

Ramsey County Workforce Investment Board
Market-Driven Workforce System Committee

September 8, 2005
Minutes

Members Present

Craig Anderson
John Evans
Kirk Hayes
Nancy Hendrickson
Scott LeMire
John Mohr

Members Absent

Phil Hanson
Hyon Kim
Lorrie Louder
Jerry McElroy EA
Mary McKee EA
Joe Richburg EA
Ginny Sullivan EA
William Yang

Staff/Guests Present

Mary Jo Gardner, WIB CEO
Kate Bates, WIB Staff
Janet Ludden, ESI
Terry Zurn, Workforce Solutions

Call to Order

Scott LeMire, chair, called the meeting to order at 1:06 pm.

Approve Minutes

Motion made by Nancy Hendrickson with second by John Evans to approve the minutes of July 14 as written.

Motion carried.

Update on ELL Grants

Thus far we have granted \$66,000 of the \$139,000 allocated to our WSA for employer-directed English Language Learner services. Though the state has not been able to release these funds, checks are expected to be sent out in the next few weeks to those organizations that have been awarded funding. There is a possibility of obtaining more funding if we need it, and if we are unable to use all of our funding, another WSA may be able to use it. The final submission date is September 15th.

Update on Business Services Pilot

There is a meeting next week with stakeholders to discuss and decide on next steps for the business services pilot. The group will discuss what has happened and what needs to happen with the learnings from the pilot. It is our responsibility to follow through with this concept and implement the best practices. It was suggested that steering committee members be included in the discussions because they have the history of the pilot.

Discuss Mobile Workforce Center

Mary Jo went down to Will County, IL and looked at their mobile workforce center. She was very impressed with its capabilities- it had 12 work stations with computers, a screen inside and one outside of the unit to serve many more people than can fit inside. This is their second mobile center- their first one having lasted 10 years. They have a very good situation because the driver is also knowledgeable about computers, workforce development and maintains the unit. Since February of 2005 they have had 2,000 customers through the unit.

It is important to compare the geography of Will County to that of Ramsey County. Will County has a similar population size, but it is much larger than Ramsey County. They also do not have a centralized “one-stop center” and instead have departments split up in different buildings. The unit allows for a one-stop to be located all over the county. This raises a question that since we have three (soon to be two) one-stop centers in a much smaller space that we may not have enough need for a mobile unit. The group feels that an assessment may help determine if there is even a need for this- something that could determine populations that have difficulty accessing a “brick and mortar” facility. The general feeling is that with our centers and the community partners that provide these services, there may not be justification for a mobile unit. Another question is where the funding comes from, and it would probably be necessary to partner with another entity and share the unit. The WIB and Workforce Solutions are supposed to develop a recommendation on the center to present to the County Board. It was felt that an action step may come out of the WorkForce Center consolidation/relocation, and that this is where efforts should lie for the time being.

Discuss Brownfield Job Training Grants

The EPA has a grant for brownfield training that will provide funding to train individuals to restore brownfields. The proposal is due next week, so we will not be applying for that one, but there will most likely be another opportunity next year. If we did apply we would partner with training facilities and recruit participants. These are good paying jobs, and there are a lot of brownfields in our community that require restoration. It was determined that the need for these types of employees be assessed, and from there the group should decide whether or not to apply for this grant. The Saint Paul Port Authority has done a program like this before with a minority population. Janet Ludden will survey employers and find their need for employees and report back.

Update on Sheraton Hotel Closing

Janet Ludden was present from Employer Solutions, Inc. (ESI) to give an update on the Sheraton Hotel closing, which Lorrie Louder introduced at our last meeting. ESI was contracted to be the employee advocate during the closing, which is expected to be finalized on October 31. Through this partnership, the employees are receiving on-site dislocated worker services on paid time, and a very generous severance package with medical benefits and some salary compensation. If any employers are interested in talking to those being laid off, please let Janet know and she can set up an "Employer of the Day" for you. The reason this business closing is being discussed so extensively is the way that the employer is working with ESI to provide for the employees. There was a question as to whether or not the employees would be tracked after the hotel closed- Janet is not sure that this will be successful because of the difficulty of tracking employees once they have left, but they will try. It will be interesting to see if enhanced services to laid-off employees make a difference.

Open Forum

The DEED conference will be October 5-6 at the Radisson Riverfront in Saint Paul. The WIB will send out a reminder to members on the conference, and the October WIB meeting will be held at the conference.

The group discussed the hurricane relief efforts and if there would be anyone seeking employment in the East Metro. It was felt that most individuals would prefer to stay in a big city (as opposed to Brainerd, where they are being sent), but nothing is for sure. If anyone knows of a hurricane survivor looking for a job, please let Scott LeMire know.

The Salvation Army received a large endowment (\$25 million) from the Joan Kroc Estate (widow of McDonald's founder Ray Kroc) to build a community center in the Rice/Pierce Butler area. They are currently looking at what services would be provided, and are planning on having the center open in 4 or 5 years.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned, upon completion of the agenda, at 2:16 p.m.

Next Meeting- November 10, 1:00-2:30, Conley Conference Room, Midway Hospital