WIB receives, which affects the WIB's cash flow. To accommodate the transition to quarterly payments (as opposed to one annual payment) the County gave the WIB two quarters of WIA funds in August, with the next payment expected in April and continuing quarterly from that point.

Staff developed a projected budget through 2011 to determine when short falls may appear.

A proposal to receive American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds will go to the County Board in the next month.

Approve Greater Metropolitan Workforce Council Dues

The Greater Metropolitan Workforce Council (Metro WIB) included a discussion on its budget in their agenda during the Minnesota Workforce Council Association in Duluth in early August but due to additional agenda items, there was not time to discuss this item. It is assumed that much of the Metro WIB efforts over the next few months will be directed toward Department of Labor ARRA grant opportunities, but the issue of dues will be discussed when times allows.

Members discussed the importance of being aware of the expectation to support the Metro WIB prior to the budgeting process. There is \$900 in the WIB's 2009 budget for these dues, as the actual cost of \$1,500 was not anticipated. It was suggested that a payment of \$900, the amount budgeted for 2009 based on dues from 2008, be sent to the Metro WIB in the near future, reserving the additional \$600 to be paid after discussions occur. The cost incurred by each Workforce Service Area is \$3,000, which the WIB split with Workforce Solutions, who has been waiting to make their \$1,500 payment until the WIB makes a final decision. If the WIB agrees to pay \$900 right now and the balance upon further discussion, Workforce Solutions will do the same. All agree it is important to get clarity on the purpose, outcomes and timing of these dues.

Motion made by Robert Morse with second by Doug Hubbard to pay the \$900 budgeted in 2009 for the dues.

Motion carried.

County Board Workshop Review

The County Board hosted a workshop with the WIB on August 4th to discuss the WIB's recent accomplishments and future efforts. In review of that session, members discussed reactions and feedback from the workshop, as well as any open action items from that session. All felt the session was positive and should happen more often, perhaps annually. The WIB came away with the impression that the County Board would like the WIB to be cognizant of the needs of a broad variety of job seekers. Members felt this was something that needed to be addressed by the board through environmental scans, and that it will be important to highlight at the next County Board workshop.

The County Board was interested in reestablishing a relationship with the Saint Paul Area Chamber of Commerce, and Mary Jo made an initial contact with Bev Fritz to work toward this goal. Additional action items are accessing the employer's voice, examining the WIB's role in oversight of the WIA dollars and determining how to become more financially independent as a board. Mary Jo will make a more comprehensive list of items to discuss at the next Executive Committee meeting.

Partnership Agreement Next Steps

WIB leadership will hold a meeting with County Manager Julie Kleinschmidt on September 30th to discuss the remaining issues in the Partnership Agreement, including the discussion of non-WIA dollars and the County's support of WIB. The Partnership Agreement needs to be signed by December 31st.

WIB Role in Workforce Initiatives

In working through the Partnership Agreement, there have been questions raised on the WIB's role in workforce initiatives. Mary Russell described the model that is being used currently with the healthcare initiative and was used with the manufacturing initiative. The WIB scans the local community for areas of need and convenes community partners to define solutions. Through this convening role, the WIB also helps partners to develop the feasibility and operations of a response and determine measures for success. After the initiative is established, the WIB hands off the lead on the program to the operational entities, remaining in an oversight role and focusing on results as opposed to specific operations. The WIB needs to be intentional in its communication to clarify this role.

Administrative Update

The CEO's new computer is in place and a Blackberry will be purchased in the near future.

The Operations Specialist will be reducing her hours to five per week while she pursues her education through November. In the meantime, the WIB's VISTA was hired on a temporary basis to work up to 35 hours per week in an administrative role. The Operations Specialist will continue to maintain the FWIB's financials and payroll.

The FWIB is in need of a 403b Plan Document outlining the organization's retirement plan. Currently the FWIB has a simple salary-reduction 403b plan and with new IRS regulations, a plan document must be in place by December 31, 2009. Mary Jo contacted several organizations for advice, and connected with an organization in MN that can develop this document for the FWIB. Initial costs for this document are \$1,250 with an annual fee of \$1,500, resulting in approximately \$3,000 in costs for 2009 and \$1,500 each subsequent year. Another option is to switch the FWIB plan to an IRA, though this would reduce the employee's maximum pre-tax contribution to \$6,000 annually, down from \$15,500 under the 403b plan. A member asked Mary Jo to clarify this requirement in writing prior to a final recommendation from the committee. Staff would appreciate any other input in to this issue.

Update on WIB Membership Change Requirement

A new state law requires that Adult Basic Education be represented on local workforce boards. Due to the recent reduction in members, the education spots on the WIB went from four to two, with the Education Committee allowing for the increased input of local education interests. To add an additional Education member on the WIB would increase the board size to 37, up from 33. The County has requested a waiver on this requirement, allowing ABE to be represented on the Education Committee as opposed to the full WIB. The state is seeking a ruling from the Department of Labor and will let the County know of the decision.

WIB and Committee Meeting Schedule

Mary Jo reviewed the attendance records at WIB and committee meetings since 2004 to determine which meetings are not well attended and could be eliminated from the meeting schedule. Due to a recent increase in attendance, Mary Jo would like to wait one more year before determining a change to the WIB meeting schedule.

September Executive Committee Meeting

The September meeting was rescheduled from September 18th to the 23rd from 3:00-4:30, location to be determined.

Other

The Office of the Legislative Auditor will be auditing the local workforce programs in September and October and will need to meet with Patricia Brady and Mary Russell. Mary Jo will connect further with Patricia and Mary on the timing of this visit.

Ramsey County is engaged in a regional grant on green jobs through Pathways out of Poverty. A support letter will be needed from the WIB on this request, which involves Ramsey County, Saint Paul and Minneapolis and careers in weatherization, deconstruction, building systems, renewable energy and construction. Other service providers may request support for independent projects associated with this grant request.

As part of the WIB's annual scanning process, it will be important to look at how job seekers are connected with the workforce system. At the September meeting, Mary Russell would like to review the 2009 annual plan and begin developing the 2010 annual plan.

Adjourn

Motion made by Robert Morse with second by Dan Strittmater to adjourn the meeting at 10:37am.

Next meeting: September 23, 3:00-4:30 pm.